



'Athletics leader in Sydney's Northern Suburbs & Northern Beaches Areas'

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NORTHERN SYDNEY ATHLETICS CLUB DISCUSSION PAPER

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THE PROPOSAL

That there should be a Northern Sydney Athletics Club that:

1. Has its principal training and competition venue at the Track & Field Facility at the Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation, Narrabeen
2. Is 'One Sport' oriented
3. Accommodates:
 - a. Little Athletes (U6 to U17)
 - b. Junior Athletes (not Little Athletes *per se* but Athletes aged from 13 to 19 years of age and that are currently are members of Senior Athletics Clubs)
 - c. Open Age Athletes (20 years of age and over)
4. Enables a seamless transition from Little Athletics to Junior Athletics to Open Age Athletics
5. Can accommodate Masters' Age Athletes (30 years of age and over)
6. Has the capability to provide Athletics Australia Accredited / Working with Children Compliant Coaches to coach and mentor Little Athletes, Junior Athletes, Open Age Athletes and Masters' Age Athletes.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Current Athletics Clubs that use the Track & Field Facility at the Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation, Narrabeen

Manly Warringah Little Athletics Centre

Manly Warringah Little Athletics was established in 1971 and is one of the oldest, largest and most successful Little Athletics Centres in NSW and Australia boasting an annual membership of approximately 900 young athletes. It is a long-standing user of the Narrabeen Track & Field Facility that opened in 1960.

Manly Warringah Little Athletics has been a consistent user and supporter of the Narrabeen Track & Field Facility for 45 years and is dedicated to sustaining and improving participation in Sport and Recreation for the local community.

Manly Warringah Little Athletics draws its membership from five clubs: Cromer, Manly, Peninsula, Seaforth and Wakehurst. They combine to hold regular Saturday competition and to form the Manly Warringah Centre for Zone, Regional and State Little Athletics Championships.

'Family, Fun and Fitness' are the three main objectives of the Little Athletics movement. Boys and Girls from age 5 to 17 are offered a wide variety of athletic events in a happy environment with the emphasis on achieving personal bests, not necessarily to win.

Sydney Pacific Athletic Club

The origins of the Sydney Pacific Athletic Club date back to the 1980s in the Ku-ring-gai and Manly-Warringah areas of Sydney.

The Ku-ring-gai Athletic Club was formed in the early 1980s and operated from the Turramurra Memorial Park and for a time at Hassall Park, St Ives. The Ku-ring-gai Athletic Club held a winter cross country series in Bobbin Head bushland.

One of the Ku-ring-gai Club's early coaches was Jackie Byrnes OAM who was to coach Australian Olympian and 100m and 200m sprints champion Melinda Gainsford-Taylor for over two decades.

In 1986 the Ku-ring-gai Athletic Club secured an annual sponsorship from Reebok valued at around \$20,000 per year in cash and in kind and changed its name to the Reebok Ku-ring-gai Athletic Club.

In 1987 the Reebok Ku-ring-gai Athletic Club merged with the Manly Warringah Athletics & Harriers Club¹ with the new entity operating as the Reebok Athletic Club.

¹ The Warringah Harriers Club was formed nearly 120 years ago in the late 1890s. Its first competition was held in June 1897 at Clifton Gardens near Mosman.

The Manly Amateur Athletic Club was established in 1919. In its early years the club was famous for its annual 'Manly Modified Marathon', a race of some twelve or thirteen miles from Manly to Narrabeen and back, open to Allcomers.

The Manly Amateur Athletic Club ran very popular winter meets every Wednesday night in the early 1920s.....'last Wednesday, when the 2-mile sealed road race was decided, there was a large crowd of onlookers. The race was popular among members, and some surprise runners came to light.' (Manly Daily, 16 July 1920)

The Manly Amateur Athletic Club disbanded in 1968 after 49 seasons. In its place, the Manly Warringah Amateur Athletic Association (MWAAA) was formed. The Manly Amateur Athletic Club and the Warringah Amateur Athletic Club merged on 17 June 1968.

Prior to the merger, Manly Warringah Little Athletics and the Manly Warringah Athletics & Harriers Club were part of the Manly Warringah Amateur Athletic Association (MWAAA). Manly Warringah Little Athletics separated because of the merger.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, NSW sporting clubs incorporated. Sydney Pacific Athletic Club Limited was incorporated on 8 February 1994. It operated as the Reebok Athletic Club under a special licence agreement with Reebok Australia until Reebok's sponsorship ceased in the late 1990s. The club then became known as Sydney Pacific.

From its initial days, the Sydney Pacific Athletic Club has maintained a presence at both the Turramurra Memorial Park and the Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation at Narrabeen. A winter track series was held at Narrabeen for many years.

2. ONESPORT

Independent Review of Athletics in Australia 2015²

Ultimately, a ONESPORT structure from club centre level through to states and a national organisation provides the best environment to deliver quality athletics that retains participants.

In order to attain broader success for the sport, Athletics Australia and its stakeholders, through the application of the recommendations of the Independent Review, must address issues by striving to place athletics in a place where it is considered a pinnacle of Australian Olympic sport and a vibrant foundation sport at the grassroots community level.

OneSport Pursued

Athletics Australia and Little Athletics Australia have demonstrated their commitment to diversity signing on 17 August 2017 a cooperative agreement³ to develop a nationwide inclusion framework for the sport of athletics.

Delivering upon the strategic priority of both organisations to support a OneSport philosophy "Athletics Australia is currently finalising our Reconciliation Action Plan, we are members of the Pride in Sport initiative and our member associations go to great lengths to ensure access to athletics for all people, but together with Little Athletics Australia we believe we can do more," Michael Hall, Athletics Australia Interim Chief Executive Officer, said.

"Little Athletics Australia and Athletics Australia can be advocates for athletics environments that welcome all Australians, irrespective of age, race, gender or sexual orientation and this project will set out to ensure that."

² https://www.ausport.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/623865/Independent_Review_of_Athletics_in_Australia.pdf

³ <http://athletics.com.au/News/onesport-pursued>

Little Athletics Australia Chief Executive Officer, Martin Stillman, echoed Hall's commitment to diversity.

"Sport should be accessible to each and every Australian and our collaborative efforts with Athletics Australia to build a framework that ensures the best possible chance for success in this area is crucial," Stillman said.

"We are confident in the work we have completed alongside our stakeholders already, but this framework will build upon a sound base even more. Athletics will be the most inclusive sport it can be."

A consultant, with the support of Athletics Australia, Little Athletics Australia and their member associations will review the current programs, processes and policies designed to encourage inclusion in athletics.

These will be refined and guide the development of resources to support people working at every level of the sport to promote diversity, whether that be club or little athletics centre competition or Team Australia at the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

"The Australian Sports Commission has extensively encouraged a OneSport philosophy by Athletics Australia and Little Athletics Australia and we are proud to support this project to develop an inclusion framework. This is another step in the right direction to ensure seamless involvement with athletics in Australia," Kate Palmer, the Australian Sports Commission CEO, said.

"By continuing to collaborate, athletics in Australia can grow its participation base and encourage Australians to enjoy the benefits of sport and physical activity for life."

Athletics Australia and Little Athletics Australia will provide updates on the development of the inclusion framework in the months ahead.

A POSSIBLE FUTURE MODEL - CONCEPT

1. One Athletics Club based at the Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation, Narrabeen that accommodates Little Athletes, Junior and Open Age Athletes, and Masters' Athletes.
2. Manly – Warringah Little Athletics would remain intact unless otherwise agreed, and would be part of a new overarching entity, for example, The Northern Beaches Athletics Club, North Sydney Athletics Club or Manly - Warringah Athletics Club⁴.
3. The Sydney Pacific Athletic Club would be wound up and its financial and non-financial assets transferred to the new entity.

⁴ Mosman Little Athletics ("MLA") announced in 2016 the establishment of **Mosman Athletics Club (MAC)** for athletes 17 years and over. MAC now provides a seamless and easy transition for athletes aged 17 and above who can no longer train and compete for Little Athletics but would like to continue their training with our top coaching staff. It also offers those in our local community (and outside the community) an opportunity to take up an activity that is fun and develops strength, speed, agility and skillsets complementary to other sports.