

20 January 2025

Mr David Marshall  
Kuringgai Councillors

**Subject: Ongoing Concerns Regarding Norman Griffiths Oval Project**

Dear General Manager and Councillors,

Voices of Ku-ring-gai, representing a coalition of community members dedicated to advocating for transparency, accountability, and responsible decision-making, are writing to express significant concerns regarding the Norman Griffiths Oval upgrade.

Our apprehensions centre on the project's escalating financial costs, environmental impact, and the apparent lack of accountability surrounding its management.

We urge you, as our elected representatives, to seek comprehensive answers from the Council on the following issues to restore public trust and ensure responsible governance.

**1. Escalating Project Costs**

The Norman Griffiths Oval upgrade has experienced substantial budget increases since its inception:

- Initial Estimate: The project was initially estimated at \$3.3 million, with local football clubs contributing approximately \$1 million through club funds and government grants.
- April 2024 Revision: By April 2024, the estimated budget had risen to \$4.77 million.
- December 2024 Update: The budget further increased to \$5.5 million.
- Current Projection: Given ongoing challenges, it is anticipated that the total cost may now exceed \$6 million.

Despite these increases, Ku-ring-gai Council stated in its December 2024 update that “progress on site has not been as expected despite the sustained efforts by Council’s project team.”

**Questions for Council:**

- What specific factors have contributed to the continuous budget increases?
- How does the Council plan to manage and fund the additional costs?
- What measures are being implemented to prevent further financial overruns?

**2. Pollution and Microplastics**

Council’s December 2024 website update asserts that “*the project includes water-sensitive urban design elements such as the bio-retention basin and the GPT, which, post-construction,*

*will result in a better quality of water entering Quarry Creek than was occurring prior to undertaking the project.”*

However, these claims conflict with findings in the Council’s own REF:

- *“Any runoff from this surface will impact on water quality.”*
- *“The synthetic field may increase pollutants such as microplastics and chemicals entering the stormwater system and impacting connecting waterways.”*

Additional overseas research confirms that synthetic turf contributes to significant microplastic pollution from turf blades and the shock pad beneath, which cannot be captured by the proposed Gross Pollutant Trap (GPT).

#### **Questions for Council:**

- When will a comprehensive pollutant load analysis be conducted?
- What strategies are in place to mitigate microplastic and chemical pollution affecting Quarry Creek and Lane Cove National Park?
- How will the Council monitor and address ongoing environmental risks associated with the synthetic field?

### **3. Environmental Compliance**

As recently as 18th January 2025, the contractor was observed pumping significant dirty water from the oval drainage system directly into Quarry Creek, causing further water pollution. This is despite Council’s assurance on their website that *“Council has complied with all the requirements to date and continues to work with the EPA on its investigation into the matter and ensuring the site is managed in accordance with approved environmental management controls and any other EPA requirements.”*

#### **Questions for Council:**

- What measures have been taken to address the incident on 18th January 2025?
- What steps are being taken to ensure contractors adhere to environmental compliance standards?
- What is the timeline for completing the EPA investigation, and how will its findings be shared with the community?

### **4. Design and Flood Management Flaws**

Ku-ring-gai Council’s December 2024 website update stated: *“The project team is currently dealing with a network infrastructure upgrade involving Sydney Water’s sewage system and are also working through design conditions with the contractor to ensure the desired stormwater management measures for the site are designed and delivered to meet Council’s expectations.”*

However, significant design flaws were evident from the outset, including the failure to adequately plan for:

- Construction of the bio-basin.
- Upgrade of the sewer main.
- Formation of the detention basin under the playing surface.
- Construction of the overland flow path.

- Laying of the playing substructure and surface.

These omissions resulted in extensive remediation efforts and delays and escalating project costs as outlined above.

**Questions for Council:**

- Why were these critical issues not identified and addressed in the initial planning stages?
- Who within the Council is responsible for overseeing project management and ensuring adherence to timelines and budgets?
- What accountability measures are in place for project managers and contractors in light of these oversights?

**Voices of Ku-ring-gai strongly advocates for:**

- A detailed public report outlining the reasons for the project's cost escalations and delays.
- Implementation of robust oversight mechanisms to prevent future mismanagement.
- Enhanced transparency and community consultation in ongoing and future projects.

We request that you, as Councillors, seek answers to these pressing questions from the Council and take decisive action to address the concerns raised.

It is imperative that the Council demonstrates fiscal responsibility, environmental stewardship, and accountability to the community it serves.

Yours sincerely,

*Dale Crosby*

Dale Crosby - Treasurer

**Voices of Ku-ring-gai**