

ITEM 23

NOTICE OF MOTION - COUNCILLOR MITHRA COX - CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN FOR COMMUNITY SPORT

Councillor Mithra Cox has submitted the following Notice of Motion –

“I formally move that Council develops a climate mitigation plan for community sport including –

- 1 In the short term (for the 2024 season), works with sports associations to extend the winter outdoor sport season for codes that have been significantly affected by ongoing wet weather. This could include, but is not limited to –
 - a Freeing up additional football pitches on a temporary basis to enable the season to extend into an overlap with the cricket season. There are some locations that could be made playable with the simple addition of line marking and temporary goals, like Roy Johanson Park in Figtree or Nicholson Park in Woonona.
 - b Contacting the Department of Education, Wollongong University or other relevant state agencies to request that some of their sporting fields be made available to extend the winter sport season.
- 2 In the longer term, developing an additional chapter of the Sportsgrounds and Sporting Facilities Strategy that deals specifically with climate adaptations for community sport. This could include, but is not limited to –
 - a A longer term plan for drainage, irrigation and shade at sporting grounds.
 - b Considering planning for one or more indoor multi use sporting facilities that could be used for a range of sports in times of ongoing wet weather or extreme heat. This facility would need to be bookable by a range of clubs and teams, and under the control of council, not licenced to a single club to ensure equity of access.
 - c Considering the need for shade at sporting grounds.
 - d Working with other government agencies on facilities sharing plans, to enable community access to school halls, university and TAFE facilities or state government owned facilities like the Wollongong Entertainment Centre.”

Background provided by Councillor Cath Blakey:

The 2024 outdoor winter sport season has been severely interrupted by ongoing and extreme wet weather: many teams have played only four games since April. This is the second season in three years to have had more than half the games in a season cancelled, and we know that climate change will only exacerbate these changes in weather and intensify extreme weather events.

According to the Bureau of Meteorology, for every degree Celsius that Earth's atmospheric temperature rises, the amount of water vapor in the atmosphere can increase by about 7%. This is particularly true for Wollongong, because the water from an unusually warm ocean is trapped by the escarpment behind the city.

We know that increased and extreme rainfall is not the only impact of climate change that Wollongong is already experiencing. Extended periods of drought and heatwave will also have an increasing impact on community sport, with heatwaves in the summer months expected to increase in severity and duration. Playing sport in extreme heat is not safe for the human body, and so we need to plan now for these future impacts, so that our community can continue to play sport now and into the future.