WESTON BEARS PARK
ANALYSIS REPORT
For: Cessnock City Council
Date: 04/03/2020
LOCAL CONTEXT: WESTON BEARS PARK

Location & Demographics
Weston Bears Park is located within the Weston area. The 2018 Estimated Resident Population for Abermain-Weston and surrounding areas is 7,791, with a population density of 0.86 persons per hectare. The site is bounded by First Street and Government Street with a rail corridor bounding its south-eastern edge.

Open Space & Education Institutions
A collection of open spaces are located along the Swamp Creek riparian corridor within the vicinity of the park. Weston Public School is the only educational institute near Weston Bear’s Park.
EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS:
WESTON BEARS PARK

Organised sports
Weston Bears Park is the home ground of the Weston Bears football club.
- Football (Soccer) main field with lighting, fencing and highly maintained turf only for official games
- Training field

Passive recreation
- Nil, Weston Bears Park is dedicated to the facilities

Supporting functions
- Aging grand stand and amenities due for upgrade
- Workers Club with allocated parking area
- Informal and unsealed parking area
Site Analysis

Cessnock City Council’s flood mapping shows little flood risk at Weston Bears Park. Low-lying areas in the north-west corner of the site experience temporary inundation during heavy rain events. The vegetation along the northern boundary is categorised as level 3 vegetation, translating to a medium bushfire risk. Cessnock City Council mapping identifies one key ecological community within Weston Bears Park - Lower Hunter Spotted Gum - Ironbark Forest. A remnant of this endangered ecological community (EEC) exists in the north-eastern corner of the site.
Key Design Drivers and Objectives

Access and circulation
A number of opportunities exist to improve access to and around the site by formalising vehicle routes and car parking, and providing new pedestrian paths.
- Provide on street parking along a portion of Government Road to create a street presence
- Formalise vehicular access road and optimise car park capacity with durable all-weather surface
- Opportunity for accessible spectator seating on eastern side of main field
- Improve access to main amenities and supporting infrastructure
- Opportunity to increase car park capacity through Workers Club

Organised sport and recreation
Opportunities for organised sport activities have been identified as follows:
- Provide lighting and upgrades to main, training and proposed junior football fields
- Potential for main field to switch to artificial turf
- New combined amenities and kiosk building to better address level of usage. Location of new facility to be considered to maximise connections to various facilities

Environment and ecology
Opportunities exist to build on the existing vegetation to provide increased habitat area and improved habitat quality
- Protection and enhancement of existing important ecological areas, including consideration of management strategies to allow regeneration of natural communities
- Water sensitive urban design (WSUD) installations such as biofiltration
MASTERPLAN: WESTON BEARS PARK

Masterplan Overview

The proposed masterplan for Weston Bears Park seeks to formalise and upgrade the park’s offerings. Some regrading and earthworks are to be undertaken to accommodate a juniors soccer field. A new amenities building and hardstand area address the level change with a ramp for an accessible point of entry between the two fields.

Remnant endangered ecological community located along the northern boundary of the park is to be retained and protected. There is also an opportunity to improve the quality of this ecological zone.
MASTERPLAN ANALYSIS:
WESTON BEARS PARK

Access and Circulation
New and accessible pedestrian paths connect the main sporting facilities and supporting uses within Park. Proposed ramping addresses the level change between the two sporting fields.

Car Parking
A mix of sealed and informal gravel allow the park to accommodate game days and other events. Two sealed car parks allow for stakeholders to control access into with park with a gate. The proposed parking layouts maximize the space drastically increasing the number of car parks available. Tree planting within formal parking areas ensure adequate shade.

Lighting
New flood lighting within Weston Bears Park maximize the usage of the sporting facilities. Lighting locations are shown indicatively and are to be resolved in future detailed design stages. Car park and pedestrian lighting is also to be resolved during detailed design stages to allow for safety and accessibility within the park.
STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT: WESTON BEARS PARK

Initial stakeholder meeting

An initial stakeholder meeting was held on Monday 23rd September 2019 in Weston. The discussions were organised by Cessnock City Council and attended by Council staff, GroupGSA staff and members of the following community organisations:

- Weston Bears Football Club
- Weston Junior Soccer Club
- Weston Workers Club

The discussions were held in a round table, open format, with stakeholders invited to share their visions for the park and any wishes or desire of their organisation. The key issues and desired outcomes are summarised below.

Weston Bears Soccer Club

- Desire to retain, extend existing grandstand as at least double the space provided is needed for the growing club. Additions should include accessible toilets and at least 4 change rooms
- Accessibility throughout the site remain an issue, specifically the grandstand
- New fencing required on site to separate juniors training ground from seniors facilities
- Potential to bring vehicle entry and parking off Swanston Street as the preference is to not bring car into the site
- Desire is to have a facility that attracts A League games
- Lighting is a priority to allow for night games and training (200-250 lux)
- Synthetic pitch

Weston Juniors Football Club

- Club moved from Varty Park
- Need the equivalent facilities or higher level of what they have now. This would require a separate juniors training ground
GENERAL PRECEDENT IMAGES

Tennis Courts
Formalise car park but maintain rural character
Community pod with ping pong, shelter and seating
BMX pump track or jump track

Amenities Building
Cricket Pitches
Dugouts
Shade Structures

new loop paths around site for access
Spectator seating to sports fields
Basketball half-court
Cricket field fencing and seating