

ITEM 6 SPORTS GRANTS PROGRAM ASSESSMENT OUTCOME 2025

This report seeks Council’s endorsement of the Sports and Facilities Reference Group (SFRG) assessment panel’s recommendations to allocate funds to eight priority projects totalling \$390,658 under the 2025 Council-funded Sports Grants Program.

The Sports Grants Program supports local sporting clubs and associations by providing financial assistance to improve community sports facilities. During the application period, Council received a total of 37 eligible applications. These were assessed and ranked by the SFRG representatives to determine priority projects for funding.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 Council endorses the recommendations of the Sports and Facilities Reference Group assessment panel identified in Table 1.
- 2 A sum of \$390,658 from the Sports Reserve fund is allocated to fund eight (8) projects that have met the criteria as determined by Sports and Facilities Reference Group assessment panel.
- 3 All unsuccessful sporting clubs who submitted an application are thanked for participating in the Grant Program and alternative Grant Programs are forwarded to those Clubs for potential application.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Mark Berriman, Manager Sport + Recreation
 Authorised by: Kerry Hunt, Director Community Services - Creative and Innovative City

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Total Submitted Projects - Sports Grants Program 2025

ACRONYMS USED IN REPORT

Abbreviation	Meaning
LGA	Local Government Area
SFRG	Sports and Facilities Reference Group

BACKGROUND

Wollongong City Council’s Sports Grants Program has been on offer since 2008 providing opportunity for clubs and associations to apply for a minimum of \$5,000 up to a maximum of \$100,000 to improve their facilities. A maximum amount of \$400,000 is available this financial year for funding under this program. The Program supports our Sportsgrounds and Sporting Facilities Strategy 2023-2027 by funding small and medium-sized infrastructure projects that:

- Increase opportunities for people to participate in sport
- Increase sportsground capacity and allow sites to be used for multiple sports and groups
- Renew and enhance existing sporting infrastructure with a focus on gender equity, accessibility, and storage
- Invest in infrastructure to support and accommodate emerging sports and independent recreational pursuits.

The program is open to sporting clubs and associations that are:

- Incorporated
- Not for profit
- Based or operating within the Wollongong Local Government Area (LGA) on land categorised as ‘sportsground’ under Section 26(4) of the *Local Government Act (1993)*.

Promotion of the Program was undertaken through Council’s website, social media channels, direct communication with sporting clubs and associations, and through the SFRG. A self-service booking system was also made available, allowing applicants to consult with Council’s Recreation Services team regarding project eligibility, scope, and submission requirements.

During the application period of 8 August to 5 September 2025, a total of 37 applications were received requesting over \$1.91 million in funding. The list of all applications received is provided in Attachment 1 of this report. Each submission was evaluated against the Program’s criteria, with consideration given to strategic alignment, community impact, deliverability, and value for money.

Projects were ranked based on merit, strategic alignment, community impact, and deliverability. The outcomes of the assessment were presented at the SFRG meeting held on 24 September 2025.

PROPOSAL

The SFRG assessment panel recommended funding for eight (8) priority projects, which collectively total \$390,658. This allocation is within the approved \$400,000 budget for the 2025-2026 financial year. The remaining balance will be retained for future rounds of the Program.

Table 1: Sports Grants Assessment recommended project list

Organisation	Project Summary	Grant Funding
Wollongong District Cricket Club	Installation of a new storage building	\$5,658
Bulli & District Tennis Association	Renewal of the existing synthetic grass court surface	\$30,000
Balgownie Junior Football Club	Installation of Sportsfield Floodlighting at Judy Masters Football Field	\$100,000
Woonona Football Club	Replacement of fencing on sportsfield	\$45,000
Corrimal Cougars Rugby League	Sportsfield Drainage & Gender Neutral Changeroom enhancements	\$50,000
Illawarra Sports Stadium	Renewal of the scoreboard and Shot Clocks	25,000
North Dalton Park Regional Sports Centre	Renewal of Floodlighting Luminar’s	\$100,000
Cricket NSW / Cricket Illawarra	Replacement and renewal of multiple synthetic wickets across the LGA	\$35,000
Total		\$390,658

The SFRG identified that North Dalton Park Regional Sports Centre’s project was valued at \$708,750 and included other sources of funding that at the time of application was unconfirmed. The SFRG recommended at the 24 September 2025 meeting, that if the North Dalton Park Trust is unable to secure the remaining funding to deliver the floodlighting program identified in its application within three (3) months, the allocated funds should be reallocated to the next ranked project.

Since this time, the North Dalton Park Trust has been notified that it was successful in securing \$300,000 from the NSW Club Grants Category 3 Fund in October 2025. The Trust is awaiting other partnership funding outcomes as many were contingent on the ability to secure the Club Grants funding, which now has been achieved.

A further report would be provided to Council if the Trust is unable to confirm the remaining funding within the specified timeframe to outline options for reallocating the grant to the next ranked project(s).

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong Our Future 2035 Goal 4 - ‘We have a healthy, respectful, and inclusive community.’ It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan 2035		Delivery Program 2025-2029
Strategy		Service
4.2	Provide a variety of quality and accessible public spaces and opportunities for sport, play, leisure, recreation, learning and cultural activities in the community.	Parks and Sportsfields

The process applied to the Sports Grants Program is consistent with Council’s Financial Assistance Procedures Management Policy.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The proposed allocation of funding under the Sports Grants Program presents minimal risk to Council, provided appropriate governance and oversight measures are maintained. Key risks include economic risk (inefficient use of public funds), operational risk (delays in project delivery), and reputational risk (perceived inequity or lack of transparency in grant allocation). These risks are mitigated through a structured assessment process undertaken by the Sports and Facilities Reference Group, formal funding agreements with successful applicants, and clear project delivery timelines.

Council’s Risk Management Policy and relevant risk registers will continue to guide oversight of funded projects, ensuring compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements and alignment with Council’s strategic objectives.

All successful applicants will be required to enter into a formal funding agreement with Council, outlining project scope, delivery timelines, and reporting obligations. Projects must be completed within 12 months of signing the agreement. Unsuccessful applicants will be provided with feedback to support future submissions. Subject to Council endorsement, funding will be released from January 2026 onwards.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Sports Grants Program is funded via Council’s Sports Reserve fund which has sufficient funds available to support these grants at a total of \$390,658.

CONCLUSION

The 2025 Sports Grants Program has demonstrated strong community demand, with over \$1.9 million in funding requested across 37 eligible applications. Following a rigorous assessment process undertaken by the Sports and Facilities Reference Group, eight (8) priority projects have been identified for funding, totalling \$390,658.

This investment will support the renewal and enhancement of community sports infrastructure across the Wollongong LGA, contributing to increased participation, improved accessibility, and greater facility sustainability. The program aligns with Council’s strategic objectives under the Sportsgrounds and Sporting Facilities Strategy 2023-2027 and Our Wollongong Our Future 2035.

It is recommended that Council endorse the allocation of \$390,658 from the Sports Reserve fund to support the eight projects outlined in this report, with funding agreements to be executed and works to commence from January 2026.

Attachment 1			
Total Submitted Projects - Sports Grants Program 2025			
App No	Applicant	Project Title	Total Amount Requested
SR2500001	Woonona Football Club	Ocean Park Fencing Stage 3 Ball Stop	\$45,000.00
SR2500002	Woonona Shamrocks Rugby Club Incorporated	Mobility Accessible and Seniors Viewing Platform.	\$19,932.00
SR2500003	Dapto Swimming Club	Portable Mini Scoreboard	\$63,596.00
SR2500004	Corrimal Junior Rugby League Football Club	Changerooms upgrade	\$4,000.00
SR2500006	Baseball Illawarra inc.	Sports fields upgrade	\$15,000.00
SR2500007	Corrimal Rangers Football Club	Playing Field Drainage Improvement	\$95,698.00
SR2500009	Wollongong District Cricket Club	Wollongong District Cricket Club Storage Building	\$5,658.00
SR2500010	Illawarra Basketball Association	Increase seating capacity at Snakepit	\$35,000.00
SR2500011	Helensburgh Off Road Cycle Club	HORCC Track reconstruction	\$100,000.00
SR2500012	Bulli Football Club Ltd	Floodlighting System Replacement. (Excluding Poles)	\$53,925.00
SR2500014	Wollongong Cardinals Baseball Club	Cringila Batting Cage	\$100,000.00
SR2500016	Western Suburbs Senior Rugby League Football Club	Installation of Water Tanks	\$28,424.00
SR2500017	Corrimal Cougars Rugby League Football Club	Ziems Park Upgrades -	\$50,000.00
SR2500018	Keira Pony Club	Upgrade Parking area	\$100,000.00
SR2500019	Woonona Bulli Bushrangers Jrlfc	Storage Shed	\$80,000.00
SR2500021	Illawarra Sports Stadium Limited	Scoreboard & Shot Clock Replacement	\$25,000.00
SR2500022	Port Kembla Cricket Club	20ft Shipping Container Storage - Port Kembla	\$7,845.00
SR2500023	Fairy Meadow Netball Club	Guest Park Netball Court Resurfacing	\$100,000.00
SR2500024	Port Kembla Junior Football Club	Sporting Equipment Shed	\$50,000.00

SR2500025	Wollongong City Surf Life Saving Club Incorporated	Fixed and Movable new board rack system	\$9,039.00
SR2500026	Illawarra Hockey Inc.	Update Field Lighting Power Supply & Controls	\$100,000.00
SR2500028	Helensburgh Junior Rugby League Football Club	Improve our player facilities	\$100,000.00
SR2500029	Wollongong Croquet Club Incorporated	Renovate the two existing croquet lawns at Wollongong Croquet Club Incorporated	\$5,260.00
SR2500030	Illawarra Stingrays FC Incorporated	Guest Park Equipment Shed	\$70,000.00
SR2500031	Bulli & District Tennis Association Inc.	Tennis Court Surface renewal - Corrimal Tennis Centre	\$30,000.00
SR2500032	North Dalton Park Regional Sports Centre Inc.	North Dalton Park Floodlighting Maintenance	\$100,000.00
SR2500033	Russell Vale Junior Soccer Club	Turf improvements	\$20,000.00
SR2500034	CORRIMAL JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB INC	Project Mobile Digital Scoreboard	\$18,865.00
SR2500035	Five Islands Outrigger Canoe Club	Outrigger Fitness and Competition Enhancement Project: Upgraded Training Facilities for Paddlers	\$9,000.00
SR2500036	Balgownie Junior Football Club	Judy Masters Oval Light Upgrade	\$100,000.00
SR2500038	Wollongong Olympic Football Club	Installation of Covered Grandstands	\$80,000.00
SR2500039	Coniston Football Club	Changeroom Upgrades - Stage 1	\$98,750.00
SR2500040	Illawarra Passionate Cricketers Club	Illawarra Passionate Cricketers Club Equipment Storage and Sustainability Project	\$9,655.00
SR2500041	Helensburgh netball Club	Netball Court upgrade- Court side seating and concrete initiative	\$5,500.00
SR2500042	Western Suburbs Junior Rugby League Football Club Incorporated	Purchase of 4 x 8-Seater Team Shelters	\$42,008.00
SR2500043	Cricket NSW on Behalf of Cricket Illawarra	Illawarra Cricket Pitch Renewal and Upgrade Project	\$35,000.00
SR2500044	Figtree Football Club Inc	Harry Graham Field 1 Reconstruction	\$100,000.00
Total			\$1,912,155.00