



20 Year State Infrastructure Plan Discussion Paper Feedback

Parks & Leisure Australia SA/NT Submission

Prepared by: President PLA SA/NT, Suzanne Suter
With input from PLA SA/NT Regional Council members

26 July 2019

About Parks & Leisure Australia SA/NT

Parks & Leisure Australia (PLA) is a not for profit industry body that represents professionals in the parks, sport, recreation and leisure sector nationally. PLA incorporates 5 regions including PLA SA/NT, through which this submission is made.

A large majority of our PLA SA/NT members are involved in planning for, developing and managing sport, recreation and community infrastructure in South Australia and therefore have a strong interest in the 20 Year State Infrastructure Plan. Many of our members work in Local Government and others work in State Government, sports associations, consultancies and the private sector.

The Importance of Sport, Recreation and Parks

We reinforce that sport, recreation and open space are significant contributors towards the liveability of South Australia and should be recognised as a priority in the 20 Year State Infrastructure Plan. Specifically, sport, recreation and open space related infrastructure contribute to active, healthy and connected communities. For example:

- Increased physical activity reduces the risk of obesity and ultimately the risk of health related illnesses and associated health costs
- Sport, recreation and community facilities, and open spaces provide opportunities for social connection within communities, which reduces the risk of isolation and mental health issues

Discussion Paper Gaps

In general, the 20 Year State Infrastructure Plan Discussion Paper is comprehensive and sound, with a broad focus and a clear understanding of the opportunities, constraints and priorities for infrastructure in South Australia. However:

Green Infrastructure

There is one significant gap in the paper from a parks, sport, recreation and leisure perspective, and this relates to green infrastructure and the environment. Green infrastructure (including parks, trees and canopy) is an important physical asset that should be recognised, protected and managed, and therefore included in the 20 Year State Infrastructure Plan, even if this is at a high level.

Green infrastructure will contribute to addressing a number of the items raised in the Discussion Paper including the need to respond to climate change and increase liveability in South Australia. Green infrastructure will give South Australia and Adelaide a competitive edge over other cities and towns in a global environment where governments and the private sector are investing in green infrastructure to attract creative and knowledge based industries and workers that are required for South Australia's transitioning economy. It is recommended that an 'infrastructure sector' section on 'Green Infrastructure and the Environment' be included in the 20 Year State Infrastructure Plan, with references to other planning such as Green Adelaide, Healthy Parks Healthy People, Vision 2020 and environmental planning.

Increased Focus on Recreation

It is suggested that the infrastructure sector Culture, Sport and Tourism be expanded to include Recreation. Whilst planning for recreation is mentioned, there needs to be a greater focus placed on recreation infrastructure including walking and cycle trails, aquatic centres, leisure centres and other infrastructure that support informal recreation and physical activity, and contribute to quality of life.

Partner Opportunities

Local Government as a Key Partner

Local Government is a significant provider of infrastructure, including sport and recreation infrastructure such as sportsgrounds, trails, play spaces and indoor facilities. Opportunities for supporting and partnering Local Government should be highlighted in the 20 Year State Infrastructure Plan. This includes establishing shared funding initiatives that create opportunities for Local Councils to contribute to and gain support for major community based infrastructure projects, including those relating to sport, recreation, parks and green infrastructure. Criteria that define the basis of major projects and justify State Government funds could be developed to ensure infrastructure projects that receive funding contribute to local and state planning objectives. This opportunity and the importance of Local Government appears to be under played in the Discussion Paper.

Sports Associations and Private Sector

Partnership opportunities with sports associations and the private sector should also be considered to attract investment in the State and achieve major sport and recreation infrastructure projects, as has occurred with Adelaide Oval.

Industry Body Engagement

When planning for infrastructure, there should be strong engagement with industry bodies like Parks & Leisure Australia SA/NT as their members are responsible for planning for infrastructure and sport, recreation, community and open space related needs.

Sports Facility Infrastructure Priorities

Hierarchy and Planning Considerations

The concept of hierarchy and the value of district and regional sports hubs should be recognised as a priority for investment, including through the State Sports and Recreation Infrastructure Plan (being developed). Most Local Councils have undertaken planning for open space and sport and recreation facilities and these plans identify issues and needs relating to specific facilities and provide a rationale for potential existing facility improvements and new facilities. Recent and relevant planning undertaken by Local Councils should be considered to assist in identifying priorities for infrastructure and allocating grant funding to projects. A top down approach to funding should be considered in recognition of the strategic and sound planning that already exists, rather than responding to individual needs raised by community groups. Any infrastructure projects supported at the State level should also be a priority for local government.

Catering for Growth Areas

There will be a need and justification for new sportsgrounds and facilities as well as leisure and aquatic centres for indoor sport and recreation, to support population growth in the growth areas. This is a particular priority in the southern, northern and Adelaide Hills growth areas (e.g. Onkaparinga, Gawler, Playford, Mount Barker and Alexandrina Council areas). Land will need to be allocated accordingly and sportsgrounds and facilities planned for and developed at a district and regional level.

Shared Use of School Facilities

The use of school facilities for community sport is important and opportunities for enabling shared-use facilities should be pursued as outlined in the Discussion Paper. However, it will be important to recognise that the size, location and ownership of school facilities are limiting factors and any investment should generally be at a local level (e.g. basic lighting and amenities) with agreements in place to ensure funding and community access are protected to match the level of investment. A recommended approach to accessing school facilities could be included in the SA Infrastructure Plan.

Recreation and Open Space Infrastructure Priorities

Particular priorities for recreation and open space infrastructure are outlined below.

Trails

Trails should continue to be a priority to support community activity, including less developed hills trails for bush walking, cycle trails and linear trails. A focus should be placed on connectivity, networks and broadening activity opportunities for all age groups and diverse interests.

Ageing and Older Population Needs

There should be an increasing focus on supporting ageing and older people to remain healthy and active and experience the outdoors, with the aim to encourage people to live productive and independent lives for as long as possible. This can be achieved through indoor recreation facilities, trails, parks and lower impact sporting opportunities.

Innovation and Technology

Innovation and technology in parks such as 'smart parks' are an evolving focus to increase activity opportunities and enhance management practices.

Metropolitan Area Considerations

Greater Adelaide Area Review

The Greater Adelaide Metropolitan Area does not currently include Mount Barker, Gawler and parts of other growth areas. A review of the Greater Adelaide area is required to reflect the broadening of the metropolitan area and ensure residents in the outer areas have good access to infrastructure including sport, recreation and community facilities.

Higher Density Implications

The potential increase in medium and higher density development will raise the importance of open spaces and greenways, as well as sport and recreation infrastructure. Smaller backyards and higher population densities will increase the demands on open spaces including the Adelaide Parklands and other significant open spaces, and providing infrastructure that supports community activity will need to be a priority in higher density areas.

Funding Local Projects Linked to Development

Strategic and innovative opportunities for funding local sport, recreation, community and open space projects should be a priority, including for Councils that are experiencing infill development and do not receive the development levy due to allotments being less than 20. The pressure of infill and a lack of open space and facilities is reducing the quality of life in these areas. Consideration should be given to how funds generated from infill in Council areas can be distributed back to the relevant Councils to invest in providing and improving local sport and recreation infrastructure and green infrastructure.

Regional Area Considerations

Supporting Regions

As identified in the Discussion Paper, the regions across South Australia add significant value to the State's economic growth and communities should be supported with appropriate sport, recreation, community and open space related infrastructure. Sport, recreation and community infrastructure have the potential to draw people to live and work in a region and support the growth and prosperity of regional areas and towns.

Regional Project Scope

Whilst it is recognised that the Discussion Paper is high level, it is a concern that very few of the regional projects identified in the paper relate to sport and recreation infrastructure. Sport and recreation hubs in regions provide a central focus for surrounding communities and encourage all age groups to be active and connected. This highlights the need to consider major community based projects as well as State based projects when planning for infrastructure and determining the priorities in the regions.

Other Related Items

Traffic Management

Traffic movement has a major impact on the liveability of the metropolitan area, including the potential for people to travel to sport, recreation and community infrastructure and open spaces. Opportunities for managing and reducing traffic congestion should therefore continue to be a priority, including the extension of public transport corridors such as trams and priority busways.