

10.6. North Sydney Oval - North Sydney Bears and Northern Suburbs Rugby VHAs

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ATTACHMENTS	1. CONFIDENTIAL - Bears and Norths 5-year VHAs - financial analysis and comparison [10.6.1 - 1 page]
CSP LINK	1. Our Living Environment 1.4 Well utilised open space and recreational facilities 4. Our Social Vitality 4.1 North Sydney is connected, inclusive, healthy and safe

PURPOSE:

This report seeks Council's endorsement of two Heads of Agreement between Council and North Sydney Rugby League (Bears) and Northern Suburbs Rugby Union (Norths), to form the basis of two five-year Venue Hire Agreements (VHAs) for the use of North Sydney Oval (NSO) and Bon Andrews Oval (BAO).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- The Bears and Norths have both been utilising NSO for more than 100-years, with historical agreements directing the nature of their engagement and utilisation of the venue.
- Council met with the Bears and Norths separately on numerous occasions throughout 2024 and 2025, to address necessary changes to their VHAs. This was required to ensure both clubs were paying the appropriate fees and charges, and to secure their tenure of NSO.
- Council sought to update these agreements to support the long-term sustainability of the Oval and to enable the clubs to customise VHA's specific to their unique requirements.
- The Heads of Agreement for the Bears and Norths clarifies certain parameters by which the clubs can utilise NSO and BAO, while permitting Council to better manage its assets in the best interests of the community.
- It is noted that the financial terms of the agreements between Council and the clubs are largely in alignment with Council's adopted fees and charges, however a five-year term requires the consent of the Council.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council notes the contents of this report in relation to the development of Venue Hire Agreements with the Bears and Norths for the use of North Sydney and Bon Andrews Ovals for the period 15 April 2025 to 31 August 2029.

2. THAT Council notes the Heads of Agreement summaries proposed between Council and the Bears and Norths noted within this report, which will be used to inform two five-year Venue Hire Agreements for the use of North Sydney and Bon Andrews Ovals for the period 15 April 2025 to 31 August 2029.

3. THAT Council authorise the Chief Executive Officer to finalise negotiations with the Bears and Norths and enter into five-year Venue Hire Agreements with the Bears and Norths for the use of North Sydney Oval and Bon Andrews Oval, based on the proposed Heads of Agreement summaries included within this report.

Background

The Bears and Norths have both been utilising NSO for more than 100-years, with historical agreements directing the nature of their engagement and utilisation of the venue.

In February 2024 Council undertook a service review of NSO. The review recommended for *further venue performance, operations and financial analysis including assessing individual activities and customer value.*

Report

Council subsequently met with North Sydney Bears Rugby League (the Bears) and Northern Suburbs Rugby Union (Norths) separately on numerous occasions throughout 2024 and 2025 in alignment with the Service Review recommendations.

The Bears and Norths were both actively involved in the negotiations related to changes in their VHAs, understanding and acknowledging the need for Council to modernise the agreements to support the long-term sustainability of the Oval. Both clubs took advantage of the opportunity during their VHA reviews to refine the agreements by customising specific sections to better align with their unique requirements.

Council has reached agreement with the respective clubs, which is summarised in the tables below. Further details in relation to these agreements are included within the confidential attachment of this report.

North Sydney Bears

Heads of Agreement Summary to inform the North Sydney Bears VHA	
1.	Five-year VHA (2025-2029 seasons)
2.	Period of agreement from 15 April to 31 August each year.
3.	Bears to pay the cost of venue hire, security (not including RSA), cleaning, flood lighting, waste disposal, and use of the outdoor multimedia screen, as per Council's adopted fees and charges.
4.	Bears entitled to a minimum of nine game days on NSO each year.
5.	Bears permitted to host one junior league community clinic free of charge each year.
6.	Subject to availability, the Bears can request one dry hire "Bears Festival" event per season, whereby the Bears and their nominated event promoter take on responsibilities for the delivery of all match day operations, in return for an agreed financial payment to Council. The festival can be a maximum of two consecutive days and must operate within the limitations of the North Sydney Oval Local Liquor Licence guidelines.
7.	'Fans on the Field' can only occur for main games and must be requested by the Bears before the season commences. Approval shall be at the sole discretion of Council's Turf Manager and requests may be denied mitigating potential impact on the playing surface. If permitted, Fans on the Field is for a maximum of seven minutes at half time and a maximum of 15 minutes at the conclusion of the main game.

Heads of Agreement Summary to inform the North Sydney Bears VHA	
8.	As part of the VHA, Council will provide the Bears with access to a lockable storage space to store their equipment at Bon Andrews Oval Pavillion storage facility.
9.	North Sydney Oval is solely responsible for the delivery of food and beverage services on standard Bears game days.
10.	On game days a maximum of 12 parking spaces will be made available in Council's depot and nominated areas surround NSO for use by the Bears' authorised personnel.
11.	The Bears must hold active public liability insurance noting the interest of the Council as owner for a sum of not less than \$20,000,000.00 for any one claim.
12.	The Bears may terminate the VHA prior to the end of the 2029 playing season in the event the Bears are promoted into the NRL (National Rugby League). Notice of this termination must be provided to Council by North Sydney DRLFC no later than 90-days prior to the first match of the upcoming season.
13.	All other terms and conditions remain consistent with NSO standard operating procedures and previous VHA's.

Northern Suburbs Rugby Union

Heads of Agreement Summary to inform the Northern Suburbs Rugby Union VHA	
1.	Five-year VHA (2025-2029 seasons)
2.	Period of agreement from 15 April to 31 August each year.
3.	Norths to pay the cost of venue hire, security (not including RSA), cleaning, flood lighting, waste disposal, and use of the outdoor multimedia screen, as per Council's adopted fees and charges.
4.	'Fans on the Field' can only occur for main games and must be requested by Norths before the season commences. Approval shall be at the sole discretion of Council's Turf Manager and requests may be denied mitigating potential impact on the playing surface. If permitted, Fans on the Field is for a maximum of seven minutes at half time and a maximum of 15 minutes at the conclusion of the main game.
5.	For specific games as nominated and approved in advance by both North Sydney Oval Management and Council's Turf Manager, a maximum of 50 authorised fans may be granted access to the eastern sideline of the playing field for the final 20 minutes of the game. The final determination of the maximum number of permitted fans shall be at the sole discretion of the Turf Manager.
6.	Office space will be made available to Norths at 283A Miller Street, North Sydney for the term of this agreement. Access to the nominated office space will be at no additional cost to Norths, with Council able to provide three months' notice at any time in the event the office space is required for any other purpose.
7.	As part of the VHA, Council will provide Norths with access to a lockable storage space to store their equipment at Bon Andrews Oval Pavillion storage facility.
8.	North Sydney Oval is solely responsible for the delivery of food and beverage services on standard Bears game days.
9.	Norths may request the Mollie Dive function space to remain open after games for an agreed period, as determined and agreed with Oval Management.
10.	On game days a maximum of 12 parking spaces will be made available in Council's depot and nominated areas surround NSO for use by Norths' authorised personnel.

	Heads of Agreement Summary to inform the Northern Suburbs Rugby Union VHA
11.	Norths must hold active public liability insurance noting the interest of the Council as owner for a sum of not less than \$20,000,000.00 for any one claim.
12.	All other terms and conditions remain consistent with NSO standard operating procedures and previous VHA's.

Consultation requirements

Community engagement is not required.

Financial/Resource Implications

The proposed financial arrangements within the 2025-29 VHAs align with Council's adopted fees and charges. Further financial analysis and comparison has been provided within the confidential attachment of this report.

The management of North Sydney Oval is already factored into Council's operational budgets. Entering into these agreements as proposed will require no additional resources.

Legislation

s608(1) of the NSW Local Government Act 1993