

21 February 2016

The President
Sydney Pacific Athletic Club



Dear Sir,

Re: Narrabeen Athletics Track – submission for re-surfacing

Little Athletics New South Wales (LANSW) is the peak state sports body for Little Athletics in NSW with approximately 40,000 registered members. Its philosophy is 'Family, Fun and Fitness' and it operates under the motto of "Be Your Best".

Little Athletics is a uniquely Australian modified athletics program for children aged 5-16 years that commenced in Victoria just over 50 years ago in 1965. Little Athletics is the foundation for all sports, offering young people activities and skills that stand them in good stead for their sporting future.

Athletes in the 11-16 age groups at Little Athletics centres can also join Senior Athletics Clubs such as the Sydney Pacific Athletic Club under the Dual Registration initiative that exists between Athletics NSW and Little Athletics NSW.

Events and competitions are conducted on a weekly basis by any one of LANSW's 200 individual Little Athletics centres across NSW and therefore LANSW has a strong interest to ensure that suitable and well maintained athletics facilities are available and accessible throughout the state - improved facilities is a key objective.

LANSW has a long history with the Narrabeen track & field facility at the Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation, with it not only being home to the Manly Warringah Little Athletics Centre since 1970, but in the past it was the venue for the LANSW State Championships and Country Championships, our State representative teams have trained there during live-in camps held every year for almost 40 years, and it is currently the venue for the annual LANSW North East Metropolitan Zone Championships in December and the LANSW Region 5 Championships in February.

The Manly Warringah Little Athletics Centre is one of the largest, longest standing and most successful Little Athletics Centres in both NSW and Australia, boasting an annual membership of approximately 900 young athletes. They have been consistent users and supporters of the facility at Narrabeen for 45 years and in partnership with the Sydney Academy of Sport, they are dedicated to sustaining and improving participation in sport and recreation for the local community, in a safe and inclusive environment.

As a commitment to the partnership with the Sydney Academy of Sport and in an effort to ensure that the venue continues to not only meet their needs, but provide suitable access for a variety of users in the local area, the Manly Warringah Little Athletics Centre has over many years contributed to a wide range of projects to help maintain, refurbish and improve this valued community asset. For example, in 2013/2014 Manly Warringah Little Athletics co-contributed \$21,000 and managed track repairs, line-marking and permanent shade structures at the facility, after they were successful in receiving a \$10,000 Community Partnership Building Grant from the then Department of Education and Communities. The repairs enhanced the longevity of the Narrabeen athletics facility as a leading sporting facility in the region, thus enabling it to retain existing users and potentially attract new users over the longer term.

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Foundation for all sports

However, with over 90,000 people using the facility each year since the last track re-surfacing back in 2008, the condition of the track surface has unfortunately deteriorated to such a level that repairs are no longer an option and full replacement is urgently required. The throws areas at the facility are also in desperate need of attention. We therefore support any effort to secure the funding required for refurbishment of the Narrabeen facility as soon as possible.

The benefits of an active healthy lifestyle for an individual's well-being and the positive contribution it has to the economic and social well-being of a community are well understood. Manly Warringah Little Athletics Centre, through its operation as the largest Little Athletics centre in NSW, together with other users of the Narrabeen athletics track and field facility (schools, senior athletics clubs, soccer clubs, league and union clubs, surf life saving clubs, athletics coaches, Sydney Academy of Sport programs etc.) provide a high level of healthy and active sporting opportunities for local communities. In order for these groups to continue the good work that they do in this area, upgrades to the facility must be a priority. There is no doubt that safety concerns due to the condition of the facility will have a negative impact upon usage if the required upgrade is not undertaken in the very near future.

LANSW fully supports any proposal to redevelop and refurbish the Narrabeen Track given its significance in the region and its poor current condition. Together with the Manly Warringah Little Athletics Centre, we look forward to working with all parties to ensure the facility continues to meet the participation needs of the various user groups and the local community.

Please forward this letter of support on to the appropriate bodies, as required.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K O'Keefe', followed by a period.

Kerry O'Keefe
Chief Executive Officer
Little Athletics NSW