



COORPAROO AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL CLUB

GIFFIN PARK SPORTS PRECINCT DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2016¹

¹ The basis of this document was produced by AFLQ in “Strategic Directions for Giffin Park, Coorparoo”, December 2013. Priorities, background, projects and costings were revised in 2016.

Introduction

The Giffin Park Sports Precinct at Coorparoo is one of the premier AFL facilities in Queensland. It is presently the principal talent development and administration facility for AFL operations in Brisbane South East, and is heavily used for both training and matchplay. Giffin Park is located in Brisbane's inner South East and comprises two AFL playing ovals that are supported by lighting and change room facilities.

Precinct Usage

Giffin Park is the most utilized AFL facility in Australia and is the busiest AFL precinct in Queensland, with both ovals presently being used year round for training and match activities.

The Brisbane Lions currently use the Precinct as a summer training base for their AFL and NEAFL squads. They share Giffin Park with several community user groups. Some of the users include:

- The Hyundai Brisbane Lions Academy (youth squads aged 12-18 years)
- Coorparoo Junior Australian Football Club
- Coorparoo Senior Australian Football Club
- AFL Queensland Brisbane South-East Talent Academy
- AFL Queensland Umpires Academy
- AFL Queensland Brisbane South Administration Staff (AFLQ)
- AFL 9's Competition
- Amateur AFL community competition

In addition to regular AFL club and programme users of the facility (see Table 1), the ovals are used by students from Coorparoo Secondary College and a large number of other schools from across Brisbane for regional tournaments and finals.

Table 1- Regular AFL users of Giffin Park, Coorparoo.

AFL Club or Programme	Participants
Brisbane Lions AFL & NEAFL teams	75
Brisbane Lions Talent Academy	90
AFL Queensland Brisbane South Talent Academy	300
AFL Queensland Umpires Academy	70
Coorparoo Senior AFC	130
Coorparoo Junior AFC (includes juniors and women)	460
Coorparoo Auskick	130
Coorparoo AFL 9s Centre	200
TOTAL	1455

The AFL recommends one full-size community AFL oval with adequate night lighting for every **240** footballers. This recommendation is made with turf maintenance and safety considerations in mind to ensure that the playing surface can be reasonably maintained to standards compliant with insurance requirements. More than 240 participants may be accommodated at community ovals (at significant additional turf maintenance expense), but this often presents challenges in scheduling turf remediation works and creates additional Precinct maintenance pressures. This is certainly the situation Coorparoo AFC finds itself in right now.

Accommodating growth in participant numbers presents a critical challenge at Giffin Park. In the past 6 years, the Coorparoo Juniors membership alone has grown from 269 to 430 participants - an increase of 60% from an already high base. This increase has been mirrored across Brisbane South and is creating challenges for AFL Queensland. Available green-space is becoming difficult to secure, and existing AFL infrastructure cannot accommodate rapidly growing participant cohorts.

Developing a Modern Community Sports Facility - Safe, Suitable and Sustainable

The Coorparoo AFC and the AFL recognize the importance of this venue for the greater community. Inner city green space is limited and populations continue to rapidly grow. Partnering with all levels of government and the community to provide multi-use space to promote active inner city lifestyles is a key objective of the Coorparoo AFC. The Park is already bounded by an activity path and is a prime location to provide such a service. Due to the large number of user groups, any improvements made at the Club benefit a wide range of patrons.

Main Oval

The main oval and associated change-rooms at Giffin Park are leased until 2017 by the Brisbane Lions from the Brisbane City Council. The main oval change-rooms and structure underwent a necessary \$650,000 refurbishment in 2012 to reinforce the building foundations and provide two change rooms suitable for professional team use. Brisbane City Council and the AFL jointly funded this upgrade.

Since then, building use has increased. Eight AFL Queensland staff work out of offices within the building and a community function room and bar area are used by the Senior and Women's Teams, and by other groups for functions and seminars. The building does not have proper catering facilities to complement the bar for functions and senior game days. Amenities that service the offices and function room are substandard and are in continual need of repair. A new, small canteen facility and amenities should be incorporated in a new design.

There is minimal level space outside the function room suitable for watching games on the main oval. A very good seating and outdoor function area could be easily created by constructing a retaining wall along the oval side of the function room and leveling it with fill from the ½ main oval drainage project undertaken by

the Lions many years ago. The BCC has asked the Lions to remove these tailings as soon as possible. Using this material as on site fill eliminates haulage costs and reduces the cost of this project.

Only half of the main oval has drainage fitted. The other half shares overland drainage pathways with the second oval and Precinct. As a result, it is not uncommon to have the main oval taken out of use for 2-3 days after a wet day senior or professional game. This impacts significantly on the training and match schedules of all other participants and leagues. Park drainage is not very effective. The main trunk drainage capacity is there, but drainage options to get water to the trunk, or preferably to storage, need to be examined.

Neither the main or second ovals have a working time clock so spectators do not have any idea of time elapsed in game. Scores are displayed with coreflute panels on a plywood backing. An electronic scoreboard would generate investment recovering income through advertisements and provide spectators with official time, score and messaging information.

There is no IT on site. Modern facilities that run senior matches provide telephone, internet and live video both in the officials and coaches boxes. There is no public address system to service either oval or the grounds in general.

At a minimum, a broadband connection in the timekeepers box adjacent to the main oval should be provided. WiFi routers can be installed to provide remote internet access around the park, and possibly a Council hotspot. The same infrastructure could be used to wirelessly provide a park PA system, sectioned to provide independent oval or park wide announcements.

The coaches and interchange boxes are well undersized and are not fitted with any facilities. The second oval boxes are poorly located on the opposite side of the oval from the Park facilities and change room. As a result, teams generally take half time breaks on the open field without privacy or shelter.

For the main oval, coaches boxes need to be lengthened with the upper decks enclosed and fitted with IT to meet modern standards.

Second Oval

A significant volume of Precinct activity in recent years has been centered on the second oval, and it is this area for which support is desperately needed.

The second oval is sited on Coorparoo Secondary College land and is leased by the Coorparoo Junior AFC under a User Agreement. The oval is used by the Coorparoo Juniors, Coorparoo Seniors, AFLQ Talent Academy, AFLQ Umpires, AFL 9's, Coorparoo Secondary College, other state and private schools, and for special sports events like AFLQ Junior Grand Finals.

The oval is constructed on reclaimed land and it has deeply subsided in many areas, making the playing surface very uneven and prone to spot flooding. The surface needs to be filled, leveled and modern irrigation and drainage installed.

This will make the playing surface safe for participants and will allow it to become serviceable more quickly following rainfalls.

The second oval is meant to be supported by adjacent toilets and canteen facilities. This centrally located structure was built in the 1980's and is in need of redesign to make it suitable. Some users have refused to use the facility due to its poor condition and have moved elsewhere. There is only one change room for the oval where there should be at least two. The existing showers leak in to the adjoining canteen storage space due to an unsealed substrate in the shower area and other amenities are not in good repair. Most critically, the space does not adequately cater for female participants, nor are there any facilities that provide disabled access in the Precinct. Both of these factors seriously inhibit participation in sport.

The coaches and interchange boxes are poorly located on the far side of the second oval. These boxes should be widened and relocated to the closer side of the oval nearer to the change rooms and amenities. This would also allow for a wider oval.

There isn't a time display or public address system for the oval. No oval seating is provided save two small shelter areas that rapidly overflow during game days.

A smaller electronic time clock could be incorporated within the manual scoreboard, and a wireless PA system installed that could be run as a separate zone of the main park PA system for oval specific and general announcements.

Two small 4 meter multi-tier stadium seating assemblies could be located at the pockets on the west end of the second oval so as not to interfere with school space while being centrally located.

The Park

The Precinct currently does not cater for disabled persons' requirements. It also does not have female change rooms, a fact that has affected uptake and growth in female football. Both of these deficiencies are difficult to comprehend in the context of modern day sport. New change rooms to serve the ovals must incorporate female amenities and all new structures should incorporate disabled access.

The Park is ideally located in inner city Brisbane to provide a community-oriented sporting facility. These constituencies are growing at an alarming rate. The already over-utilized facilities at Giffin Park will soon not be able to cope with this increased pressure. Additional oval space and associated infrastructure needs to be provided. To be truly community oriented, the new oval space could also cater for cricket and soccer, greatly multiplying the usefulness of the Precinct. The Coorparoo Secondary College has relatively unused green space that could be developed in to a multi-use area to benefit the school, the CACF and the greater community.

There is significant frontage on Stanley Street that is currently overgrown and underutilized for both Precinct access and commercial potential. The old billboard

that used to proudly display Jonathon Brown has deteriorated in to an uninviting and unflattering statement on the Park. This long frontage should provide the primary Giffin Park vision. Direct southbound access from Stanley Street could be easily provided and an electronic billboard used to promote the park, and paying sponsors. This could contribute significantly to the financial sustainability of the park.

Sustainability

Both ovals are irrigated year round using Council water. Approximately 640,000 litres of water is used per week to maintain their condition and the cost is prohibitive. It makes little sense to pour expensive Council water on the fields when we are located right next to a creek and potential underground aquifers. The Council has constructed the Norman Park Sports Precinct Stormwater Harvesting Project, but users have already noted that the reservoir has insufficient capacity and water quality is poor. A simple solution would be to tap in to natural and run off sources, collect water in tanks, and pump it through the existing irrigation system for oval use. A 150kL tank would supply one oval watering and oval irrigation could be cycled to provide adequate coverage.

The Precinct uses enough electricity to be considered a commercial user. Oval lights themselves consume more than 120kWh. There are two flat-topped, fully exposed roofs that would easily accommodate solar power generation. Current solar designs also incorporate power storage capability to further reduce grid reliance. Analysis indicates that we could more than halve our power bill if solar were incorporated and we were removed from off-peak tariffs because of the reduced grid consumption.

Refuse associated with football operations consists of approximately 80% recyclable material. Nothing is currently recycled on site and an average of 2400 litres of material is taken to curb each week. During Grand Finals, this may reach 3500 litres per day. Not recycling this much material is irresponsible and is a key area to address. Four or five recycling stations with can compactors placed at key locations around the park would help promote a recycle mindset and reduce bin usage. A large cardboard skip would also reduce wheelie bin demand and remove bulky canteen recycling from the main bins.

Infrastructure Projects at Giffin Park

AFL Queensland and Giffin Park Stakeholders have identified infrastructure projects that will help address the identified deficiencies of the park and enable them to better cater for the needs of its users (See Table 2, and map on p9).

**Table 2 - Infrastructure Requirements at Giffin Park
Unprioritized Capital Projects**

- 1 Oval irrigation system using recycled and ground water
- 2 Refuse recycling stations and processes
- 3 Disabled amenities, access and suitable main oval seating
- 4 Construction of school oval change-rooms that cater for all users
- 5 Additional $\frac{3}{4}$ Junior multipurpose oval and lighting constructed on school property
- 6 Solar power capture with future storage possibility
- 7 New sprinklers, drainage works and leveling of second oval
- 8 Amenities improvements for function room/ bar and main oval spectators

- 9 Canteen facility associated with function room area
- 10 Leveling area outside function room to make it useable for spectators and functions
- 11 Public address system for both ovals and general area
- 12 Main, second oval and Park drainage installation and improvement with second oval irrigation
- 12 Electronic scoreboard and timing for main oval and timing for second oval
- 13 Improve coach and interchange boxes on main oval, relocate boxes on second oval
- 15 Second oval spectator seating
- 16 Development of Stanley St frontage including electronic media
- 17 Improvement of parking areas off Stanley St

The focus of these projects is to help the constituent clubs provide a safe, suitable and sustainable facility for the community. They will cater for anticipated growth in AFL participation in the short to medium term, reduce the environmental footprint significantly and provide infrastructure and commercial opportunities to help sustain the precinct in the future.

All new designs will consider disabled access, female player amenities and environmental footprint. There is also provision for commercial opportunities in the facility plan to provide longevity. The projects outlined are not specifically prioritized and will be completed based on available funding.

Moving Forward

The Coorparoo Junior and Senior AFCs are non-profit organizations run by volunteers to promote the sport of Australian Football and the health of the community through participation in sport. They strive to be a family oriented club focused on community.

The facilities at which we do this are inadequate. They are not safe, they do not meet the needs of the current cohort and are not operating sustainably. There is much to be done to make this a suitable inner city sports precinct and the work has already begun. New oval lights, transformer box sealing, junior canteen plumbing and wiring, and a plans for a main oval fence will allow play under much safer conditions. Several critical projects have been identified that will continue to move the Precinct in the right direction.

With the term of the BCC lease to the Brisbane Lions ending in 2017, uncertainty exists concerning subsequent Precinct maintenance and support cost. By building sustaining infrastructure now, any remaining stakeholders will not be disadvantaged as severely and the viability of the Precinct will be better assured.

To achieve these goals, the Club initially requires external funding from all levels of government and the private sector. Private sector funding has traditionally allowed the Club to run its day-to-day operations and look after small maintenance items in the Precinct. This plan would see a shift to a more sustainable model based on ongoing private investment and reduction in operating cost. The irrigation and power systems proposed would in themselves save the users \$41,000.00 per year with an ROI of just over 2 years.

The Giffin Park Sports Precinct does need an immediate injection of funding to meet current demand and provide a safe facility that will be sustainable. Investing in this facility now is a smart investment in a fantastic Community facility.

For more information, please contact our Infrastructure and Funding Coordinator, Dennis Bramadat, at coorparoojuniors@aflbj.com or 0418 887 915.



**Table 2 - Infrastructure Requirements at Giffin Park
Capital Projects**

- 1 Oval irrigation system using recycled and ground water
- 2 Refuse recycling stations and processes
- 3 Disabled amenities, access and suitable main oval seating
- 4 Construction of second oval, fully accessible change-rooms
- 5 Additional ¼ Junior multipurpose oval and lighting constructed on school property
- 6 Solar power capture and storage
- 7 New sprinklers, drainage works and leveling of second oval
- 8 Amenities improvements for function room/ bar and main oval spectators
- 9 Canteen facility associated with function room area
- 10 Leveling area outside function room to make it useable for spectators and functions
- 11 Public address system for both ovals and general area
- 12 Main, second oval and Park drainage installation and improvement with second oval irrigation
- 13 Electronic scoreboard and timing for main oval and timing for second oval
- 14 Improve coach and interchange boxes on main oval, relocate boxes on second oval
- 15 Second oval spectator seating
- 16 Development of Stanley St frontage including electronic media
- 17 Improvement of parking areas off Stanley St