SUBJECT: St Leonards Park Indoor Sports Centre Scoping Study

AUTHOR: Alex Williams, Team Leader - Policy and Megan White, Landscape Planner

ENDORSED BY: Warwick Winn, General Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Council has received an unsolicited concept for an indoor sports centre within St Leonards Park. The concept was put forward by local resident and architect Michael Morgan and presents very preliminary graphics that incorporate an underground indoor sports centre with associated parking and roof-top open space on the eastern portion of St Leonards Park immediately adjacent to the Warringah Expressway.

On 14 October 2013, Council resolved (Min. No.659):

THAT Council undertake a feasibility study for an Indoor Sports Centre complex in St Leonards Park.

This report constitutes the first stage in the feasibility study as requested by Council’s resolution. The report takes the form of a scoping study which seeks to provide decision makers with a summary of existing statutory requirements, policies and other Council documents relevant to the management and future development of St Leonards Park. This information is provided with the express purpose of providing a background for decision makers regarding the St Leonards Park indoor sports centre concept. The study outlines principles ascertained from a review of Council’s adopted strategic documents. These are recommended to guide any future redevelopment of the park:

- The extent of existing open space should be maintained;
- The usability of existing areas of open space should be improved to allow for a range of uses and an increase in carrying capacity;
- Any development should protect and/or contribute to, and not undermine, the heritage qualities of the park;
- Views to Kirribilli and Sydney Harbour from St Leonards Park should be preserved and where possible enhanced; and
- Council will engage the community on any future developments relating to the establishment of an additional indoor sporting facility per Council's Community Engagement Policy and Protocol.
These guiding principles should be primary considerations in any subsequent design stages should the St Leonards Park indoor sports centre concept be progressed. Should any of these principles prove unachievable, it is recommended that the St Leonards Park indoor sports centre concept not proceed.

This report also outlines the proposed methodology for undertaking further work in relation to this matter. It is proposed that further work be undertaken sequentially allowing for the gathering of necessary information, and if required, the allocation of funds for detailed consultant input, at appropriate stages:

- Stage 1 - Scoping study (this report);
- Stage 2 - Recreation needs study;

It is intended that Stage 2 will constitute a report to Council on the findings of the Recreation Needs Study, which is due for completion in late 2014, specifically regarding the demand for an additional indoor sports centre. Only if demand is established should the project progress to subsequent stages, being:

- Stage 3 - Site selection;
- Stage 4 - Concept design;
- Stage 5 - Strategic assessment and feasibility analysis;
- Stage 6 - Decision.

This process seeks to allow other sites to be considered as a location for a possible new indoor sports centre. This is considered appropriate given that, to date, no such identification and analysis of candidate sites has been undertaken. The staging of the feasibility study will allow for the gathering of appropriate information, the selection of an appropriate site and the dedication of funds for detailed consultant input, to be undertaken in a sequential and rational manner. It will allow Council to establish a strategic vision for an additional indoor sports centre in North Sydney and will form the basis for any future development application and development process.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Nil

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. THAT upon completion of the Recreation Needs Study a report be presented to Council outlining:
   - The findings of the study in relation to the demand for an additional indoor sports centre in the North Sydney LGA; and
   - Should demand be established, a process to investigate and report on candidate sites within the LGA that could potentially accommodate an indoor sports centre.

2. THAT should the need for an indoor sports facility be established, Council engage with the community in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy and Protocol (Community Engagement Protocol) at the earliest possible juncture.

3. THAT should St Leonards Park be selected as the site of a new indoor sports centre, the
following principles ascertained from Council’s adopted policy documents be used to guide any further investigations and designs:

- The extent of existing open space should be maintained (Open Space Provision Strategy 2009);
- The usability of existing areas of open space should be improved to allow for a range of uses and an increase in carrying capacity (Recreational Needs Study 2005);
- Any development should protect and/or contribute to, and not undermine, the heritage qualities of the park (Conservation Management Plan 2013);
- Views to Kirribilli and Sydney Harbour from St Leonards Park should be preserved and where possible enhanced (Development Control Plan 2013).
REPORT OF ALEX WILLIAMS, TEAM LEADER - POLICY AND MEGAN WHITE, LANDSCAPE PLANNER/ARCHITECT

RE: ST LEONARDS PARK INDOOR SPORTS CENTRE SCOPING STUDY

LINK TO DELIVERY PROGRAM

Direction: 1. Our Living Environment

Outcome: 1.5 Public open space, recreation facilities and services that meet community needs

Direction: 2. Our Built Environment

Outcome: 2.4 North Sydney's heritage is preserved and valued

BACKGROUND

On 16 September 2013, resident and architect Mr Michael Morgan presented an unsolicited concept for an indoor sports centre to the Educational Institutions Working Group. The concept was the subject of a Councillor briefing on 23 September 2013 and was reported to Council’s Sports and Recreation Reference Group meeting on 8 October 2013. The concept involves an underground indoor sports centre with associated parking and roof-top open space on the eastern portion of St Leonards Park immediately adjacent to the Warringah Expressway.

The matter was the subject of a Notice of Motion at the Council meeting of 14 October 2013. Council subsequently resolved (Min. No.659):

1. THAT Council undertake a feasibility study for an Indoor Sports Centre complex in St Leonards Park.
2. THAT the feasibility study examine the Concept Plans prepared by North Sydney resident and architect, Mr Michael Morgan, and provide a report to Council on the feasibility of the project including various options and detailed financial modeling of the project.
3. THAT the feasibility study be completed and reported to Council by no later than the first Council meeting held in March 2014.
4. THAT Council establish a Project Group to oversee the project and liaise with the key stakeholders including local schools, sporting groups, precincts and the State Government.
5. THAT the Project Group consist of:
   • The Mayor
   • The General Manager;
   • The Chairs of Council’s Sport and Recreation Reference Group and Educational Institutions Working Group; and
   • All interested Councillors.
6. THAT the first meeting of the Project Group be scheduled for a date to be identified by the General Manager.
7. THAT Council notes that the Project Group is not a decision-making body and will report back to Council.
8. THAT legal advice be sought as to the right of the Mayor to attend all meetings involving Councillors and the ability of Council to schedule meetings.

On 4 November 2013 Council resolved (Min. No.680):

THAT a steering committee of staff be established immediately replacing the Project Group.
CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with Council’s Community Engagement Protocol.

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

The sustainability implications of the project have not been considered as part of this project initiation/scoping study report. Sustainability implications are more appropriately considered and reported on as part of the strategic assessment after a concept design has been finalised.

DETAIL

1. Scoping Study - St Leonards Park Indoor Sports Centre Proposal

This report constitutes the first stage in the feasibility study as requested by Council’s resolution. It seeks to provide decision makers with a summary of existing statutory requirements, policies and other Council documents relevant to indoor sports centres; the likely future demand for an additional indoor sports centre in North Sydney; and the management and future development of St Leonards Park. This information is provided with the express purpose of providing a background for decisions regarding any future proposal for an indoor sports centre at St Leonards Park.

Future stages of the feasibility study are outlined in section 2 of this report.

1.1 The concept

The concept involves an underground indoor sports centre with associated parking and rooftop open space on the eastern portion of St Leonards Park immediately adjacent to the Warringah Expressway. It appears that vehicular access would be via Ridge Street with pedestrian access via the park. No details have been provided beyond the preliminary graphics presented by Mr Morgan.
Figure 1 - St Leonards Park indoor sports centre concept

Figure 2 - St Leonards Park indoor sports centre concept
It is understood that the concept stands alone from the existing North Sydney Indoor Sports Centre at 36 Hume Street, Crows Nest. This existing centre lies between the Pacific Highway and Willoughby Road, on top of the Hume Street Car Park. It consists of four fully enclosed playing areas, grandstand seating, meeting and change rooms, office space, and parking for up to 100 cars. Basketball and badminton is mainly played at the Centre but it is adaptable for all forms of indoor sporting and meeting use.

1.2 Description and significance of St Leonards Park

St Leonards Park is one of North Sydney’s oldest and most significant parks. It covers approximately 15 hectares and compares favourably with some of Sydney’s other historic urban parks including Hyde Park. The Park is bounded by Miller, Falcon and Ridge Streets and by the Warringah Expressway, and is a short walk from the North Sydney CBD.

St Leonards Park has a wide range of facilities for both active and passive recreation. The Park is home to North Sydney’s preeminent sportsground; the nationally significant North Sydney Oval which has been used for cricket and football since the late 1800s. Other sports facilities include the Bon Andrews Oval, netball courts and a Bowling Club. The Park also has a children’s playground and extensive open lawn areas.

St Leonards Park has considerable heritage, recreational, social and environmental significance. It is an attractive, high profile green space in North Sydney that is important to the local and wider Sydney community. While locals view the park as their ‘backyard’, facilities including North Sydney Oval and the Music Shell regularly attract visitors from further afield.

Other significant features of St Leonards Park include the Music Shell, the War Memorial and Tunks Fountain and the grandstands and other buildings associated with North Sydney Oval.
Specimen trees and formal avenues of mature trees give the Park its distinctive 19th century landscape character. The south-eastern section of the Park offers panoramic harbour views. Adjoining properties include residential, commercial and institutional land uses.

Council’s management of St Leonards Park seeks to maximise the Park’s potential, ensuring that it is appropriately maintained, that it continues to cater for a range of activities, that conflicts between user groups are minimised, and that any future developments are appropriate and sympathetic to the established landscape character.

1.3 Ownership

St Leonards Park is Crown Land under the care and control and management of the Council.

1.4 Strategy review

This section summarises existing Council documents, policies and statutory requirements relevant to indoor sports centres; the likely future demand for an additional indoor sports centre in North Sydney; and the management and future development of St Leonards Park.

1.4.1 Recreation Needs Study 2005

The North Sydney Recreation Needs Study (RNS) 2005 is an important policy document that assesses existing supply of recreation facilities, establishes likely future demand and sets out key directions and recommendations to ensure North Sydney residents, workers and visitors have appropriate access to recreation spaces and facilities.

Consultation with stakeholders carried out as part of the RNS identified that North Sydney’s network of parks and reserves was generally highly regarded, however there was potential for further improvement. The Study found there were opportunities to optimise and enhance existing open spaces, especially given the comparatively low level of provision of open space and parkland in North Sydney relative to the area’s population.

Key recommendations of the RNS relevant to St Leonards Park include:

- Providing additional netball courts and consideration of converting a portion of the passive open space area for this purpose;
- Reviewing the current location and standard of ancillary facilities including seating, tables, barbecues and bubbler with a view to installing additional or replacement facilities as required (implemented);
- Improving basic maintenance standards for ancillary facilities including seating, tables, playground equipment and public amenity blocks (implemented);
- Continuing to upgrade playgrounds and to provide equipment and facilities for children of all ages, and those with special needs (scheduled).

The RNS noted that the need for an additional indoor sports facility in North Sydney was an issue that emerged as a result of stakeholder consultation undertaken during the preparation of the strategy. The RNS noted that although there was considerable community enthusiasm for an additional indoor sports centre, there was a high possibility that an additional centre was not feasible and could fail, when considering the significant population demand thresholds.
required to support the duplication of these specialised facilities within a relatively small area, the high capital and operational costs and the lack of land for facility construction.

The RNS recommended that as a long range objective Council continue to monitor the demand for an additional indoor sports centre, in response to the high utilisation of the existing centre at Crows Nest. To this end, a new Recreation Needs Study is currently being prepared and is due for completion in late 2014.

There was support for reviewing the activity schedule at the existing centre in order to accommodate a broader range of sports such as indoor cricket, netball and soccer, and concern that the existing indoor sports centre in Crows Nest was being over-utilised for basketball. It is understood this review has already been undertaken and recommendations implemented.

1.4.2 North Sydney Commercial Centre Study 2013

The North Sydney Commercial Centre Study was completed in 2013 as part of an ongoing broader review of the North Sydney Centre. The Study was undertaken by professional consulting firm Urbis on behalf of North Sydney Council. Its surveys of North Sydney workers found a high level of usage of existing sporting and recreational facilities. It also recommends that Council consider mechanisms that may help improve the access to sport and recreation facilities around North Sydney to help promote an active workforce (e.g. lunch time team sport competitions, etc).

1.4.3 Open Space Provision Strategy 2009

The North Sydney Open Space Provision Strategy (OSPS) was prepared to ensure new land provided for open space meets the needs of the current and future North Sydney population, offering useful and usable open spaces in areas of population growth and low open space provision, in an economically viable manner.

The OSPS aims to create an open space network in the North Sydney area that:

- Is equitably distributed;
- Is functionally diverse;
- Is well-connected and integrated;
- Supports an appropriate range of recreational activities to meet current and future needs;
- Protects and enhances the natural and cultural environment;
- Considers economic viability; and
- Is sympathetic to adjacent land uses.

While the Strategy primarily focuses on strategies to provide new land for open space, it also considers other ways to improve the usability of existing areas of open space, in particular, the embellishment of existing open space to increase carrying capacity. By making improvements to open space that increase the usability of open space for a range of users, (e.g. new/upgraded playgrounds, new surfaces for sportsfields, additional seating, new pathways and bush tracks), Council can increase the capacity of a parks and reserves to accommodate additional users.
The indoor sports centre concept would be likely to impact upon the existing passive and informal open space in the south-eastern corner of St Leonards Park. However, it is noted that the concept involves roof-top open space which if appropriately designed may allow for a more diverse range of uses and increased carrying capacity.

1.4.4  *St Leonards Park Plan of Management 2011*

1.4.4.1  **Management Context**

The St Leonards Park Plan of Management (POM) is an important Council document that guides the future use, development, management and maintenance of this important urban park. It provides both short and long term policy, and is flexible enough to respond to the changing needs of stakeholders and to incorporate new requirements as they arise.

St Leonards Park is a Crown reserve under the care, control and management of North Sydney Council. As such, the St Leonards Park POM takes into account the intentions of the Crown Lands Act 1989 and the principles of Crown Land Management. It is also consistent with the Local Government Act 1993. Under the Local Government Act 1993 Plans of Management are only required for areas of Council-owned community land, however in the interest of holistic management, North Sydney’s set of Plans of Management cover all parks and reserves that Council manages and maintains, regardless of ownership. Council adopted the most recent St Leonards Park POM in 2011.

The St Leonards Park POM examines the broad range of issues associated with St Leonards Park in a comprehensive and holistic manner. It draws on information contained in other significant planning documents and previous in-house studies (including the Local Government Act 1993, the Crown Lands Act 1989, North Sydney Council’s 2020 Vision and Council’s Delivery Plan, LEP 2001 (superseded), the Recreation Needs Study 2005 and the Open Space Provision Strategy 2009), incorporating them into a useful document that functions as one of Council’s management tools.

The St Leonards Park POM examines the present-day condition and characteristics of the Park. It identifies clear objectives and establishes directions for planning, resource management and maintenance. It clarifies and establishes management policy and direction, both to Council staff and the general public. The POM provides a basis for assigning priorities in works programming and budgeting. All Council’s Plans of Management are subject to a major review after approximately 5 years, allowing policy and planning issues to be revisited and updated, and a new works program to be developed.

It should be noted that the North Sydney Bowling Club grounds are currently operated by the North Sydney Leagues Club and the site is directly leased from the Crown.

1.4.4.2  **Use and Management of Crown Land**

St Leonards Park is located on Crown Land, and the St Leonards Park POM takes into account the following principles of Crown Land management as set out in the Crown Lands Act 1989 (Section 11):
(a) that environmental protection principles be observed in relation to the management and administration of Crown land;
(b) that the natural resources of Crown land (including water, soil, flora, fauna and scenic quality) be conserved wherever possible;
(c) that public use and enjoyment of appropriate Crown land be encouraged;
(d) that, where appropriate, multiple use of Crown land be encouraged;
(e) that, where appropriate, Crown land should be used and managed in such a way that both the land and its resources are sustained in perpetuity; and
(f) that Crown land be occupied, used, sold, leased, licensed or otherwise dealt with in the best interest of the State consistent with the above principles.

The St Leonards Park POM sets out core values which describe the most significant and important qualities of St Leonards Park. These values must be considered when future management objectives, strategies and actions are formulated, to ensure their protection. These core values relate to the cultural heritage and aesthetics of the Park, its social and recreational significance, as well as its environmental importance (see Appendix 2). The Plan also sets out a series of Management Objectives for St Leonards Park, based on legislative goals, community needs and expectations, and the Park’s core values and assets (see Appendix 3).

1.4.4.3 Forward Planning in the Park

The St Leonards Park POM acknowledges St Leonards Park’s local, metropolitan and regional significance and identified the need to prepare a landscape Master Plan to guide the upgrading of this large and historically significant park in order to enhance both its functionality and its visual amenity. Preparation of a Master Plan will provide direction for future development of St Leonards Park and establish a broad vision for how the Park will look and function in the future. It will involve a high level of community and other stakeholder involvement.

As a first step towards upgrading St Leonards Park, a Conservation Management Plan for the Park was prepared in 2013. This document provides baseline information that will inform the Master Plan. The Master Planning process itself will incorporate an extensive program of community and stakeholder consultation. The final Master Plan will include a comprehensive planting plan and an interpretative component to give visitors an insight into the natural and cultural (Aboriginal and European) heritage of the Park. Preparation of the Master Plan for St Leonards Park has been scheduled for the 2014/15 financial year; however the project is currently unfunded.

1.4.5 St Leonards Park Conservation Management Plan 2013

St Leonards Park has a rich heritage and a unique combination of physical and cultural characteristics. The entire Park is listed as a local heritage item under the North Sydney Local Environmental Plan (see below), and many of its monuments and features including the War Memorial, Tunks Fountain, the Music Shell, the Entry Gates and North Sydney Oval with its associated grandstands, scoreboard and turnstile booths are individually listed. Other Park monuments valuable to the cultural identity and history of North Sydney include the World War I artillery gun, the Fig Tree Avenues, various Depression Relief Works and the Bon Andrews Oval. In 1994 the National Trust of Australia included the whole of St Leonards
Park in its register, describing the area as "a rare example of an urban 19th century park in the English 'gardenesque' landscape tradition of the period."

The St Leonards Park Conservation Management Plan (CMP) 2013 provides a framework for the ongoing care and management of the heritage of the Park; it will be used to guide decisions about its conservation, use and development into the future. The CMP will inform preparation of the upcoming St Leonards Park Master Plan.

The CMP sets out Council’s primary objectives for St Leonards Park:

- To recognise, protect and conserve the cultural and natural heritage of the Park;
- To provide a range of both formal and informal recreational activities commensurate with the park’s capacity as a significant urban park and major open space resource, and which meet identified needs;
- To encourage the use of the Park by both the local and wider community;
- To promote the Park as a venue for large-scale community events and functions, sporting fixtures and commemorative events;
- To provide a safe and secure circulation system through and within St Leonards Park, and to provide good connections to surrounding areas.

The CMP recognises that St Leonards Park has aesthetic significance within New South Wales as a designed landscape that demonstrates early town planning and landscape principles and features picturesque views. The park has features that are typical of Victorian era parks, and remains largely intact, with its original design appreciable. It is a landmark in the local context.

For St Leonards Park, the key obligations arising from its significance include maintaining the various historically important sporting uses of the site as well as conserving and interpreting the key characteristics of the site and a landscape space. Ensuring the conservation of the site’s landscaped spaces within the context of its very high rates of recreation is the key management issue facing the Park.

The CMP notes that all future conservation and development of St Leonards Park should be carried out in accordance with the principles of the Burra Charter, and sets out key conservation principles for the Park:

- Recognition of the potential state heritage significance of the Park. To indicate the significance of the place and formalise its heritage protection under the provisions of the NSW Heritage Act 1977;
- Conservation management of the landscape character, the buildings and contributory elements of Exceptional, High and Moderate significance throughout the Park, including those within the North Sydney Oval complex and the Bowling Club;
- Development of a consistent approach to maintenance of heritage significance and new elements within the Park such as park benches, lighting, picnic tables, signage and paths;
- Interpretation of the heritage significance of the Park, and the various elements that contribute to that significance. The development and implementation of an interpretation strategy will further develop public appreciation of the site;
Integration of heritage management into the existing park management processes. The CMP should be the basis of future planning, guiding works and assisting in identifying potential heritage impacts from proposed works or activities.

1.4.6 North Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2013

1.4.6.1 Zoning and permissibility

St Leonards Park is zoned RE1 Public Recreation under LEP2013.

The objectives of the RE1 zone are:

- To enable land to be used for public open space or recreational purposes;
- To provide a range of recreational settings and activities and compatible uses;
- To protect and enhance the natural environment for recreational purposes; and
- To ensure sufficient public recreation areas are available for the benefit and use of residents of, and visitors to, North Sydney.

The following uses are listed as permissible within the RE1 zone:

Building identification signs; Business identification signs; Community facilities; Environmental facilities; Information and education facilities; Kiosks; Recreation areas; Recreation facilities (outdoor); Roads; Water recreation structures.

An indoor sports centre could reasonably be defined under LEP2013 as a recreation facility (indoor), that is:
... a building or place used predominantly for indoor recreation, whether or not operated for the purposes of gain, including a squash court, indoor swimming pool, gymnasium, table tennis centre, health studio, bowling alley, ice rink or any other building or place of a like character used for indoor recreation, but does not include an entertainment facility, a recreation facility (major) or a registered club.

As this use is not included in the list of permissible uses within the RE1 zone, an indoor sports centre is currently a prohibited use within St Leonards Park under LEP2013. If Council decides to pursue the indoor sports centre proposal, an amendment to LEP2013 to make the use permissible would be required. Legislated administrative and consultation requirements would apply.

1.4.6.2 Heritage

St Leonards Park is listed in Schedule 5 of LEP2013 as a local heritage item and is identified on the heritage map.

Section 5.10 Heritage Conservation of LEP2013 includes the following objectives:

- to conserve the environmental heritage of North Sydney; and
- to conserve the heritage significance of heritage items and heritage conservation areas, including associated fabric, settings and views.

Section 5.10 generally requires development consent to be obtained for any works to a heritage item and requires the consent authority to consider the effect of the proposed development on the heritage significance of the item concerned. It also states that a consent
authority may, before granting consent, require a heritage management document to be prepared that assesses the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development would affect the heritage significance of the heritage item concerned.

This also applies to development of land within the vicinity of a heritage item or a heritage conservation area. Given the land identified as a potential location for an indoor sports centre is in the vicinity of the heritage listed North Sydney Oval as well as the Walker/Ridge Street Conservation Area, the extent to which the carrying out of the proposed development would affect these items would also need to be given consideration.

1.4.7 North Sydney Development Control Plan 2013

1.4.7.1 North Sydney Planning Area Character Statement

St Leonards Park is located within the North Sydney Planning Area as defined within DCP2013. The Planning Area includes the North Sydney business district and stretches north to Falcon Street.

![Figure 8 - North Sydney (suburb) Planning Area](image-url)
Provisions within the North Sydney Planning Area Character Statement that are potentially relevant to the proposed indoor sports centre include the following:

**New development ... should result in:**
- a diverse range of living, employment, recreation and social opportunities being provided that attract both local and regional populations which contribute to the vibrancy of the Centre...

**Function:**
- There is a mix of uses and activities to meet the demands of the residents, workforce and visitors;
- Community facilities meet the needs of the Centre’s working and resident population, visitors, and residents of nearby neighbourhoods, in terms of wellbeing, culture and recreation, and add to the diversity and activity of the Centre;
- There are active uses outside of standard business hours;
- Parks and public spaces are well used and provide for a range of social and recreational activities...

**Environmental Criteria:**
- Mechanical noise and other commercial noise is controlled, to protect residential amenity;
- There is an opportunity to enjoy the views from and within the area towards the Sydney CBD, Sydney Harbour, heritage items and surrounding areas;
- additional public open space is provided for increased residential population...

**Built Form:**
- The significance of heritage items is retained, and promotes the rich development history and provides interest in the physical fabric of the area...

**Quality Urban Environment:**
- Traffic is managed so that pedestrians can move within the area freely and safely, and amenity is maintained;
- Parking is managed in a way that maintains pedestrian safety and the quality of the public realm and minimises traffic generation.

1.4.7.2 **Civic Neighbourhood Character Statement**

The Civic Neighbourhood lies within the North Sydney Planning Area and has its own character statement. The Civic Neighbourhood includes St Leonards Park, Stanton Library and North Sydney Boys High School.
Provisions within the Civic Neighbourhood Character Statement that are potentially relevant to the proposed indoor sports centre include the following:

**Significant Elements**

**Land use:**
- Predominantly community based facilities such as educational establishments, places of public worship and public administration buildings;
- Passive and active recreational spaces...

**Topography:**
- Generally flat forming the top of the ridgeline, with a fall from the north to the south along Miller Street south of McLaren Street...

**Views:**
- The following views and vistas are to be preserved and where possible enhanced:
  - To Kirribilli and Sydney Harbour from St Leonards Park...

**Identity/icons:**
- St Leonards Park and North Sydney Oval...

**Desired Future Character**

**Diversity of activities, facilities, opportunities and services:**
- A variety of specialty uses including education, public services, community facilities and recreational parks;
- Open space used by local residents, students and the wider regional population for social and recreational purposes...

**Accessibility and permeability:**
• Pedestrian connections through Civic Park and St Leonards Park.

The development of any concept plans as well as the assessment of any development application for an indoor sports centre in St Leonards Park would need to consider these DCP provisions.

If the proposal were to proceed, the desired future character statements should be amended to reflect indoor sporting facilities as a desired outcome.

1.4.7.3 Car parking and transport

Part B Section 10 of DCP2013 contains parking rates according to land use. Recreational facilities require one space to be provided per 100m² of GFA.

1.5 Potential impacts

The concept as presented is not of sufficient detail to accurately determine the recreational and associated facilities of an indoor sports centre. However, based on an understanding of the operating requirements of the existing Indoor Sports Centre in Crows Nest it is likely that such a facility would require:

- A minimum site area of approximately 2400m² (The concept appears to have a development site area of approximately 6000m²);
- Fully enclosed playing areas (The existing centre has four playing areas. The concept appears to show seven playing areas);
- Grandstand seating;
- Toilets and change rooms;
- Meeting and office space;
- Disabled access; and
- Parking (the existing Hume Street centre has capacity for up to 100 cars as well as access to other nearby facilities).

The recreational and associated facilities required to meet any existing or projected demand are best considered after the extent and nature of the demand has been established. This should occur after the completion of the new RNS in late 2014.

Given the indoor sports centre concept is in its infancy with recreational and associated facility requirements yet to be established, it is not possible to provide detailed analysis of expected impacts. However, a preliminary analysis of likely impacts is possible and is provided below.

1.5.1 Open space

The concept involves an underground indoor sports centre with roof-top open space. It is not clear at this stage whether the concept would result in a reduction in the overall quantum of open space. However it is highly likely that the nature of the existing open space would change as a result of any redevelopment from informal/passive to more formal/active uses. It is noted, however, that the design of the roof-top open space may allow for a mixture of formal and informal uses.
1.5.2 Views

It is not clear at this stage whether the concept would negatively impact upon existing views of Kirribilli and Sydney Harbour. However, it is highly likely that the concept will alter the setting from which such views can be enjoyed. It is unclear at this stage whether the roof-top open space would be an attractive and accessible place from which the public could enjoy the available views.

1.5.3 Traffic

Based on the parking requirements of North Sydney DCP2013 it is likely that the concept would require approximately 60 parking spaces. It is likely that the concept would result in increased traffic on local roads, particularly Ridge Street. Such impacts will require careful consideration and management.

1.5.4 Noise

It might be assumed that the acoustic impacts of sports being played within an indoor sports centre can be largely contained within the building’s structure. However, the likely increase in pedestrian and vehicular traffic, as well as plant facilities and any associated uses, will have an impact on the noise levels in the local area.

The existing acoustic environment in the south-eastern portion of St Leonards Park is dominated by the noise of traffic on the Warringah Expressway. This is another issue that will require careful consideration.

1.6 Legal considerations

St Leonards Park is Crown Land under the care and control and management of the Council. Council manages the area as reserve trust manager over the land in accordance with the Crown Lands Act 1989.

If proposed works require development consent, then land owners’ consent is required. For this purpose a copy of the application would need to be sent and owners’ consent obtained from the Crown Lands Department.

Council should consult with Crown Lands before proceeding any further with this proposal.

1.7 Scoping study conclusion

This scoping study has utilised available information, including information contained in relevant North Sydney Council strategic documents, to provide decision makers with a background for considerations regarding any future proposal for an indoor sports centre at St Leonards Park.

The preliminary nature of the concept plans provided as well as the need for the Recreation Needs Study to be updated means that the available information is insufficient to provide clear direction regarding consistency with Council’s strategic policy documents. It is clear, however, that an indoor sports centre is currently a prohibited use on the land in question.
The scoping study has found that, should Council pursue the St Leonards Park indoor sports centre concept, a number of guiding principles should be respected to ensure consistency with Council’s adopted policy documents. These recommended principles are outlined in section 2.2 below.

2. Way forward

2.1 Feasibility study process

At its meeting on 24 February 2014 MANEX established the steering committee as required by Council’s resolutions and considered a proposal to undertake the feasibility study in stages. It is recommended that the feasibility study be undertaken as follows:

- **Stage 1 - Scoping study (this report)**
  - An analysis of the existing policy background, including:
    - the St Leonards Park plan of management;
    - the existing recreational needs study regarding the existing and future demand for an indoor sports centre;
    - current zoning under LEP2013;
  - A review of any necessary legal considerations including any reserve trust agreement between the Council and the Crown;
  - Establishment of guiding principles regarding development of the park;

- **Stage 2 - Recreation needs study (late 2014)**
  - Analysis of demand for an additional indoor sports centre in North Sydney;

It is intended that Stage 2 of the feasibility study process will constitute a report to Council on the findings of the Recreation Needs Study, which is due for completion in late 2014, specifically regarding the demand for an additional indoor sports centre. Only if demand for additional indoor sporting facilities is established should the project progress to subsequent stages. If the need is demonstrated then the following is considered an appropriate process to progress the matter further:

- **Stage 3 - Site selection (early 2015)**
  - Analysis of candidate sites and reporting to Council;

- **Stage 4 - Concept design (2015)**
  - Discussions with key stakeholders and land owner/s regarding the broad proposal;
  - Development of concept designs of the recreational and associated facilities required to meet any existing or projected demand (including parking);

- **Stage 5 - Strategic assessment and feasibility (2015)**
  - An assessment of likely impacts associated with an indoor sports centre;
  - Assessment of proposal against guiding principles (if St Leonards Park);
  - An assessment of the financial implications for Council of the proposal;

- **Stage 6 - Decision (2015)**
  - Public exhibition of concept plans;
  - Report to Council.
This process seeks to allow other sites to be considered as a location for a new indoor sports centre. This is considered appropriate given that, to date, no such identification and analysis of candidate sites has been undertaken.

The staging of the feasibility study will allow for the gathering of appropriate information, the selection of an appropriate site and the dedication of funds for detailed consultant input, to be undertaken in a sequential and rational manner. It will allow for Council to establish a strategic vision for an additional indoor sports centre in North Sydney and will form the basis for any future development application and development process.

As outlined above, the next stage of the feasibility study process will constitute a report to Council on the findings of the Recreation Needs Study specifically regarding the demand for an additional indoor sports centre. Should sufficient demand be found to exist, the report will recommend a process for the identification and analysis of candidate sites potentially capable of accommodating an indoor sports centre. Funding decisions regarding detailed design and feasibility work can appropriately be made at this later stage.

2.2 St Leonards Park - Guiding principles

Should the site selection process result in St Leonards Park or an alternative site being selected as the preferred location for an additional indoor sports centre, the strategy reviews undertaken as part of the above scoping study indicates that there are principles within Council’s adopted strategic documents that should be respected. In the case of St Leonards Park these principles include:

- The extent of existing open space should be maintained (Open Space Provision Strategy 2009);
- The usability of existing areas of open space should be improved to allow for a range of uses and an increase in carrying capacity (Recreational Needs Study 2005);
- Any development should protect and/or contribute to, and not undermine, the heritage qualities of the park (Conservation Management Plan 2013);
- Views to Kirribilli and Sydney Harbour from St Leonards Park should be preserved and where possible enhanced (Development Control Plan 2013);
- Council will engage the community on any future developments relating to the establishment of an additional indoor sporting facility per Council's Community Engagement Policy and Protocol (Community Engagement Protocol).

These guiding principles, along with the adopted Plan of Management for St Leonards Park, should be primary considerations in any subsequent design stages. Should any of these principles prove unachievable, it is recommended that St Leonards Park indoor sports centre proposal not proceed.

These guiding principles apply equally should an alternate site be identified as a preferred location for additional indoor sporting facilities.

3. Conclusion
The possible use of the south-eastern corner of St Leonards Park has been foreshadowed by an unsolicited concept for an indoor sports centre. While in isolation the proposal can be seen to have some merit, a broader consideration is required before commitment is made to a particular course.

The next step in those considerations is the identification of need for additional indoor sporting facilities in North Sydney. If demand exists this should be followed by the identification of an appropriate site. It would then be appropriate to progress to more detailed considerations including financial and environmental acceptability.

The views of the community should be sought, considered and respected at every stage.

The recommendations of this scoping report are presented for Council’s consideration.
concept design proposal for

St Leonards Park

September 2013
regional context
user groups: non-government schools

- Marist College North Shore
- Marist Primary School
- Monte Saint Angelo Boys College
- Wenona School
- Australian Catholic University
- Shore Sydney Church of England Grammar School
- St Aloysius College
- Loreto Kirribilli
st leonards park
aerial view
planning – ridge street level RL 82.0
planning – courts level RL 78.0
planning – carpark level RL 75.0
bradfield highway view
fly through
Appendix 2 – Core Values of St Leonards Park

(Extract from Council’s St Leonards Park Plan of Management 2011)

The following core values describe the most significant and important qualities of St Leonards Park. These values must be considered when future management objectives, strategies and actions are formulated, to ensure their protection.

Cultural Heritage and Aesthetics
St Leonards Park contains numerous items of European heritage significance which are valuable to the cultural identity and history of North Sydney including the Music Shell, the North Sydney War Memorial, the World War I Artillery Gun, the Tunks Memorial Fountain, the Fig Trees Avenues, various Depression Relief Works, North Sydney Oval and its stands and grounds, the Bon Andrews Oval and the Cunningham Pavilion.

The Park is one of the largest in North Sydney’s open space network. It is highly valued by the community for the open space it offers and for its visual amenity and green character, which contrasts with the surrounding built-up urban environment.

Environmental
Due to its size and its location, adjoining high density urban residential land use and major transport corridors, St Leonards Park plays an important environmental role. This large pocket of urban forest provides major benefits to the community including such things as reduction of atmospheric contaminants and atmospheric purification, carbon storage and sequestration, reduction of urban heat island effects and reduction in storm water run-off.

The North Sydney Stormwater Reuse project has provided various areas of St Leonards Park including North Sydney Oval, Bon Andrews (No.2) Oval, open grassed areas and North Sydney Bowling Club with reused stormwater suitable for irrigation, and has eliminated the need to have a separate water storage facility and extraction system in the Park.

Social/Recreational
St Leonards Park is an essential recreational resource for the local and wider community. It caters for picnickers, dog walkers and joggers as well as for people playing organised sport or just relaxing and socialising.

St Leonards Park has regional significance due to its unique combination of scenic, recreational and heritage features, due to the presence of North Sydney Oval and due to its ability to accommodate large scale public events.

Major sporting fixtures and other cultural events are held in the Park. These attract people from all over Sydney who come to spectate or to participate in park life.

The sportsfields and courts in St Leonards Park provide a wealth of active sporting, recreational and cultural experiences for North Sydney residents and people living in surrounding areas. They are the home venues for many long established sporting clubs and associations. People come to the fields for their weekly gathering and sporting competitions, coaching, school carnivals and occasionally other community activities and events.
The Park functions as an informal meeting place and facilitates community interaction. As population numbers grow and density increases, the importance of St Leonards Park as a venue for social events and occasions also increases.

**Health**

Providing a number of sporting venues that cater to a variety of organised sporting activities (as well as to other forms of recreation) plays an important role in increasing participation and in increasing the range of community health benefits.

Increasing levels of physical activity has been shown to help with both physical and mental health problems. Regular participation in physical activity allows individuals to improve their overall health and functioning including balance and co-ordination, mental alertness and stress management.
Appendix 3 - Management Objectives for St Leonards Park

(Extract from Council’s St Leonards Park Plan of Management 2011)

Management Objectives

Based on legislative goals, community needs and expectations, and the values and assets of St Leonards Park, the following broad management objectives have been identified:

- To manage St Leonards Park in accordance with the objectives of the North Sydney Council 2020 Vision and the North Sydney Council Delivery Program;
- To manage St Leonards Park taking into consideration the Crown Lands Act 1989, the principles of Crown Land Management and the Local Government Act 1993;
- To provide a range of recreational activities commensurate with the Park’s capacity as a significant urban park and a major open space resource;
- To provide and maintain high quality recreation facilities that meet the needs of the local users and the wider community, based on identified needs and within budget;
- To recognise, conserve, enhance and interpret features of historical and heritage significance in the Park;
- To protect and enhance the recreational, heritage, scientific and natural qualities and values of the Park;
- To upgrade the existing recreational environment and the aesthetics of St Leonards Park where required;
- To ensure the Park (including the sportsgrounds) is culturally, physically and economically accessible to the general community;
- To cater for users with mobility impairments where practical within the physical constraints of the Park;
- To provide for public safety;
- To allow use of the Park by groups, and for appropriate special events;
- To minimise conflict between appropriate user groups;
- To manage large-scale events in the Park using best-practice techniques to minimise potential negative impacts on surrounding residents and other park users;
- To ensure that management of the Park is sustainable in environmental, social and economic terms, and that any new development considers environmentally sustainable principles;
- To take a consistent approach to management of the Park and to maintain it to a standard commensurate with its high public profile;
- To encourage community involvement in the management and maintenance of the Park;
• To provide and maintain high quality specialist facilities for organised sport that meet the needs of local users and the wider community, including visitors to North Sydney, based on identified needs and within budget;

• To take a regional approach to the management of North Sydney’s organised sporting facilities;

• To upgrade the existing sportsfields and courts and their associated facilities as required in accordance with identified needs;

• To manage the Bon Andrews Oval Complex and the netball courts as per Council’s generic Sportsgrounds Plan of Management;

• To manage the North Sydney Oval Complex in accordance with Council’s North Sydney Oval Plan of Management;

• To manage the playground as per Council’s generic Playgrounds Plans of Management;

• To manage the Music Shell in accordance with Council’s Community Centres Policy and the Planet X Plan of Management;

• To ensure this Plan of Management is flexible and able to evolve with changing community needs and attitudes.

These objectives have been used to guide policy development and formulation of the works program in the St Leonards Park POM.
Appendix 4 – St Leonards Park aerial photography