

Minister for Sport and Recreation
Question Time Briefs
February 2021

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CM2021/258

Portfolio/s: Sport and Recreation

Coronavirus Impact on Sport Update

Talking points:

- Public Health measures to slow the spread of COVID 19 have had an impact on how we work, travel, play sport and participate in recreation.
- In mid-March last year, many summer sporting seasons were cancelled, events called off and then winter seasons postponed. Restrictions to gatherings, indoor space restrictions and “non-essential services” saw sport and physical activity providers largely shut down.
- In April 2020 I announced supports including direct financial support totalling \$700,000 (to peak bodies); early access to grants schemes (from 1 July); and waivers for facility hire of ACT Government Sportsgrounds and Education facilities (until 31 March 2021).
- These specific measures were in addition to broader means of community support like rates relief, utilities rebates and access to JobKeeper which have been, subject to individual circumstances, relevant to local sporting clubs and organisations.
- In August 2020 I announced further recovery support for the sport sector through:
 - an extension of hire fee waivers beyond 30 September 2020 for ACT Government sportsgrounds, school gymnasiums/halls, Stromlo Forest Park and
 - an introduction of fee waivers for pool and lane hire fees for clubs and commercial groups. This extension and pool fee waivers will cover the full summer season till 31 March 2021.
- From May 2020, we took our first steps into the phased recommencement of community sport. Full contact sport resumed from mid-July, activities in defined group sizes commenced and outdoor and indoor activities recommenced with an emphasis on vigilance in regard to physical distancing and general hygiene.
- The response from the sector, supporting the staged approach and ongoing vigilance for physical distancing and hygiene, was positive.
- Community sport is starting to find a new normal and getting back on track.
- Canberra sport has, in many ways been resilient. I have heard some sports are actually experiencing increased demand and heightened event registrations.
- I acknowledge the localised clusters and the necessary measures required to keep our communities safe such as border closures creates an uncertain environment for event organisers and sports seeking to travel to interstate competitions.

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Contact Officer name: Rebecca Kelley Ext:74389
Lead Directorate: Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development

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Key Information

- Data on the COVID-19 pandemic impacts on sport and recreation, including participation and financial, is not yet available. The national Ausplay participation survey (released 30 October 2020) was only based on survey data to 30 June 2020 and the participation impacts of COVID-19 are not fully reflected in this research.
- The longer-term impacts on people's financial capacity to participate and sponsorship of community sporting clubs and activities is not known.

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Portfolio/s: Sport and Recreation**North Woden Tennis Centre – NEW****Talking points:**

- The suitability and safety of community sporting facilities is important to support our high levels of active sporting participation in the ACT. The issues raised by the North Woden Tennis Club regarding the current state of its eight court facility in Hughes are currently being considered by Government.
- I am aware that a “Notice to Remedy” has been received by the ACT Government from the Club and an investigation into the matters raised by the Club’s President is underway through the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

Key Information

- The North Woden Tennis Club, through its President, Mr Terry Lennard has served a ‘Notice to Remedy’ to the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) for the full replacement of the eight courts at its tennis facility in Hughes.
- The North Woden Tennis Club holds a Concessional Crown Lease over the community tennis facility located in Hughes. The lease has a range of “Territory Owned Improvements”, including eight tennis courts, a small tennis pavilion and cyclone perimeter fencing.
- Recent correspondence from Mr Lennard details the existing tennis courts at the North Woden Tennis Club are deteriorating and becoming dangerous. The estimated cost to replace the eight courts is approximately \$850,000, based on a single quote obtained by the North Woden Tennis Club.
- Following lodgement of the ‘Notice of Remedy’, Mr Lennard advised EPSDD he would soon be lodging a submission with the ACT Administrative Appeals Tribunal (ACAT) to seek appropriate resolution of this matter. Prior to doing this, a ‘Notice to Remedy’ must be served which gives the landlord (EPSDD) the opportunity to respond.
 - Following a further discussion with an EPSDD officer in late January 2021, Mr Lennard agreed to withhold submitting the ACAT application for the time being to allow the ACT Government to further consider the matter.
- While the North Woden Tennis Club has submitted several grant submissions through the Sport and Recreation Grants Program for funding to replace the courts in the past, a detailed condition audit of the tennis courts has never been provided.
- The North Woden Tennis Club do not have the financial means to fund the court replacement.
- Sport and Recreation and EPSDD, Planning Delivery are currently seeking legal advice from the ACT Government Solicitor on key terms in the Concessional Crown Lease to determine who is responsible for the replacement of the “Territory Owned Improvements”, including the tennis courts.

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- The outcome of this matter will likely inform discussions relating to Concessional Crown Leases held by other sporting organisations (i.e. other tennis clubs and district netball facilities) and where responsibility for major asset replacement lies.

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Portfolio/s: Sport and Recreation

Mpowerdome

Talking points:

- Mpowerdome is a privately owned and managed facility, which operated under a commercial lease. Since its closure in April 2016, I understand the facility has been for sale.
- The future use of the Mpowerdome site is a matter for the private lessee.
- The ACT Government is continuing to progress work to supplement the supply of indoor sport courts for community sporting groups.
- Recent ACT Government investment includes:
 - Expansion of the gymnasium at Amaroo School to include an additional full-sized court.
 - Upgrading the gymnasium at the Headley Bear Training Centre in Stirling to allow community access.
 - Provision of a full-sized court as part of the gymnasium at Margaret Hendry P-6 school in Taylor.
 - A double-court gymnasium at the Evelyn Scott P-10 school in Denman Prospect.
 - Planning for the Home of Football in Throsby includes four indoor community standard futsal courts.
- The ACT Government will continue to plan for the provision of new indoor sport court facilities at new ACT Government Schools.
- In relation to the distinct needs of smaller scale indoor sports and also district level priorities, the ACT Government will continue to work with sports and community representatives on a case by case basis.
- The ACT Government will continue to investigate possible partnership opportunities with sporting organisations and the private sector to deliver future indoor sporting facilities in Canberra.

Key Information

- A key component of future indoor sport facility provision in the ACT will be the development of new ACT Government schools in growth regions. Early planning and design for any new ACT Government schools in will consider the current and future demand for indoor sporting facilities in that region. The ACT Government recognises that a range of complementary facilities, in particular dedicated community storage areas, are required to support community access and use of school facilities outside of core school hours.

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Background Information

- Mpowerdome closed its doors on Saturday 9 April 2016 with the current owners saying that insufficient parking provision at the site impacted on its viability.
- Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS), the agency with responsibility for managing the public unleased land adjacent to the facility, previously offered mpowerdome a long term license of the area, including a flexible rental arrangement to facilitate the development of the car park and offset the cost of works.
- Over several years, the ACT Government has provided consistent advice to the owner/operator of the facility about its options for the site. This has included advice regarding uses permitted under the current lease, uses that would require a lease variation and uses that would require a variation to the Territory Plan, including appropriate community engagement and consultation.
- Significant guidance and support has also been provided to mpowerdome over the years, including funding support in the order of \$11,000 to develop a parking plan, to assist in formalising the use of adjacent unleased land for overflow car parking by mpowerdome patrons.
- TCCS confirms site remediation is necessary to ensure public safety given the degradation resulting directly from the effect of parking. The operators have not taken any formal action to progress the license and site remediation option – not in the lead up to its decision to close the facility in April 2016 or since the facility closure.

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