



COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY:

ATHLETICS INFRASTRUCTURE



CITY OF CANNING





ATHLETICS INFRASTRUCTURE

The sport of athletics is made up of a variety of events comprising running (sprints, middle distances, cross country etc.), jumping (high jump, long jump and triple jump), throwing (shot put, javelin, discus etc.) and walking. Athletics primarily takes place annually in the summer months, between October and March. Athletics facilities for track and field activities typically include a 400 metre track for running events and space for field events (throwing and jumps). There is no formal equipment utilised for cross country events. As a code, it has a large amount of heavy, cumbersome sporting equipment and Clubs require adequately sized and easily accessible storage for this equipment.

State, National and International competition athletics tracks are permanent and require more specialised infrastructure that is typically closed to the general public. For school sports carnivals (intra/inter), the track and field events can be temporarily marked on a suitably flat surface.

CURRENT DELIVERY

Athletics is an integral sport within the City. It is not only considered a sport in its own right, but a foundation sport for development and pathways into other sports (i.e. AFL, soccer etc.). Participation in athletics has been fairly consistent over the past five years, based on bookings data, and the City currently has a number of reserves used for training and competition.

There are currently four sites regularly used for athletics in the City:

Ern Clark Reserve – the only synthetic track in the City and one of only two synthetic surfaces in the metropolitan area, the other being at the WA Athletics Centre in Floreat (16km from Ern Clark Reserve). Ern Clark Reserve was built in 1993 and jointly funded by the WA State Government and the City of Canning. It has had a number of improvements over the years, with a significant upgrade in 2014 to include a Mondo athletics track. Synthetic tracks are a requirement for State, National and International level participation, whereas grass tracks are the norm for District and Local participation.

Ranford Reserve, Burrendah Reserve and Canning Vale Reserve are also regularly used for athletics and include 400m tracks and jumps pits.

There are a number of active reserves throughout the City that can also be used as overflow and have sufficient area space for a 400m track, including Prendwick Reserve. These active reserves, together with Ern Clark and Ranford Reserves, are often used by schools and clubs, as requested.

The Southern District Little Athletics Centre (LAC), which consists of Southern Districts LAC, Ranford LAC, Willetton Riverton LAC, Canning Vale LAC and Queens Park LAC, together with the Senior Clubs of Master Athletics, Curtin Athletics and Canning Districts Athletics Club and Special Olympics, are the primary users of our athletics infrastructure. The membership over the last three years has averaged 340 members across all four sites.



City of Canning Athletics Sites and Current Infrastructure

| Reserve | Provision | Club | Hierarchy | Catchment | Population Guidelines |
|-------------------------|---|---|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Ern Clark Reserve | synthetic 400m track 4 Jumps pits 3 zones for throwing events | Athletics West Canning District AC Curtin AC Masters AC Southern Districts LA Centre (SDLAC) Queens Park LAC (SDLAC) Special Olympics | District | | 1:250,000 (needs basis) |
| Ranford Reserve | 400m grass track Jumps pit | Ranford LAC (SDLAC) | Local | 2km | |
| Burrendah North Reserve | 400 grass track Jumps pits | Willetton Riverton LAC (SDLC) | Local | 2km | |
| Canning Vale Reserve | 400m grass track 2 Jumps pits | Canning Vale LAC(SDLC) | Local | 2km | |

*The clubs listed with SDLAC all form part of the Southern Districts Little Athletics Centre



CASE STUDY: ERN CLARK RESERVE

Ern Clark Reserve is the highest used location for athletics in the City and athletics is the primary user of this reserve.

Infrastructure includes a 400 metre Mondo synthetic track, four jump pits (including synthetic run ups), and four throwing zones (two throwing circles to the north, one netted and one synthetic javelin run up). There is also a steeple chase hurdle. The area is lit for night use.

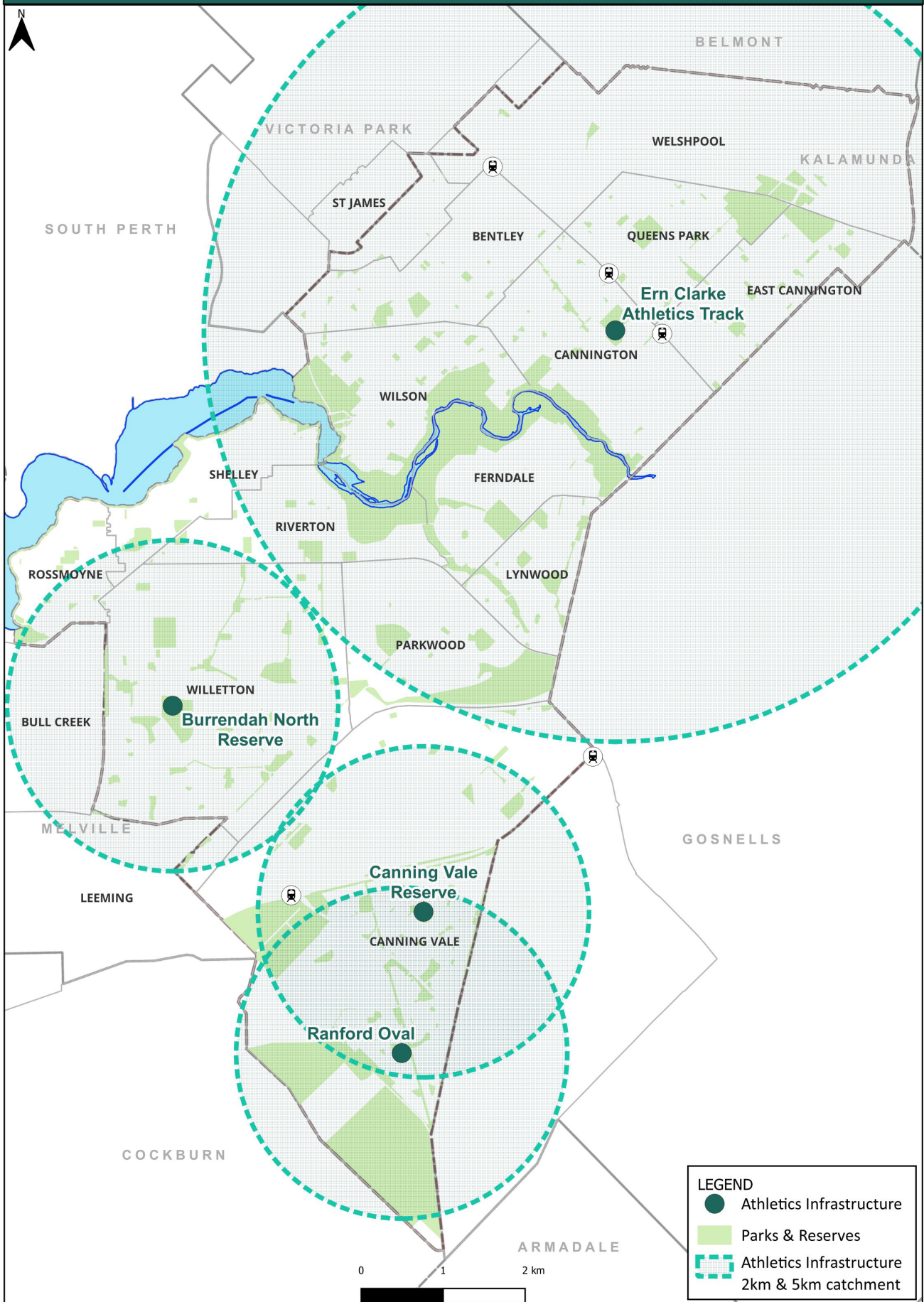
There are multiple users of this reserve, due to the synthetic track and sports floodlighting allowing night use.



CASE STUDY: CANNING VALE RESERVE

Canning Vale Reserve is a large District reserve (31,930m²) located at The Ramble, Canning Vale. It is more typical of most District reserves within the City and across the state, as it is used for both structured sporting pursuits and unstructured recreation opportunities, such as dog walking and outdoor gym sessions. This reserve is currently shared between athletics training sessions and cricket during the summer sporting season, and junior football in the winter sporting season. There are also a number of casual hirers.

There is a grass 400 metre track, two jumps pits, and no permanent throwing circles.



INDUSTRY PROVISION RATES AND BENCHMARKING

Parks and Leisure Australia, Western Australia (PLA WA) Guidelines provide the below provisions for athletics infrastructure.

Standards of Provision for Athletics - The PLA WA Community Infrastructure Guidelines 2020 (the PLA WA Guidelines)

| Facility | Local/Satellite | District | Regional |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Track Surface | Temporary grass track overlaid onto an oval, not a permanent facility. | Grass surface | Permanent synthetic track |
| Jumps Pits | Not a requirement | 2 jumps pits | Permanent runway and 2 jumps pits |
| Discus | Seasonal line marking | Seasonal line marking | Permanent circle |
| Shot put facility | Permanent circle | Permanent circle | |
| Flood Lighting (Australian Standard) | Not a requirement | Training standard | Competition standard |

The table above is based on the following population and/or catchment information

- Regional - 1:250:000
- District – 1:40,000 to 1:50,000 at 5km
- Local/Satellite - 2km

The PLA WA Community Facility Guidelines identify that athletics has limited facility provision across the metropolitan area, as a general trend. It is pleasing to see that the central zone (which includes Canning) scores the highest of the three zones, with a level of provision of 53.20% sitting above the median level of provision of 35-50% for athletics infrastructure.

There is significant variance in the provision of athletics infrastructure across the State and at a National level. Local Government Authorities (LGAs) typically focus on providing community level infrastructure and services, such as community centres, and community sport infrastructure that meets the needs of local residents. On the other hand, State and National level sporting infrastructure and facilities are generally the responsibility of the State or Federal government, as they require larger investment, have much higher operation and lifecycle costs, and have a wider regional or national significance. They do not focus on the residents within the locality, although local governments may still provide a role in supporting State and Regional competitions by hosting and/or in an advocacy role.

This position has been reinforced with the State Government's investment in community sporting infrastructure both through the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund and the Club Night Lights Program, which provide funding support for community groups and local governments to develop basic infrastructure for sport and recreation. Priority of these funds is given to projects that lead to facility sharing and rationalisation. Multi-purpose facilities reduce the infrastructure required to meet similar needs and increase sustainability.

Synthetic tracks and some other athletics infrastructure at both a Regional and State level are predominantly single-use and have a high whole-of-life. This, together with limited funding opportunities and limited accessible public open space, means the provision of these types of infrastructure are not common practice nor commonly supported.

The City has sufficient provision to meet current population with capacity to meet projected population growth with minor improvements to existing sites that increase provision from Neighborhood to District level.

Surrounding LGAs provide athletics infrastructure to a Local and District level only. The nearby Cities of Gosnells and Melville are developing Regional sporting precincts, which may consider athletics as a project up to a Regional standard.

TRENDS

The following trends have been identified for consideration with regards to athletics infrastructure:

- Athletics club membership in the City has been fairly consistent over the past five years, based on bookings received. Membership locally and throughout Australia tends to increase in the season/seasons after summer Olympic Games cycle, the last being Tokyo 2020 held in August 2021. The 2021/2022 annual report from Athletics West outlines that state athletics membership over the last year has had a 12% (9,433 persons) increase. However, this significant growth is not reflected in the City's club membership numbers.
- The breakdown of males to females is very even in athletics, with 51% male and 49% female participation. This is significantly higher than most other sports.
- Athletics infrastructure tends to be focussed on a centralised venue, which is supported in the City with our four primary venues.

THE FUTURE

The City will continue to invest in athletics Infrastructure, as it is seen as a sport that provides foundation skills for development and a foundation activity that leads to development in other sports. We will provide quality opportunities for men and women of all age groups to stay fit, active and healthy and participate in athletics to a high standard. The CIS principles of maximising the use of existing infrastructure and co-located, accessible facilities, are particularly relevant with athletics infrastructure and will be implemented with all infrastructure upgrades and improvements within the City.



PROVISION STANDARDS

The City has developed the following provision standards, by applying the industry provision rates and benchmarking information with the existing use of the grassed athletics locations in the City.

City of Canning Proposed Provision Standards

| Facility Component | Local/Satellite | District | Regional |
|---|--|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Track Surface | Temporary grass track overlaid onto an oval, not a permanent facility. | Grass provision | Permanent synthetic track |
| Jumps Pits | N/A | 2 jumps pits | Permanent runway and 2 jumps pits |
| Discus | N/A | Permanent circle | Permanent circle |
| Shot put facility | Permanent circle | Permanent circle | Permanent circle |
| Flood Lighting (Australian Standard) | N/A | Training standard | Competition standard |

CONSULTATION FINDINGS

This type received 45 responses the second highest response rate among the yoursay surveys. Of these, only 12 were from within the City. This reflects a broader usage of this infrastructure by the wider metropolitan area, generating significant interest primarily from residents beyond the City's boundaries.

| Summary of Consultation | |
|---|---|
| Survey Questions | Results |
| Surveys Completed | 45 |
| From a suburb within the City of Canning | 12 |
| Already using Action Sports in Canning | 43 |
| Addition consultation activities specific for this Type | Athletics West meeting Direct emails to the Athletics Clubs Youth Consultants Network workshop Cultural Ambassadors Huddle |

Survey Response Results

| | Support | Neutral | Oppose |
|---|---|---------|--------|
| Strategic Direction 1 - The City is over provisioned for athletics tracks to suit current and projected population over the next 10 years. There is significant capacity to continue to support growth in athletics participation across current City sporting reserves. | 22 | 11 | 12 |
| Strategic Direction 2 - Minor improvements to supporting facilities such as throwing circles and jump pits will be required to meet provision standards and projected population growth at various sites | 38 | 2 | 5 |
| Strategic Direction 3 - The City will fund district level grass tracks and is supportive of a synthetic track should full external funding be identified and a business case developed. | 33 | 5 | 7 |
| Strategic Direction 4 - The City will continue to foster athletics and its associated infrastructure across the City and look to improve the facilities to our minimum standards. | 39 | 3 | 3 |
| Strategic Direction 5 - In line with the City Centre Structure Plan and Land Use Plan, Ern Clark has been identified for a change of use within a 10 year period. | This question was not included in the survey as it was not able to be affected by the results. | | |
| Recommendation 1 - Maintain Ern Clark Reserve to a district level facility in the short-to-medium term with replacement of the synthetic athletics track at the end of the assets useful life restricted to grass track provision at a District level within the City. | 12 | 9 | 24 |
| Recommendation 2 - Increase the provision of athletics sites to a district level by listing permanent shot put circles for budget consideration at Ranford Reserve, Burrendah North Reserve and Canning Vale Reserve where feasible. | 30 | 11 | 4 |
| Recommendation 3 - Plan for the provision of a district level athletics site at Ferndale Reserve. | This question was not included in the survey due concurrent work to identify locations other than Ferndale reserve. | | |

KEY THEMES

Synthetic Track: Most respondents emphasised the importance of keeping the synthetic track at Ern Clark Reserve. They opposed replacing it with a grass track, citing potential negative impacts on athlete performance, training, and athletic development. Respondents encouraged the City to maintain and repair the current synthetic surface until a comparable replacement is available. 53% oppose the recommendation (1), 27% support it, and 20% responded neutral.

Funding and Maintenance: Respondents urged the City of Canning to maintain the synthetic track and actively seek funding for its replacement. There were a number of comments supporting lobbying the State Government (7 responses) and exploring alternative funding sources as the substantial cost was noted.

Access and Inclusivity: Some responses requested expanding access to the facility and enhancing the surrounding community infrastructure.

Athletics West provided the following feedback:

- There are only three synthetic tracks in WA, with two located in the metropolitan area. These tracks primarily support regional and state competitions, providing specific, built-for-purpose facilities for track and field, and alleviate some of the challenges posed by grass fields, which are often shared with other sports like cricket.
- Removing a synthetic track within the City of Canning would increase reliance on other state synthetic tracks. Athletics West seeks to understand the impact of this on key stakeholders, such as Masters Athletics WA, Southern Districts Little Athletics Centre and their delegate clubs, as well as Curtin and Canning Districts Athletics Clubs.
- They acknowledge the significant investment required to maintain such facilities and would like to see State Government support to retain a secondary synthetic track in the metropolitan area.
- Additionally, they suggest exploring opportunities to enhance usage as an alternative to the WA Athletics Stadium and to increase venue versatility, similar to other states, where the infield and crowd seating of athletics facilities are used for soccer matches and training.



KEY FINDINGS

There was high levels of support by respondents to the Strategic Directions and Recommendations, with only one opposed.

The feedback consistently supports the need for maintaining and upgrading the synthetic track at Ern Clark Reserve. There is a strong alignment between community desires and the strategic directions proposed and to support this desire for synthetic an additional Recommendation has been added regarding advocacy.

Community Engagement: Residents and stakeholders express a strong desire for the City to consider their feedback in planning and maintaining the synthetic track to ensure it meets current and future needs.

Local Community: Only 27% (12 respondents) were from a suburb within the City of Canning. Other respondents came from as far north as Padbury and as far south as Silver Sands, indicating a demand for state-level regional synthetic infrastructure. Among the local respondents, only 38% opposed the removal of the synthetic track.

CONSULTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. No changes to the Strategic Directions
2. Minor change to Recommendation 3 to enable a more robust location assessment:
 - FROM: Plan for the provision of a district level athletics site at Ferndale Reserve
 - TO: To develop a plan for a district level athletics site at one of the reserves within the City.
3. New Recommendation 4 to support feedback provided: To advocate to the State Government for support of a synthetic surface in the metropolitan area to support the feedback.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION



The City is over provisioned for athletics tracks to suit current and projected population over the next 10 years. There is significant capacity to continue to support growth in athletics participation across current City sporting reserves.



Minor improvements to supporting facilities such as throwing circles and jump pits will be required to meet provision standards and projected population growth at various sites.



The City will fund district level grass tracks and is supportive of a synthetic track should full external funding be identified and a business case developed.



The City will continue to foster athletics and its associated infrastructure across the City and look to improve the facilities to our minimum standards.



In line with the City Centre Structure Plan and Land Use Plan, Ern Clark has been identified for a change of use within a 10 year period.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Maintain Ern Clark Reserve to a district level facility in the short-to-medium term with replacement of the synthetic athletics track at the end of the assets useful life restricted to grass track provision at a District level within the City.



Increase the provision of athletics sites to a district level by listing permanent shot put circles for budget consideration at Ranford Reserve, Burrendah North Reserve and Canning Vale Reserve where feasible.



To develop a plan for a district level athletics site at one of the reserves within the City.



To advocate to the State Government for support of a synthetic surface track in the metropolitan area.





