

ITEM-26 LMM 26/10/21 - BASKETBALL COURTS AT NATIONAL PARK

MOTION

That City of Newcastle:

1. Notes that a key principle of the current 2012 National Park Plan of Management (PoM) is to provide sporting, recreation, and leisure facilities to meet the current and future needs of the community and that the former tennis courts site is categorised as 'sportsground' under the current PoM, with the objective of sportsground land being to 'encourage, promote and facilitate organised and informal sporting activities and games';
2. Endorses the provision of 4 new basketball courts, currently under construction, following the success of the construction of 2 basketball courts in September 2020, noting that a Review of Environmental Factors has stated that **the project aligns with the intention of the National Park Plan of Management 2012**, and that a management action of the PoM states that *If management of the tennis courts is no longer viable/economic during the life of this Plan, Council may investigate and implement alternative uses*;
3. Acknowledges that since the adoption of the 2012 PoM, the conversion of the former Life Without Barriers site has provided an additional 9750m² of green space not previously accessible to the public, which has been rehabilitated for passive recreation;
4. Notes that the provision of the four new basketball courts returns this space to the public, aligns with the 2012 PoM, while providing an additional 1250m² of green space surrounding the new courts, and significantly updating public amenity including the provision of new shelters, seating, a drinking water station and brand-new playing surfaces.
5. Commends our Parks and Recreation Team for revitalising this desolate, black-asphalted eyesore and unused section of National Park and returning it back to the community, for local people and families to enjoy.
6. Notes that the exhibition of an updated National Park Plan of Management will occur in 2022.

BACKGROUND:

City continues activation of unused space in National Park

27 Jul 2021

Work is about to start to triple the number of basketball courts located within the inner city's National Park.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said the decision to add four basketball courts was based on the popularity of the existing courts since opening in September last year.

"Each weekend, hundreds of mostly young people flock to National Park to use the blue basketball courts and the green space located on the site of the former bowling club building," Cr Nelmes said.

"Based on the demand, we're continuing our re-activation of the former tennis courts located near the corner of National Park and Parry Streets by increasing the total number of basketball courts to six.

“By delivering four additional courts, we’re increasing the opportunity for our community to get outdoors to participate in casual sport and exercise.”

Seating, shade shelters and a drinking fountain will also be installed as part of the work, with lighting to be considered during the development of the National Park Plan of Management and associated Landscape Masterplan.



The Lord Mayor said the long-term future of the space would be determined through the National Park Plan of Management and Landscape Masterplan.

“We recently consulted with our community regarding the future of National Park to inform the revised National Park Plan of Management and Landscape Masterplan, which are now under development.

“National Park is such a unique recreation space located in the heart of Newcastle. It will continue to play an important part in the liveability of our city into the future.”

Local basketball coach, Kristy Flores, who has played and coached USA college basketball, said that the local basketball community has welcomed the news of additional courts in National Park.

“Newcastle has a growing number of basketball players and it’s been fantastic for both amateurs and professional players to have access to such great community facilities. I’m sure that once the additional courts are complete and there’s space for spectators to sit and relax, that National Park will become even more popular a recreational hub,” said Flores.

National Park is one of Newcastle’s largest and oldest sportsgrounds and open space reserves, covering over 20 hectares and is currently home to a range of community facilities including sportsgrounds, netball courts, croquet club and athletics track.

The northwest corner of the park was formerly home to tennis courts and a bowling club, which was later occupied by charity Life Without Barriers until 2017.

City unveils new community basketball courts

27 Sep 2020

City of Newcastle has opened two new basketball courts near the corner of National Park and Parry Streets to activate the formerly unused corner of National Park.

The new basketball courts replace the long defunct tennis facilities and sit alongside the recently opened greenspace where the former bowling club building previously stood. Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said the continued revival of the space within National Park has occurred at the perfect time.

“Following the demolition of the former bowling club building, we created new green space in this inner city park for the community to enjoy,” the Lord Mayor said.

“The addition of the basketball courts makes the location the perfect place for our community to get outdoors to participate in recreation and exercise as the weather continues to warm up.

“I’m pleased to say that the basketball courts have opened just in time for the school holidays and I have no doubt that kids and adults alike will be heading to National Park to shoot hoops over the coming weeks.

“Our outdoor spaces have been coveted by our community during the pandemic and continue to be important contributors to the wellbeing of our people.

The Lord Mayor said the long-term future of the area would be determined through community consultation on the upcoming National Park Plan of Management.

“National Park is a unique site in Newcastle and will play an important part in the liveability of our city centre as the population grows and the CBD moves to the west,” Cr Nelmes said.

“We’re looking forward to working with the community on the future of National Park, with engagement expected to start before the end of the year.”

National Park is one of Newcastle’s largest and oldest sportsgrounds and open space reserves, covering over 20 hectares and is currently home to a range of community facilities including sportsgrounds, netball courts, athletics track and high school.

The northwest corner of the park was formerly home to tennis courts and a bowling club, which was later occupied by charity Life Without Barriers until 2017.

In 2019 City of Newcastle commenced a process to provide safe public access to the northwest corner of the park, including demolishing the Life Without Barriers building and turfing the area for passive recreation. Investigations are currently underway for additional basketball courts at the site.

The National Park Plan of Management review is currently underway, with community consultation set to commence in November and a draft plan to be publicly exhibited in early 2021.

In 2019 City of Newcastle commenced a process to provide safe public access to the northwest corner of the park, including demolishing the fire damaged Life Without Barriers building and turfing the area for passive recreation.