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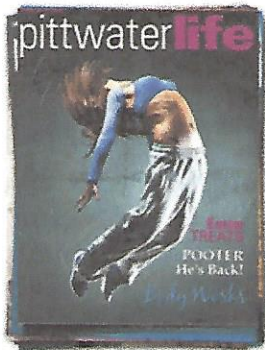
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PETITION AIMS TO FAST-TRACK REPAIRS

The State Liberal Government is facing pressure from the new local Federal Liberal member to fast-track the repair and upgrading of the "dangerous" surface and surrounds at the Narrabeen athletics track and field facility.

Sydney Pacific Athletic Club President Robert McEntyre said a petition set up by Mackellar MP Jason Falinski (www.fairshare4thebeaches.org.au) calling for the urgent upgrade of the facility had attracted almost 1000 signatures, a target set for the end of November.

With sufficient community support, Mr Falinski has pledged to lobby NSW Minister for Sport Stuart Ayres to get sign-off for the urgent resurfacing of the track, which was last fully resurfaced in 2008 and requires an estimated \$1.5 million to restore.



"On the Northern Beaches we pay our fair share and the lack of investment in the Narrabeen Track and Field Facility is quite frankly unsatisfactory," Mr Falinski said.

"Putting our athletes at risk of injury is unacceptable, and I want to help secure the necessary NSW Government funding."

Mr McEntyre said their priority was a full track upgrade.

"This track is worn, is falling apart in places, is rock hard and masquerades as a '400-metre Olympic standard athletics track' as described on the Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation's website," he said.

The outer layer is bubbling and peeling off, creating unevenness in the surface, water ponding coupled with drainage issues and potential trip hazards.

"This is combined with crumbling of the upper surface and loss of thickness of the previous overlay in certain areas, including starting areas to the 100m, 200m and 400m, high jump approaches, javelin areas and the long jump/triple jump regions.

Photos taken by Pittwater Life support claims about the extent of the damage.

"As a result of the hardened and deteriorating condition of the track, there has been an increasing number of injuries sustained by athletes of all ages," Mr McEntyre added.

He said the lack of serious maintenance and upgrade of the track in the past five years by the Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation was analogous to "a car that has clocked 200,000km, received its last full service at 60,000km, has bald tyres, has rust on the body and has all warning light indicators flashing on the dash – it is not registrable!"

The Narrabeen Track and Field Facility is owned by the NSW State Government and is managed and operated by NSW Sport & Recreation.

It is used by over 70 primary and secondary schools each year, by Manly Warringah Little Athletics and the Sydney Pacific Athletic Club, as well as many track and field coaches (including Olympian Melinda Gainsford-Taylor) and by Little Athletics NSW. Last March the Sydney Pacific Athletic Club and Manly Warringah Little Athletics made a Joint Submission to Mr Ayres for a full upgrade.

A comprehensive Audit was undertaken by Consultants in early 2016 and a report submitted to the NSW Office of Sport in May 2016, with observations and recommendations.

The NSW Office of Sport is currently preparing a Business Case to present to the NSW Treasury to acquire funds in the 2017-18 NSW State Budget to upgrade the Narrabeen Track at the very least.

Mr McEntyre said he was hopeful the latest community push would finally see the NSW Government inject the necessary capital to return the track to its former glory.

Pittwater Life approached Mr Ayres' office for comment.

– Nigel Wall

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