

Greenbushes

Sportsground Precinct

REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT



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Redevelopment Project

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The Consultation Process

This document identifies key components of proposed redevelopments in the Greenbushes Sportsground Precinct, as detailed in the map at Attachment 1.

Written Submissions are invited from Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes residents and ratepayers on the proposal. Submissions must be received no later than 4.30pm on Friday 13 March and are to be addressed to:

Mr Tim Clynn
Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes
PO Box 271
BRIDGETOWN WA 6255

Submissions may also be delivered by hand to the Shire's front counter at 1 Steere Street, Bridgetown or via email to btnshire@bridgetown.wa.gov.au.

Background

In 2017/18 consultation (via a community workshop) occurred with Greenbushes residents about possible future redevelopment of the Greenbushes Sportsground Precinct, an area comprising the playing fields, hard courts, free camping area and the Dumpling Gully dams.

Upgrading the Precinct will transform it into a district-level sporting facility, improving the facilities for croquet, hockey, soccer, basketball, tennis and other sporting events. These upgrades will improve the sporting experience for players and spectators, promoting visitor attendance for sporting events.

The proposal also includes an upgrade to the transit camping area, to attract more tourists to the region to boost regional tourism and the local economy.

The upgrade also supports greater participation in sporting events, such as the Pink Fun Run, and local festivals such as the Blues Festival, which attracts visitors from far afield.

A. Proposed Improvements to Playing Fields

Council's vision (via its Strategic Community Plan) is to make the Greenbushes Sportsground the home for rectangular sports within the Shire, specifically soccer. There currently exists one rectangular field that has been set out for soccer but when more than one playing field is required the adjacent oval is used.

It is proposed to upgrade the playing surfaces of the soccer pitch and oval via sub-surface improvements, returfing and the installation of irrigation/reticulation. The oval can be divided into two soccer pitches plus an area for the development of a grassed croquet court. The cricket pitch currently located on the oval would be removed.

B. Dumpling Gully Dams

The Dumpling Gully Dams were for many years used by the Water Corporation as a water supply to Greenbushes. With the commissioning of the Regional Water Supply network in 2017 the use of the Dumpling Gully dams for water supply became redundant.

At its ordinary meeting on 15 December 2016 Council resolved the following:

That Council request the CEO to investigate the options of the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes taking ownership of the Dumpling Gully Dams (and associated area) commonly called the Dumpling Gully Precinct to incorporate the area into a Shire Reserve which can be developed for both passive and active recreation activities for the community and to manage and protect the Wetlands and associated unique fauna and flora of the region.

Since then the Shire, Water Corporation and Department of Biodiversity, Conservation & Attractions (DBCA) have been working through the issues associated with de-proclamation

of the dams as a drinking water source area and their removal from State Forest classification.

The dams are seen as an important aspect of the long term recreational development plan for the Greenbushes. The potential for tourism and recreational development of the various waterbodies around Greenbushes has been raised and acknowledged for many years.

It is proposed that only one of the two dams be used for active recreational pursuits. The eastern dam (closest to the Sportsground) is deemed most suitable (due to accessibility and foreshore characteristics) for recreational use and can be used for swimming, kayaking, fishing, etc. noting that no use of motorised craft would be permitted due to safety concerns. The eastern bank of the dam (behind camping area) is suitable for development of beach access.

The western dam would be reserved as a water supply for irrigation of the Sportsground. A bird hide would be developed on its northern side.

Walk trails would circumference each dam. A boardwalk would be required at the far eastern end in order to traverse a marsh area and a bridge is required to cross the overflow area between the two dams.

C. Free Camping Area

Over several years a free camping area has been created at the Greenbushes Sportsground. There is a growing trend in Australia for people, particularly those in self-contained recreational vehicles (RV's) seeking free camping options. The location of the Greenbushes camping area isn't heavily promoted but has become common knowledge on caravanning blog sites and similar and in recent years its usage has grown exponentially.

There are positive economic impacts in providing free camping options. Users are likely to frequent local business establishments and without having to pay camping fees there is more disposable money able to be spent locally. Anecdotal evidence also exists that after staying in a free camp area with limited facilities for a few days many "free campers" relocate to a commercial caravan park in order to access better services such as showers and laundry facilities.

On the other hand there have been concerns raised by some Greenbushes residents about the free camping, specifically its unregulated management including no limits on the number of campers and the length of their stay. With regard to the first issue many residents have indicated in public forums that they would like to prohibit camping in the area between South Western Highway and the soccer ground as this area is in full view of passing motorists on the highway.

Whilst many of the campers use self-contained caravans or RV's not all do. Therefore the number of camping sites must be able to be accommodated by the existing ablution facilities near the oval and also must be within reasonable walking distance. Note the

change rooms and ablutions at the soccer ground are locked when sport isn't being played and are therefore not available for campers.

The camping area is located within the Greenbushes Sportsground Precinct. Contained in Council's Corporate Business Plan is an action proposing the preparation of a 'Greenbushes Sportsground Precinct Improvement Plan'. Two linked actions in the Corporate Business Plan are to acquire vesting of the Dumping Gully waterbodies from the Water Corporation and develop a plan for future community recreational use of the waterbodies. Therefore any changes to the free camping area must fit into the proposals for recreation and conservation at the sportsground and the waterbodies.

Set out below is a summary of the legislative requirements in having a free camping area, the types of camping areas that could be developed and recommendations on how the area could be developed.

1. *Legislative Background*

- 1a The Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997 outline the way and circumstance in which a person can camp. Part 2, Regulations 10 and 11 are the most relevant in this instance.

10. Where person may camp

A person may camp only —

- (a) at a site in a caravan park or camping ground, as appropriate, licensed under the Act; or
- (b) in accordance with regulation 11. Penalty: a fine of \$1 000.

11. Camping other than at caravan park or camping ground

(1) A person may camp —

- (a) for up to 3 nights in any period of 28 consecutive days on land which he or she owns or has a legal right to occupy, and may camp for longer than 3 nights on such land if he or she has written approval under subregulation (2) and is complying with that approval; or
- b) for up to 24 consecutive hours in a caravan or other vehicle on a road side rest area; or
- (c) for up to 24 consecutive hours in a caravan or other vehicle on a road reserve in an emergency, unless to do so would cause a hazard to other road users or contravene any other written law with respect to the use of the road reserve; or
- (d) on any land which is —
 - (i) held by a State instrumentality in freehold or leasehold; or
 - (ii) dedicated, reserved, or set apart under the Land Administration Act 1997 or any other written law, and placed under the care, control or management of a State instrumentality, in accordance with the permission of that instrumentality; or
- (e) on any unallocated Crown land or unmanaged reserve, in accordance with the permission of the Minister within the meaning of the Land Administration

Act 1997, or a person authorised by the Minister to give permission under this paragraph.

- (2) Written approval may be given for a person to camp on land referred to in subregulation (1)(a) for a period specified in the approval which is longer than 3 nights —
- (a) by the local government of the district where the land is situated, if such approval will not result in the land being camped on for longer than 3 months in any period of 12 months; or
 - (b) by the Minister, if such approval will result in the land being camped on for longer than 3 months in any period of 12 months; or
 - (c) despite paragraph (b), by the local government of the district where the land is situated —
 - (i) if such approval will not result in the land being camped on for longer than 12 consecutive months; and
 - (ii) if the person owns or has a legal right to occupy the land and is to camp in a caravan on the land while a permit has effect in relation to the land.

- (3) In this regulation —

Emergency means a situation where to move the caravan or other vehicle to a more suitable area would constitute an immediate and serious hazard due to the condition of the caravan or other vehicle, or a vehicle towing the caravan, or of the driver, or passengers, of any such vehicle;

Permit means a building permit or a demolition permit as defined in the Building Act 2011 section 3;

Road side rest area means an area designated by a traffic sign erected in accordance with a written law, as an area which may be used for 24 hours for —

- (a) resting; or
- (b) stopping; or
- (c) camping, in a vehicle;

State instrumentality has the same meaning as it has for the purposes of the Land Administration Act 1997;

Unallocated Crown land has the same meaning as it has for the purposes of the Land Administration Act 1997;

Unmanaged reserve has the same meaning as it has for the purposes of the Land Administration Act 1997.

- 1b. Before giving approval under Regulation 11(2) the local government under Regulation 13 is to be satisfied that the land is a suitable place for camping especially with respect to —
- 1. Safety and health; and
 - 2. Access to services.
- 1c. Whilst the free camping area has been operating at the Greenbushes Sportsground for many years it has never obtained the necessary approvals. The subject land is a crown reserve vested in the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes for

the purpose of 'recreation'. To formalise the camping area will require an amendment to the purpose of the reserve (2687), requiring an application to be submitted to the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. There may be native title considerations.

2. Nature Based Caravan Parks

- 2a. The Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997 defines a "nature based park" as meaning a facility in an area that —
 - (a) is not in close proximity to an area that is built up with structures used for business, industry or dwelling-houses at intervals of less than 100m for a distance of 500 m or more; and
 - (b) has been predominantly formed by nature; and
 - (c) has limited or controlled artificial light and noise intrusion.
- 2b. The characteristics and location of the current free camping area at the Greenbushes Sportsground meets the definition of a nature based park.
- 2c. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries authored a document titled "Nature Based Parks – Licensing Guidelines for Developers and Local Governments". This guideline aims to provide guidance to local governments, developers and operators of nature based parks on the process for the licensing of a nature based park under the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds legislation and also what conditions can be imposed on the licence.
- 2d. A Management Plan is to be prepared for all nature based parks and sets out the operating guidelines for the park including:
 - Market segment being targeted
 - Traffic management
 - Environmental impact
 - Waste management
 - Risk management
 - Amenities to be provided, or not provided (in light of the market)
 - Length of stay of occupiers
- 2e. Under Regulation 51 of the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997 the maximum number of camping sites for a nature based park is not to exceed one site per 50 square metres of camping ground availability.
- 2f. A nature based park is to have 2 toilets (unisex or single sex) for every 20 sites unless otherwise approved. There isn't a minimum specification for the number of showers and hand basins as that decision is left to the approving authority (in this case the Shire) and should be based on the target market. For example if most campers use self-contained caravans or RV vehicles there is a lesser need for showers. If showers are provided they are to have hot water. The Nature Based Park Guidelines state that if no showers are provided the maximum length of stay should be limited to 3 nights.

- 2g. The maximum length of stay permitted under the above Regulations in a nature based park is 28 days in any 3 month period.

3. Roadside Rest Areas

- 3a. Roadside rest areas are becoming common place, particularly on highways in rural and remote areas. Typically these areas are managed by Main Roads Western Australia and are within the road reserve thus persons may camp in these for up to 24 hours as per Regulation 11(1)(b) of the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997.
- 3b. Some Councils (i.e. City of Bunbury) have provided this type of facility on local roads within a townsite and have extended the maximum stay period to up to 3 nights which is the maximum a person is allowed to camp on land other than a caravan park or camping ground without having to obtain written approval to camp.
- 3c. Managing the Greenbushes camping area as an overnight rest area could only occur if the maximum stay was limited to 3 nights and persons wouldn't be permitted to return until after 28 days had passed. This would be difficult to manage.

4. Transit Caravan Park

- 4a. The Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997 defines a transit park as meaning a facility where an occupier may stay no longer than 3 consecutive nights.
- 4b. A transit park is to have showers, toilets and hand basins to a ratio defined under the above Regulations. For example for a transit park of less than 10 sites one male toilet, hand basin and shower and one female toilet, hand basin and shower would be required. For between 11-17 sites the same applies as well as a male urinal. Currently no showers are provided at the Greenbushes free camping area.

5. Conclusion

Maintaining the current free camping area outside of the legislation isn't an option. The site fits the definition of a nature based park and accordingly the site should be developed and managed to comply with the Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997.

6. Recommendations – Type of Camping Facility

- 6a. That a development plan be prepared for the site showing the total number of camping sites permissible having regard to the ratio of camp sites to area under Regulation 51 and the extent of ablution facilities that already exist.
- 6b. That an application be submitted to the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage seeking an amendment to the purpose of Reserve 2687 to accommodate a nature based caravan park.

7. Developing the Current Free Camping Area to a Nature Based Park

- 7a. A nature based park will often have limited facilities. This should be linked to the targeted market segment and their needs. For example if the targeted market is self-contained recreational vehicles or caravans the need for ablution facilities is lessened.
- 7b. The Caravan Parks and Camping Grounds Regulations 1997 state that the only buildings allowed in a nature based park are a manager's house, toilets, an ablution block, washing up facilities and a camper's kitchen. This means that the proposal previously put forward to redevelop the old cricket pavilion as a "bunkhouse" for trail users and other campers not using a caravan or RV cannot proceed under the classification of a nature based park. Classifying the area as a caravan park would not be practical as all the requirements for a caravan park would apply.
- 7c. Nature based parks are intended for use by tourists. One of the key considerations in developing such a facility is to ensure there is minimal or no impact on the environment. As such long stay accommodation isn't appropriate.
- 7d. The Regulations require a minimum 3 metres separation between camp sites.
- 7e. The Regulations require a centrally located tap and potable water in a nature based park.
- 7f. A camp kitchen, although not compulsory, is seen as a necessary feature.
- 7g. All camp sites should be located within 150 metres of an ablution block.
- 7h. Depending upon the number of camp sites identified the effluent disposal system at the ablution block on the western side of the oval may require upgrading.
- 7i. Camp sites should be numbered so that campers can see where the sites are and whether any sites are available. Signage should clearly state that if all sites are occupied no camping is permitted. Under no circumstances would camping outside of a marked site be allowed.
- 7j. With the construction of the proposed mine access road the entrance to the sportsground precinct (and camp area) will change.
- 7k. Under the *Health (Treatment of Sewage and Disposal of Effluent and Liquid Waste) Regulations 1974* – the use of chemical toilet treatment systems are prohibited from being connected to onsite waste water systems. This is because the chemicals interfere with the natural bacterial breakdown process which occurs in the traditional septic tank and leach drain system. Therefore facilities that receive waste from caravan/recreational vehicles either need to be connected to reticulated sewerage or disposed of to a holding tank which is then periodically pumped out.

With no sewerage available in Greenbushes this only allows for the holding tank option. Assuming 10 pump outs per annum the estimated operating costs are approximately \$9,500 per annum.

8. *Recommendations – Size, Facilities and Layout of Camping Area*

- 8a. The camping area (nature based park) is to be limited to the area on the western side of the oval. No camping outside this area is to be permitted and this is to be clearly shown on signage.
- 8b. The change rooms and ablutions at the soccer ground are locked when sport isn't being played and are therefore not available for campers.
- 8c. Currently there exists the following ablution facilities at the Greenbushes Sportsground free camping area:
- Male: 1 toilet, 1 urinal, 1 hand basin
 - Female: 2 toilets, 1 hand basin

This would allow up to 20 sites to be developed as a nature based park however the limited cleared areas in the identified area limit it to a lesser number.

- 8d. No shower facilities to be provided.
- 8e. A camp kitchen can be sited close to the ablution block to take advantage of the proximity of water and power.
- 8f. Twelve (12) camp sites can be set out. Campsites 11 and 12 will require very minor clearing to provide a cleared site.
- 8g. No fire rings or similar to be provided due to fire risk in summer.
- 8h. Signage to be erected at entrance to camp site and within camp site setting out rules to apply including the maximum length of stay and limitation of only camping in a marked bay that is available.
- 8i. The need for a dump point to be monitored.
- 8j. Maximum length of stay to be 3 nights due to lack of shower facilities and limited number of campsites. The camp area has been designed as a short stay area only.

D. Other Improvements

- The kiosk would be upgraded to make it more vermin proof and able to offer a wider variety of products.
- The existing fence around the playground would be upgraded so it was accessible at all times.
- A herb garden would be established within the camping area.

E. Car Parking

With construction of the new mine access road the entrance to the Sportsground will change. This will make provision of parking adjacent to the current entrance safer. With the prohibition on camping in the area between the highway and soccer pitch this area will become an overflow car park for sporting events.

There is a need to develop parking for visitors to the proposed recreational dam and an area north of the hardcourts has been identified for this purpose.

Attachment 1 – Project Plan

