

18 May 2010

## Council begins work on new \$2.2m Bernie Regan hockey field

Shoalhaven City Council has begun work on the new \$2.2 million hockey field at Bernie Regan Sporting Complex in North Nowra.

Council has been planning for the expansion of the existing grass hockey fields at North Nowra for several years. The project is the first stage of developing an all year round Australian competition standard facility. The new field will be constructed with an artificial turf grass surface to compliment the three existing fields at the site.

This project has been made possible through funding of \$700,000 from the Federal Government's Jobs Fund grant, \$200,000 from the Shoalhaven Hockey Association and \$1.3million from Council.

The much needed hockey facility will add a considerable benefit to all hockey players and the city in general as the artificial turf surface will provide the ability to host competitions at state and national levels.

Shoalhaven City Mayor Councillor Paul Green said Council has been planning for the new field since the mid 1990s.

"The new field will add an extra dimension to the sporting attractions in the Shoalhaven," Cllr Green said. "Once the project is complete we will have a hockey field that all modern hockey is played on throughout the world," Cllr Green said. "The new artificial surface will mean the hockey association can attract those high level players who compete on an artificial surface field and it will also provide a nationally recognised playing surface for the 400 or so hockey players in the Shoalhaven hockey competition.

"On top of that the new field will also be an attractant for many people who may be considering moving to the Shoalhaven who like to participate in high level sports, such as defence personnel."

Council is expecting that high profile games such as the NSW Championships, Australian Championships, National Hockey League and other fixtures can be promoted at the venue once it is completed.

Council will be asking the Illawarra Academy of Sports to conduct training sessions at the new field. This will save Shoalhaven athletes having to travel up to 200 km a week to attend training and games sessions.

President of Shoalhaven Hockey, Juanita Mackay, said: "Many elite players representing the Shoalhaven at NSW level have in the past been required to leave the local competition to maintain their skills. This new field will draw some of the players back to Shoalhaven and allow the current crop of juniors to hone their skills on this better field.

"Shoalhaven Hockey had worked with Council to develop a facility that will increase the standard of sporting assets within Shoalhaven. With the expected growth of this area, we need modern facilities to satisfy the needs of our younger and not so younger population. This will bring Nowra and Shoalhaven closer to matching many other Centres throughout Australia," Mrs Mackay said.

The project at North Nowra will include a better access road to the fields, upgraded and expanded car parking, landscaping, lighting and watering systems. The project will also see an environmentally friendly system for rainwater to be captured from the surrounded area to be used on the artificial field.

The field is expected to be completed by August 2010.

For further information on the Shoalhaven Hockey Association fields at Bernie Regan Sporting Complex, you can contact Council's Project Delivery Manager, on (02) 4429 3378.

**Photo caption:** Tim Pullen from Shoalhaven Hockey, Michelle Green Mayoress of Shoalhaven City, Juanita Mackay President of Shoalhaven Hockey, Shoalhaven City Mayor Councillor Paul Green and Andrew Davie from Digging Around inspect the plans for the new hockey field at the Bernie Regan Sporting Complex.

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