

DARLINGTON SPORTS AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION (WA) Inc. (DaSRA)



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DaSRA

Darlington Oval Realignment Idea - Information Sheet

01 December 2021

DaSRA, consistent with its Objects of Association, has agreed to moderate a conversation about the realignment/widening of the Darlington Oval. The role of DaSRA in this situation is one of collecting ideas, concerns and opportunities and disseminating this information to the wider community to establish an agreed position that can be put to DCRA and the Shire.

Improved access for junior sporting teams. The motivation for a realignment and widening of the playing field has come from the Sporting clubs who see this as an important initiative providing room for an additional age group in both Cricket and Football, both boys and girls, to play games at Darlington. Thus encouraging the young and youth of the community to come out from behind their screens and enjoy the personal and social benefits of 'belonging' to Darlington teams, at their Home base.

An Aerial photograph of the Oval and its surrounds is provided below for reference purposes, showing a juxtaposition of a widened northern boundary as proposed by the Sporting Clubs. This will soon be shown on site with a series of painted pegs outlining the reshaping, for real time viewing.



Proposed Oval realignment with Cricket Pitch in the middle – playing field approx 105M diameter at pitch. North ↑

Note: 1. The Red line shows the extent of realignment within the boundary of the Main Reserve and associated strip

2. The Inset Photo shows extent of playing surface for Junior Football

3. Oval surface condition proximate to the Northern Boundary

4. Also a number of the Pine trees shown in the inset photo have since died and been removed [Red Circle]

Darlington Vision: The community and locality of Darlington is recognised as having a vision of sustainability that goes beyond just economics and energy but is an holistic vision about community, coming together and the future, "...an informed, responsible, creative and multicultural village community with an affinity to the natural environment whilst fostering art, education, recreation and business activities" [Ref. Darlington Locality Plan 2019 - <https://www.darlingtonvillage.org/community-groups/darlington-ratepayers/>]. Any development needs to be considered in this light.

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Questions:

Of course, the change proposed by the Sporting Clubs has already raised some legitimate concerns and questions, which are presented here.

1. **Will the widening impact on the Railway Heritage Trail?** No – The dimensions identified ensure that any formal oval widening will NOT encroach into the Reserve known as the Railway Heritage Trail.
2. **What about the so called “ Drainage Easement”?** A skinny piece of “Reserve” along the norther boundary of the oval, known locally as a “Drainage Reserve”, is in fact, from a Shire management responsibility, part of the Recreation Reserve 18731 and NOT part of the Railway Heritage Trail Reserve. The Red Line in the Photo above shows this part of the Reserve.
3. **How much vegetation will need to be removed to accommodate the widening?** Based on the draft layout shown in the plan above, a maximum increase of 5 metres at the northern edge of the oval would require: [refer also to more aerial photographs and overlays on the Darlington Pavilion website]
 - a. The removal of the one remaining pine tree that borders the Oval. [A community member’s suggestion was that, if removed, the Log could be milled and used for furniture around the Oval.]
 - b. The widening would also require the relocation of three Xanthorrhoea grass trees possibly for Landscaping improvements in the Skatepark/Pump Track area or donated to another local group
4. **Would there be an impact to any of the Dog Memorial Posts, trees and benches?** No – the oval widening does not extend into these areas
5. **Does the Cricket Pitch move?** No. Based on the current proposal the Cricket Pitch will not move.
6. **Do the Goal Posts get Moved?** Yes to enable the additional football team to play on a regulation sized oval the Goal Posts would be marginally realigned.
7. **Does it mean that more sports will be played on the Oval?** The Sporting Clubs advise that their request for realignment and widening is to enable one additional Junior team [one each in Football and Cricket] to play their home game at Darlington. The clubs advise that the bookings of the Oval are managed by the Shire of Mundaring through seasonal booking arrangements. While club player registrations and participation rates change each year the clubs advise that the additional games could fall within their Seasonal Booking [further evidence and information is required on this]. The three main clubs advise as follows

Junior Football Comments: Junior Football has a block booking with the Shire from around Easter to the end of August.

- a. Auskick and Junior Football upto year 5’s are the dominant fixtures where up to two teams play on the oval at the same time [Saturday 8.00am to 11.00 am normally and Sunday 8.00am to 12.30], generating the most traffic and parking.
- b. After this there is currently one game at a time on a larger area for year 5’s with games between the time of 12.30 - 2.00pm.
- c. With respect to Footy training the Junior Football training has a block time of 4.30-6.00pm daily.
- d. The aspiration is for the addition of a Year 7’s team, which is expected to not prolong the game use of the Oval, as appropriate scheduling would result in home games on Darlington Oval being alternated between the various age groups.
- e. The lack of broad lighting at Darlington restricts training to the Pavilion end of the Oval, which results in the older teams generally training under lights at Boya Oval, so no increase in training.

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- f. As with Cricket the football club has first option to use the Oval during the Block times but has always been flexible for use by others when the Oval is not being used by the club

Junior Cricket Comments: The Junior Cricket Club currently has a “Block” booking of the Oval with the Shire from October 1 to March 31 every summer. Our registrations open up to U/10’s, 11’s, 12’s 13’s, 14’s, 15’s and 17’s in the mixed competitions, and U/11’s, 13’s, 15’s and 18’s in the Girls competition. Currently, we only have 5 teams, with around 50 players registering for Cricket Blast to play on Friday.

- a. Our aspiration is for the oval to be expanded to comply with the rules for U/11’s and up
- b. The Block booking is for use of the Oval from 4pm - 7pm every week day [although currently, the club only uses the oval on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday] for training sessions and from 7am -12 noon for games on Saturdays and Sundays.
- c. If the possible teams were fully subscribed, we would need to have a couple of teams training each night at the oval Mon- Thurs with Junior and Master Blasters Cricket from 4:30-6pm on Fridays, and one of our teams would need the oval on a Saturday and Sunday for a home game
- d. The clubs predict that there will be some extra games at the weekend during school terms [coordinated with Social Cricket] and possibly extra training sessions in the afternoons during school terms but given the way the junior sport competitions are scheduled the majority of games will be away games.

Social Cricket Comments: There would be no change to the current scheduling of Social Cricket.

- a. The Schedule currently accommodates approximately 22 Games on Darlington Oval, across the season between October and April, held on either a Saturday or Sunday from around 11.30am to 5.30pm.
8. **Will this change lead to competitive adult sport taking place on the oval?** No –the oval would not be large enough to meet requirements for senior/adult football or competitive adult cricket.
9. **How would the widening impact on the wide range of oval users?** The Oval is within a Reserve designated for recreational purposes and accommodates many users as a shared community space, all of whom currently work cooperatively and informally to minimise impact. The Oval also provides a green setting in the Darlington Village that is appreciated as a peaceful open space. Managing any additional use needs to factor in the potential impact on the views and aspirations of all users.
10. **Traffic and Parking.** The impact of an additional game, on traffic and parking, on a weekend needs more detailed information about timing and numbers of attendees. So some more research is required. Especially in light of current traffic and parking experience around congestion and Safety during major events/activities. It is noted that the Shire does not have any current plans for making any parking or road improvements along Pine Terrace or adjacent areas.

Ideas and Opportunities:

The Sporting clubs have suggested that the proposal to realign and widen the Oval could be combined with other proposals, and new ideas, as an opportunity to improve the aesthetic of the oval and its surrounds, provide an environment to be enjoyed by all oval users and visitors to our village, and support the sense of belonging to Darlington

1. **Improve the drainage of the Oval.** The drainage of the Oval, constructed some time ago, is now a serious concern during the winter wet season when large tracts of the oval become inundated with “surface water” and therefore unsuitable for many users, both recreational as well as sporting, needs to be fixed. The current drain on the Northern side is in poor condition, is inadequate and is poorly

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located. The repairs/construction of a new drain [as proposed in a future Shire Budget] provides an opportunity to realign the drain and to make the oval more of an “Oval” shape.

2. **Improve the surface of the Oval.** The uneven and patchy grass surface on the Northern Side of the Oval is a maintenance and safety concern, as stated by Shire operational staff and the sporting clubs. This is partly a result from old and current tree roots under the surface. The removal of the tree roots and reshaping the surface would contribute to improving the surface.
3. **Removal of Last Pine Tree.** Besides being required to be removed as part of the realignment/widening, removing the remaining Pine Tree, located on the Northern boundary of the Oval, would assist in improving the long term status of the surface as well as enabling a new drain to be designed and constructed around the Northern side of the Oval.
4. **Other Development around the Oval.** The sporting clubs suggest that, with a joint campaign, along with the Oval realignment/widening there are opportunities to enhance the Northern bank of the Oval where there are existing deciduous shade trees, achieved by:
 - a. Adding more trees [possibly shade shelters?], as well as increased and improved seating, to make it more amenable, useable and attractive.
 - b. This could also include the enhancement of the Dog Memorial area as a place of reflection; of course subject to those people with an interest in this area being involved in any decision making, planning and/or development.
 - c. DCRA has recommended to the Shire for the incorporation of a Fitness trail around the Oval and, once this is further developed, then work could be coordinated with other ideas.
 - d. There may be other ideas in the Community to be considered.

While these ideas are not specifically tied to the issue of the Oval realignment/widening the Sporting Clubs suggest that they can be connected and that with community support and some fund raising a number of them could be advanced for the benefit of the broad community.

Process from Here:

Like any change to the amenity and aesthetic of our village environment, DaSRA recognises that we aspire to remain sympathetic to our surroundings and the character that makes Darlington a great place to live.

DaSRA is happy to receive feedback about the proposed realignment and associated issues.

The DaSRA Website has a page specifically set aside for comment –

<https://www.darlingtonpavilion.com.au/oval-realignment> -

so please go to it for your responses. Alternatively you can contact Geoff Barker geoff@pmdwa.com to have a conversation on the matter.

Following this interactive conversation process it is proposed to hold a Public Meeting to present the findings in the new year and, from this, a report would be prepared and presented to DCRA and all interested parties.

Geoff Barker

Chairperson DaSRA