

Item 12**Questions on Notice with Answers****1. Use of Synthetic Turf**

By Councillor Thompson

Question

1. What synthetic turf fields exist in the Local Government Area?
2. What new ones are planned or underway?
3. When will the community get a chance to give feedback on whether they prefer synthetic or natural turf?
4. Does the Council do any monitoring or check on fields? If yes, provide details.
5. What research has guided the City to suggest that the use of synthetic grass doubles playable hours?
6. In areas within the City's catchment that have been recognised as being prone to flooding, is there any consideration to prioritise natural turf over synthetic alternatives?
7. Is the City aware of any pollution which could be attributed to the use of synthetic turf?
8. Is the City aware of any risks associated with the play-use of synthetic turf in sporting fields which could cause harm or exacerbate pre-existing injuries?
9. Does the City refer to findings from the 'Mapping Summer Microclimates' report when it plans to develop new sporting fields? If so:
 - (a) What was the range of temperatures recorded on microclimate logger 53 and 54?
 - (b) Was the average temperature recorded from this logger distinct from than any loggers located in natural-turf sporting fields?
10. Is Martin Sheppard/Smart Connections or Sport Eng doing any consulting for Council, if yes:
 - (a) How much is his company being paid?
 - (b) How much has this company been paid over the last 3 years?
 - (c) What training days have staff been to, including workshops? If yes, at what cost?

X113778

Answer by the Chief Executive Officer

1. The City currently has four synthetic turf fields – these are located at:
 - Perry Park, Alexandria
 - Getiela, Alexandria (shared facility with the Alexandria Park Community School)
 - Gunyama Park, Zetland
 - The Crescent, Annandale (half field)
2. There is one new synthetic turf field planned:
 - Mandible Street Sports Precinct, Alexandria
3. Community consultation on the draft concept plans for the new Mandible Street Sports Precinct will be undertaken early next year.
4. The City's monitoring and maintenance of synthetic turf fields includes:
 - Daily cleaning and inspection
 - Fortnightly grooming of long pile fields
 - Monthly grooming of short piles fields
 - Twice yearly deep cleans
5. Gunyama Park was opened in early 2021 and is the first synthetic field owned by the City. It is booked between 50-100% more than the City's other well maintained and managed natural turf sports fields.

The City's natural turf grass sports fields are closed due to wet weather about 10 to 45 days per year and grass renovation or replacement works are undertaken between 6 to 11 weeks per year. The synthetic fields remained open during this time for public use.
6. Most sports fields (natural turf grass or synthetic) within the Local Government Area are on flood prone sites due to limited land availability. The synthetic fields have been built above the 1 :100-year flood levels or are within levee so they are not damaged in flood events.

7. The City is not aware of any pollution attributed to the 4 City synthetic turf fields in the Local Government Area.

The synthetic turf fields have undergone site-specific design and environmental assessment processes to address the risk of synthetic field materials migrating into surrounding area and into the wider stormwater system. The strategies including:

- Installation of concrete dish drains and / or a raised edge to the field to retain any material in the field area
- All field drains have trap pits and filters to capture any materials before it enters the stormwater system
- High-quality and new materials are used to address leaching and fibre release
- Regular grooming and maintenance of the field of play and surrounding area
- Soft landscaping and shade trees around the fields, including maximising opportunities to increase tree canopy in the surrounding area

8. The City is not aware of any risks.

- 9.

- (a) The 'Mapping Summer Microclimates' report is a new report published on 5 March 2025 that was undertaken in collaboration with the University of Western Sydney. This report will inform the development and delivery of the City's major capital works projects.

Logger 53 in McEvoy Street and Logger 54 in Mandible Street are located within the vicinity of the future Mandible St sports precinct.

Logger 53 – McEvoy Street

- Mean temperature over the study period – 24.2C
- Maximum temperature – 40.0C
- Minimum temperature – 16.3C

Logger 54 – Mandible Street

- Mean temperature over the study period – 24.1C
- Maximum temperature – 40.8C
- Minimum temperature – 16.6C

- (b) No loggers were located directly at natural turf sporting fields to monitor temperatures.

The Mandible Street Sports Precinct project will include soft landscaping areas around the playing field and courts to increase greening and reduce heat.

10. Martin Sheppard / Smart Connections or Sport Eng are not currently doing any consulting work for the City.

Smart Connections Consultancy was engaged in 2019 to provide advice on the development of synthetic turf fields – the value of this engagement was \$48,800.

- (a) Not applicable – no current engagements.
- (b) There have been no engagements by the City over the last 3 years
- (c) City staff have attended webinar and in person industry information sessions and conferences where Smart Connection and Sport Eng have presented on various topics related to synthetic and natural turf facility development, operation and maintenance.

These events were either free or part of conferences covering a broad range of topics regarding open space and recreation.