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## **2.3 Indoor Sports Centre Feasibility Study**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **Purpose**

To seek Council approval of the recommendations made in the Indoor Sports Centre Feasibility Study as prepared by Stratcorp Consulting.

#### **Issues**

Through the completion of the feasibility study, a demand has been identified for a Multi Purpose Indoor Sports Centre within the municipality. The construction of such a facility requires further investigation relating to a suitable location, initial financial outlay and ongoing capital and recurrent resource implications.

#### **Resource Financial Implications**

The capital cost for development of a four-court indoor facility is approximately \$4.5m. Further, an annual subsidy estimated at \$188,000 is required from Council for operational costs associated with the ongoing operation of such a facility.

#### **Community Implications**

A thorough community consultation program was completed as part of the Feasibility Study. The purpose of consultations was to review the catchment area, identify potential usage, identify a potential site/s for the proposed facility, assess regional competitors and examine community demand for the ongoing use of an indoor sports centre in the City of Yarra.

#### **Environmental Implications**

The development of an indoor sports centre within an existing open space site may generate objections from some residents. The use of existing open space as a site for the facility was not supported by the results of the Study.

Visual impact of an indoor sports facility is likely to be high, therefore the aesthetics of any design should be considered carefully prior to construction.

#### **City Plan, Strategy and Policy Implications**

The Feasibility Study is in line with the 2002-2005 City Plan Key Commitment Area 5 – Community Development Major Strategies: Action 5.3.2 “Complete a review of a multi-purpose indoor sports facility for Yarra and progress the plan to implement recommendations.”

#### **PROPOSED ACTIONS**

It is proposed that Council acknowledge the recommendations made in the Feasibility Study that identify a demand for a Multi-purpose indoor sports centre and::

- (a) enter into discussions with the State Government with regard to the potential use of the former Gas & Fuel site situated on the corner of Queens Parade and Nicholson Street, Fitzroy for the purposes of an indoor sports centre; and
- (b) a further report be submitted to Council on the findings of the discussions held with the State Government on the potential use of the subject site.

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## **2.3 Indoor Sports Centre Feasibility Study**

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File: 62/30/15  
Responsible Officer: Manager Environment and Recreation Services

### **Purpose**

1. To seek Council approval of the recommendations made in the Indoor Sports Centre Feasibility Study prepared by Stratcorp Consulting.

### **Background**

2. The City of Yarra is committed to ensuring that the short and long-term leisure needs of its residents and the broader community are met. This involves providing a variety of sporting facilities for over forty local clubs and attempting to address the needs of new and emerging sports groups and community members.
3. Council currently provides a wide array of active and passive recreation opportunities across the municipality. Opportunities for active participation range from tennis, swimming and bike riding to football, aerobics and bocce. The passive recreation opportunities are infinite and include walking, picnic and park options and unstructured sporting opportunities.
4. Council's outdoor sporting facilities and its three leisure centres, in Richmond, Fitzroy and Clifton Hill are heavily utilised and cater for a variety of interests. The City of Yarra does not currently own or operate any court based, multi purpose indoor sports facilities catering to sporting opportunities such as netball, basketball and volleyball.
5. Stratcorp Consulting were engaged to undertake a multi purpose indoor sports centre feasibility study. The aim of the study was to determine the demand for, and probable usage levels of a multi purpose indoor sports centre in Yarra. The Study also provided information relating to the potential size and location for such a facility, the capital cost for construction and some approximate ongoing operational and maintenance costs. In addition, Stratcorp Consulting provided a concept plan for the facility and a three-year business plan featuring operational income and expenditure for a proposed indoor sports facility.

### **Issues**

6. The Study found that there is a demand for an indoor sports facility in Yarra and that development of such a facility is feasible.
7. The Study recommends that Council give further consideration to the full range of site options discussed within the report. Whilst no site is immediately available, it is recommended that Council commence negotiations with the State Government for the possible retention of the former Gas and Fuel site as a community recreation precinct.
8. The Princes Hill Secondary College intends to develop a proposal for the redevelopment of their existing gymnasium with expanded community use.

9. North Fitzroy Primary School is also investigating a proposal to build a new multi purpose hall with expanded community use. Funds for this proposal would be sought in partnership with Council through the State Government's Community Facilities Fund grants program.
10. That an Indoor Sports Centre Steering Committee be established comprising the:
  - (a) Mayor;
  - (b) Chairperson of the Finance and Resources Committee;
  - (c) Chairperson of the Planning and Community Development Committee;
  - (d) Director Asset Management;
  - (e) Manager Environment and Recreation Services;
  - (f) Manager Leisure Facilities; and
  - (g) Team Leader Recreation.

### **Consultations**

11. A broad range of community consultation was conducted as part of the Feasibility Study including:
  - (a) 300 random telephone surveys of Yarra residents;
  - (b) a focus group meeting with social workers and community providers;
  - (c) a focus group meeting with culturally and linguistically diverse groups;
  - (d) a focus group meeting with youth workers and community providers;
  - (e) two public/community meetings;
  - (f) surveys to 36 schools in Yarra;
  - (g) surveys to 16 sports clubs that may potentially use an indoor sports centre;
  - (h) meetings with City of Yarra officers;
  - (i) meetings with the project steering committee;
  - (j) media release calling for community submissions; and
  - (k) public notice calling for community submissions.
12. The purpose of consultations was to review the catchment area, identify potential usage, identify a potential site/s for the proposed facility, assess regional competitors and examine community demand for the ongoing use of an indoor sports centre in the City of Yarra.

13. Ten potential sites for the development of an indoor sports centre were reviewed. These sites included Council owned and Crown land sites. In addition, a search of privately owned sites within Yarra was also conducted. The key criteria used to assess each site included land availability, size of the site, visibility from major traffic routes and surrounding areas, proximity to catchment areas and impact on visual amenity. Other considerations such as proximity to public transport were also reviewed.

### **Resource and Financial Implications**

14. The capital cost for development of a four-court indoor facility is approximately \$4.5m.
15. Furthermore, an annual subsidy estimated at \$188,000 is required from Council for ongoing operational costs associated with such a facility.
16. A number of possible funding sources exist for Council to finance the capital cost of the proposed indoor sports centre including Council's Capital Works Budget process, government grants, partnership opportunities with local educational institutions, commercial investment, community fundraising and user group contributions.
17. The financial implications of funding a new indoor sports centre must be placed in context with regard to the development of other community facilities including Victoria Park and local libraries.
18. Provision has been made in the 2004/05 capital budget to undertake a detailed feasibility study of the selected site for the construction of the facility. It is expected that once discussions for the use of the former Gas & Fuel site have been completed a detailed study will be undertaken.

### **Environmental Implications**

19. The development of an indoor sports centre within an existing open space site is likely to generate objections from some residents.
20. Visual impact of an indoor sports facility is likely to be high, therefore the aesthetics of any design should be considered carefully prior to construction.

### **City Plan, Strategy and Policy Implications**

21. The feasibility study reflects the intentions and directions of Council's Recreation Strategy Plan, Draft Open Space Strategy, Municipal Public Health Plan 2003-2005, and compliments the goals of Council's City Plan.
22. More specifically, the Multi Purpose Indoor Sports Feasibility Study is in line with the 2002-2005 City Plan Key Commitment Area 5 – Community Development Major Strategies: Action 5.3.2 "Complete a review of a multi-purpose indoor sports facility for Yarra and progress the plan to implement recommendations."

### **Proposal**

23. It is proposed that Council approve the recommendations made in the Feasibility Study.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

24. That Council notes the recommendation of the Report that states that the development of an indoor sports centre in Yarra is feasible.
25. That Council notes the recommendation of the Report that identifies the demand for a Multi Purpose Indoor Sports Centre within the municipality.
26. That Council establishes an Indoor Sports Centre Steering Committee comprising the:
  - (a) Mayor;
  - (b) Chairperson of the Finance and Resources Committee;
  - (c) Chairperson of the Planning and Community Development Committee;
  - (d) Director Asset Management;
  - (e) Manager Environment and Recreation Services;
  - (f) Manager Leisure Facilities; and
  - (g) Team Leader Recreation.
27. That Council enters into discussion with the State Government with regard to the future use of the former Gas & Fuel site situated on the corner of Queens Parade and Nicholson Street, Fitzroy including for the purposes of an indoor sports centre.
28. That a further report be submitted to Council on the findings of the discussions held with the State Government on the potential use of the subject site.

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## 2.4 Report on the East Timorese Asylum Seeker Campaign

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File: 50/05/10-03  
Responsible Officer: Manager Culture and Community Planning

### Purpose

1. To provide Council with an overview and final report on the outcomes of the *Common Sense for East Timorese – Let Them Stay* advocacy campaign (the campaign) in support of East Timorese asylum seekers.

### Background

2. At the beginning of 2003, Council took a leadership role in initiating the campaign.
3. Council's initial response was to the needs of its own community, which includes the largest group of East Timorese living in Australia. With the support of a variety of organisations including aid agencies, schools, churches, State Government and political representatives, community volunteers and the East Timorese people, Council's campaign quickly became an integral part of a wider national movement.
4. The campaign built on the work of the *Yarra East Timor Asylum Seeker Task Force* (the Task Force), which had been formally endorsed by Council in August 2002. The broad objectives of the Task Force were to harness practical and political support for the East Timorese asylum seeker community who were at risk of being returned to East Timor despite a long-term connection and commitment to Australia.
5. Councillor representatives and Council officers coordinated the campaign, and *Socom Public Relations* supported the development of the campaign communications strategy and associated media activities.

### Issues

6. The campaign's key objective was to secure permanent residency for East Timorese asylum seekers living in the City of Yarra (and in Australia generally).
7. To achieve this end, the campaign was focused on developing and implementing a government relations and media strategy to raise community awareness about the connection, commitment and positive contribution of the East Timorese people to Australia.

### Key Activities

8. The formal launch of the campaign was held in early February 2003. Council convened a meeting with the five other metropolitan councils with the greatest concentration of East Timorese asylum seeker residents; Brimbank, Greater Dandenong, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley and Moreland. The six councils agreed to jointly conduct an advocacy campaign and to raise funds to support asylum seekers via a *Let Them Stay Fighting Fund*.