

# 2022 KEN GANNON COMMUNITY FOOTBALL FACILITIES AWARDS WINNING PROJECT CASE STUDIES



GOVERNMENT  
& FACILITIES

# FOREWORD

The Ken Gannon Community Football Facilities Awards recognise, on an annual basis, best practise in community football facility development across Australia, along with the people, clubs and other stakeholders driving our best community level projects.

Ken Gannon had a decorated career across many areas of the game, including as Chief Executive of the Geelong Cats and AFL Victoria. Ken spent much of the last decade of his career developing the AFL's interest and partnerships in the community facilities space, leading outcomes related to more than 800 community football facility projects in that period.

The growth of our game has largely been underpinned by the overwhelming success and upcoming expansion of AFLW to a full 18 team competition in 2023. Across Australia, for every 1 female football team in 2010, there are now 12.4 teams. Australian football reaches and actively engages more than 100,000 women and girls every week, 12 times more than ten years ago and growing every year and almost half (47%) of community football venues now host female football competitions.

Significant steps have been made to improve football facilities over the past decade, guided by locally focused State and Territory facility strategies. The environment for football and related facilities has changed rapidly in the past decade, and more pathways are being provided to support women and girls to participate, coach, officiate and lead.

Matching supply of venues for our growing game's needs is one of our sport's biggest challenges and is a key part of our Towards 2030 Facilities strategy. Three overarching facility goals have been developed to guide our resourcing in terms of infrastructure:

1. Build the capacity of community football.
2. Enhance elite, state league and talent infrastructure.
3. Drive innovation and growth.

Wonderful work continues to be undertaken around the nation in partnership with many different stakeholders to improve existing venues and develop new precincts.

We trust you enjoy hearing about the stories behind these projects and look to replicate some of these project features in your own community in coming years.

## **Shayne Ward**

Head of Facilities, State & Local Government

## **Rob Auld**

Executive General Manager Game Development

*2020 National Winner - Nathan Road Sports Complex at Redcliffe*



# PROJECT OVERVIEW

These awards are funded by the AFL's Australian Football Facilities Fund which partners on \$50M worth of community football facility projects benefitting more than 100 clubs each and every year. The AFL is proud of its investment into the game and the facilities we use. Over the past 5 years, the AFL has invested \$24M into an estimated \$340M worth of infrastructure projects.

The following seven award winning project case studies are remarkable examples of best practise with each aligning strongly to the AFL's aim of providing well positioned, welcoming, fit for purpose football facilities that support our growing game's strategic priorities.

State/Territory Winners	Project Title	Total Project Cost
New South Wales	Wiigulga Sports Complex	\$28,400,000
Northern Territory	TIO Stadium Seat Upgrade	\$862,300
Queensland	G Rae Sports Ground	\$1,460,000
South Australia	Max Amber Sportsfield Redevelopment	\$10,900,000
Tasmania	Devonport Oval Change Room Development	\$962,510
Victoria	Reid Oval Redevelopment	\$10,645,000
Western Australia	Frankland Park Sporting & Community Facility	\$10,530,000

2021 National Winner - Lakelands Park Sporting Complex, WA



# WIIGULGA SPORTS COMPLEX

Club: Northern Beaches Blues AFL Club / Northern Beaches Blues J AFC  
Council: Coffs Harbour City Council  
Venue: Wiigulga Sports Complex

Funding Partners	Contribution
Australian Football Facilities Fund	\$50,000
Federal Government	\$10,000,000
Council	\$10,000,000
State Government	\$8,000,000
Community Contributions	\$350,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$28,400,000</b>

## OVERVIEW

As a Greenfield site (located on the western side of Solitary Islands Way and adjacent to Woolgoolga High School), Council had the opportunity to design a sporting precinct purpose built for the needs of the Northern Beaches of the LGA, and encompasses both outdoor sporting use, indoor sporting use, as well as a range of indoor and outdoor community use areas. A venue built to support all aspects of our game to utilise the facilities available, particularly women's football, talent, and multicultural activities.

Club matches and finals can now be played at the venue, giving the local club a strong sustainable future, along with providing a space for preseason and umpiring development activities, Masters competitions and elite training camps.

Environmentally, the Multipurpose Centre located within the complex is the first green star accredited building with a rating of 4, within the LGA, with numerous sustainable features noted throughout the venue. Features include sustainable building design principals and material choices, through to high volume solar and batteries, rain water harvesting, EV charging stations, and much more.

Previous hours of use	0-5 hours	Previous SFA score	0
Current hours of use	26 - 30 hours (approx 25)	New SFA score	125
Combined Male Participation	163	Combined Female Participation	78

## OUTCOMES

Wiigulga is a new integrated sport and community facility in Northern NSW including two 200lux AFL ovals and 4 changerooms for players, adequate umpire facilities, appropriate canteen and storage facilities and a multi purpose indoor centre, including two courts, stage, sensory room, commercial kitchen, function rooms and onsite cafe.

This now offers all participants and officials the best opportunity to fixture back to back male and female fixtures, train at night, fixture night matches, and host key events. The second oval with no cricket pitch for juniors and warming up ahead of senior games on the main oval is a game changer for both players, umpires and coaches.

The Junior and Senior clubs previously shared one ground at Centennial Oval. The venue had poor drainage and lighting, synthetic cricket pitch and inadequate amenities and player and umpire changerooms.



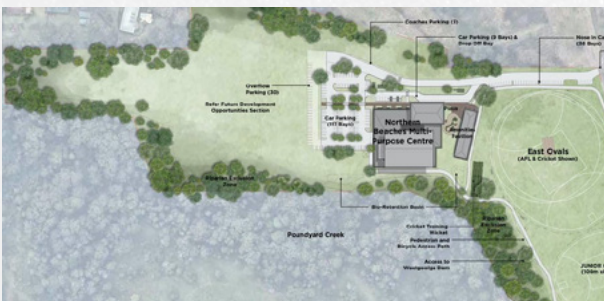


*"The Wiigulga Sporting Complex is the ideal facility to allow the AFL community to grow the game in the local area. These grounds will help grow our club and help introduce the game we all love to a range of new people in the wider Northern Beaches community. All in all we are greatly looking forward to getting out there and showcasing to the broader North Coast region our brand new facility."*

**Jackson Horrocks**  
 Senior President, Northern Beaches Blues AFL Club

*"Great to see construction completed as this is a game-changer for the whole of the northern beaches, this facility will be great for local families and sporting clubs. It will allow us to attract major sporting and cultural events. Additionally, it has created jobs and will be a great economic driver for the community." Kevin Hogan MP, Federal Member for Page* *"This new complex is a game-changer for the Woolgoolga and Northern Beaches community. The indoor spaces have a versatile range of uses and I can't wait to see our community bring this space to life. The community committee led by Alastair Milroy must be thanked for their decade long advocacy for this project and for their work during the design and construction phase to ensure the original vision for the complex was achieved. All of the community groups who have contributed financially to the project also deserve our collective praise"*

**Gurmesh Singh MP**  
 Member for Coffs Harbour



**NORTHERN BEACHES BLUES**

# TIO STADIUM SEAT UPGRADE

Venue: TIO Stadium

Funding Partners	Contribution
TOTAL	\$862,300

## OVERVIEW

This project provides a seating upgrade at TIO Stadium that will create the first AFL facility with a local indigenous design on the seats. This is a huge step in acknowledging and building a greater connection with the local Larrakia people, the traditional owners of the land, the NT's indigenous population and their relationship with AFL. This will put TIO Stadium on the national stage.

Northern Territory Government (NTG) owns TIO Stadium in which AFLNT leases. This initiative came about because the NTG planned to replace the 4,500 seats. AFLNT advocated to replace them with an indigenous design to reflect the Larrakia people where the ground is located. AFLNT worked with the artist and architect to transfer the design to seats.

The driver for the project was to replace the seats with a meaningful design to create a unique aesthetic that reflected the local people.

The replacement of the seats was funded and managed by the NTG. AFLNT identified a local artist, Trent Lee who created the design. Smart Form Architects were engaged to transfer the design to the seats. Collaboration between NTG, AFL staff in the NT and nationally took place to ensure there was a design that maintained it's story and was able to be transferred to the seats.





“The Star Dreaming which is the circles with the interconnecting lines, was given to my sister at a very young age, through different events that would take place.

One of our stories for us is how my totem animal / dreaming area was created.

One star/spirit being was flying through the sky looking for a wife whilst he was flying he saw a woman and swooped down to trying to get her but he missed and created a gouge in the reef because he was traveling so fast he bounced back up into the sky as he was trying to turn around to go back, but was unable to and his direction of travel headed him to continue on to towards the Peron islands.

The orange in the background is the crocodile scales in reverse as it is one of our main totems for our people we respect, and we can affiliate with it.

This image is my representation of the connection we have with the land, sea and sky, and the importance of keeping cultural alive through our art stories and living on country.”

Trent Lee  
Artist

# G RAE SPORTS GROUND

**Club:** Hinterland Blues Australian Football Club

**Council:** Sunshine Coast Council

**Venue:** Grahame Rae Sports Ground

Funding Partners	Contribution
AFL Queensland Grand Final Facilities Fund	\$150,000
Sunshine Coast Council	\$710,000
Queensland Government W4Q	\$500,000
Queensland Cricket	\$100,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,460,000</b>

## OVERVIEW

The redevelopment included a new club house, gender neutral player and umpire changerooms, public amenities, first aid room, social / meeting space, kitchen/ bar area and storage for user groups. The new facility was built above the Q100 flood level to better protect the asset and reduce volunteer impact. The two large, unisex changerooms can be divided into four through the use of operable walls.

During the planning of the project a key decision was made to raise the structures above the Q100 Flood Line. This was immediately beneficial in the event of the early 2022 floods where the new facilities sat above the surrounding precinct that was predominantly underwater. Previously the former clubhouse was susceptible to flooding events resulting in costs and time impacts for Council and Volunteer committee members.

Previous hours of use	20 hours	Previous SFA score	60.5
Current hours of use	25 hours	New SFA score	67.5
Combined Male Participation	172	Combined Female Participation	65

## OUTCOMES

- » Improved standard of facilities and compliance with preferred facilities guidelines
- » Improved all abilities access to the unisex facilities.
- » Improved flood resilience significantly and reduced risk of related financial impact and volunteer burden.
- » Project was delivered by Sunshine Coast Regional Council in collaboration with the stakeholder group from ALF Queensland, State Government and Queensland Cricket. Demolition of previous facilities was completed in February 2020 and the facilities were made available to AFL users for the commencement of Season 2022.
- » Maintained participation particularly in females who are less likely to leave the club because of poor facilities.
- » Significantly reduced risk of flooding related damage, financial impact and impost on volunteers.
- » Brings facilities in line with Preferred Facilities Guidelines.







*“Sunshine Coast Council was excited to work in partnership with the Queensland Government and AFLQ to deliver a new \$1.46M clubhouse for the growing Palmwoods community. Importantly, the modern and compliant clubhouse has been raised above Q100 flood levels to avoid ongoing flooding issues at the site which adversely impacted club volunteers. This was tested soon after completion with the clubhouse standing high and dry! The clubhouse is a great asset for members, players and spectators providing large canteen and meeting space; four female-friendly change rooms; ancillary spaces and raised viewing opportunities for improved spectator experience.”*

**Wendy Guthrie**  
**A/Team Leader Sport Planning & Development, Sunshine Coast Regional Council**

*“This modern, inclusive clubhouse includes four female-friendly change rooms, umpire facilities, a new canteen, meeting room, storage area, first-aid room and an improved spectator embankment.” Importantly, the building has been raised above the Q100 flood level to avoid flooding issues which have happened in the past. I’m delighted to see our new partnership with the AFL through the \$8 million 2020 AFL Grand Final Facilities Fund start kicking some goals by helping projects like this get off the ground.”*

**Stirling Hinchliffe**  
**Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement**



# MAX AMBER SPORTSFIELD REDEVELOPMENT

Club: Athelstone Football Club  
 Council: Campbelltown City Council  
 Venue: Wayikuu, Max Amber Sportsfield

Funding Partners	Contribution
Campbelltown Council	\$5,655,000
Federal Government	\$5,000,000
State Government	\$245,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,900,000</b>

## OVERVIEW

The Max Amber Sportsfield is a key community sporting hub. The project was developed in partnership with the clubs and the broader community to rejuvenate a tired building and create a new sustainable home providing opportunity for clubs to grow and develop new spectator experiences.

Constructed in 1976, the existing club room was outdated and expensive to maintain, not meeting the needs of the club and development of its membership base.

The new development has reinvigorated the sports field and provides clubs with a home and new opportunities. The facility is fit for purpose with a vision for a sustainable future. This project will enabled the club to attract more participants which will better distribute playing numbers in the region, as well as reduce the risk of participation drop-out due to lack of quality facilities or offerings in the area.

Previous hours of use	26 hours	Previous SFA score	79
Current hours of use	> 31 hours (More than 6)	New SFA score	130
Combined Male Participation	172	Combined Female Participation	54

All facets of project were considered, with storage, club heritage and identity and ability to maximise participation, as well as the commerciality of the venue at the forefront of decision making. The close working relationship between council and club are visible in the design and can be felt in all parts of the venue, from the changerooms, to the breathtaking spectator spaces in the function room and pavilion areas.

## KEY BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- » Brand new unisex changerooms for players and umpires.
- » Two large change areas, which can be divided into 4 smaller areas to support multi-gender match scheduling, as well as junior carnivals (all with accessible toilets and showers).
- » Green project which aims to achieve a goal of reducing energy consumption by 40 per cent as well as potable water consumption by 20 per cent, delivering cost savings to the club
- » Ability to better commercialise catering/operations through highly appealing function spaces and spectator viewing areas.
- » Netball courts generate the potential to host wheelchair football programs and create a football/netball club concept.
- » Appropriate storage for club equipment, including areas for the club to showcase its memorabilia and historical items.





*"The new facility is the talk of the town, every visiting club has commented on how amazing the club and changeroom facilities are. Since our opening in July we have had a large number of enquiries from both new and ex-players and supporters wanting to return or join in Season 2023. We also look forward to getting our Netball program up and running in 2023 - something brand new for Athelstone".*

**Stephen Young**  
Athelstone FC President



*"These new facilities boast spectacular viewing areas, which cater for the needs of everyone and represents the diverse range of sporting interests of the community".*

**Mayor Jill Whittaker**  
City of Campbelltown

**SANFL COMMUNITY FACILITY OF THE YEAR** 

**ATHELSTONE FOOTBALL CLUB** 

# DEVONPORT OVAL CHANGE ROOM DEVELOPMENT

Club: Devonport Football Club  
 Council: Devonport City Council  
 Venue: Devonport Oval

Funding Partners	Contribution
Australian Football Facilities Fund	\$40,000
Federal - FF Water Safety Stream Program	\$420,000
Devonport City Council	\$50,000
Devonport Football Club	\$1000
Communities, Sport and Recreation Grant	\$307,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$962,510</b>

## OVERVIEW

Existing under grandstand changerooms and storage spaces stripped out, reinforced beam work added for grandstand support to allow foundation pile removal, full design and reconfiguration for the allowance of split changerooms for home and visitor teams, full construction fit out with addition of three outside compliant public toilets.

These upgrades have ensured the venue is able to best cater for male and female athletes, providing the north west region with an outstanding venue capable of hosting football at all levels, as demonstrated by the Hillcrest Tribute game that was played in 2022 between Hawthorn and Richmond.

Previous hours of use	16 hours	Previous SFA score	121
Current hours of use	20 hours	New SFA score	135
Combined Male Participation	189	Combined Female Participation	85

## OUTCOMES

- » The Devonport Football Club had clearly identified a need to upgrade these facilities.
- » The club's facilities were amongst the poorest in the region, with nothing suitable for female participants. Both the club and the council identified the need to upgrade the facility to ensure the club and its participants had a space that was welcoming, accessible and of an extraordinary standard for players (home and away) and umpires.
- » The project scope was to replace two old change rooms with four new change rooms for male and female players. It required two variations to extend the completion date due to delays in obtaining materials for the work.
- » Innovation was shown, particularly through design and building methods, with the unique structure of the changerooms being underneath the historic grandstand.
- » This project has assisted the Devonport Football Club to better cater for increased female participation, as well as catering for its existing participation base.
- » The finalisation of this project also helped demonstrate the power of the game and sport to a national level, with the venue able to host the 'Healing for Hillcrest' AFL pre-season match due to these changerooms being finalised. The previous changerooms may have prevented such an event from taking place at the facility.





*“The upgraded change facilities that this redevelopment has provided for our community are fantastic. The first people to use the rooms were athletes and cyclists (male and female) for the Devonport Athletic Carnival. This was followed by Hawthorn FC and Richmond FC who played in the Hillcrest Primary School Tribute game. Given Devonport Oval has rarely hosted a game of such profile and capacity, we were delighted to receive nothing but high praise from AFL and AFL club officials about the changerooms. Our club has a focus on being ‘one club’ that welcomes all of our players and teams. These changeroom upgrades have ensured our female players have a safe, private environment with exclusive access to one set of our changerooms on training nights. These changerooms allowed our club to host senior NWFL finals for the first time in a decade, with a Semi Final and Preliminary Final played at the venue. This project has provided Devonport Oval with current and modern facilities that both the City and Club can be proud of. We now have a space that is comfortable and attractive for all athletes.”*

**Devonport Football Club**

*“The project has provided users of the Devonport Oval facilities with modern facilities suitable for all users. In doing so, the Devonport Oval is now an example of best-practice design in the region and will be able to be at the centre of the community.”*

**Devonport City Council**



**DEVONPORT FOOTBALL CLUB** 

# REID OVAL REDEVELOPMENT

Club: Warrnambool Football Netball Club and Warrnambool  
 Council: Warrnambool City Council  
 Venue: Reid Oval

Funding Partners	Contribution
Australian Football Facilities Fund	\$250,000
State Government (SRV and RDV)	\$7,100,000
Warrnambool City Council	\$3,000,000
Cricket Victoria	\$200,000
Club and Community	\$95,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,645,000</b>

## OVERVIEW

The completed project developed a regional level facility that included:

- » Complete reconstruction of the oval playing surface
- » Installation of 200 Lux lighting
- » Construction of a multipurpose sports pavilion inclusive of our unisex player change rooms and an umpires room to allow for AFL preseason and AFLW matches.
- » Adjoining grassed training area and lighting upgrade, which included the installation of goal posts to host training and junior matches for both players and umpires.

## UTILISATION

The main oval upgrade allowed for greater hours of use and programming for both training and competition and the new warmup oval has also taken the training load off the main oval, allowing for greater football use. The female specific changerooms have seen more players attend training and game day.

Reid Oval hosts finals for both Hamden FNL and Western District FNL, is home to the Warrnambool Football Netball Club and Warrnambool and District Umpires Association and for 2023, welcomes its first U14 girls competition.

Previous hours of use	26 hours	Previous SFA score	78
Current hours of use	> 31 hours (More than 6)	New SFA score	145
Combined Male Participation	224	Combined Female Participation	69

Reid Oval was unsuitable for female football and rated very poorly for player and umpire changerooms, playing field condition and field lighting. Access for players and officials is also very poor, all impacting the regions ability to attract significant regional events.

The redevelopment constituted a major renewal of the primary oval and associated facilities within the Reserve. Already a significant asset to the community, the project represented an important opportunity to enhance the existing infrastructure onsite whilst addressing an increasing demand for sport by diverse user groups.

Officially opened on 29 April 2022, Reid Oval is considered the premier regional level facility providing sport and recreation opportunities for Warrnambool and the surrounding Great South Coast community. Its amenity and program provision are driving sports development in all community sectors, particularly those that are currently under-represented in formal sporting activities, especially women and girls.

Since opening, Reid Oval has also hosted:

- » Its first AFLW Game which featured Essendon and Geelong in front of over 3,800 spectators

- » HFNL matches (including night matches) and finals, WDFNL finals. Installation of Goal Posts on training ground to host training and junior matches
- » Private school senior boys football competition, Emmanuel College made it through to Herald Sun Shield
- » Emmanuel College Year 8 football academy training session and motivational talk - Guest speaker Willem Drew (Port Adelaide)
- » South West Sports - Disability Inclusion sports day, identified as an accessible venue and club volunteer workshops
- » AFL Community Camp with Geelong Football Club which included a training session, hosting a seminar with local clubs and a junior training session.

Reid Oval has provided an opportunity for the tenant clubs to increase participation in sport, particularly among females. On top of this, the ability to attract major events, conduct sport at night and host a variety of events linked to sport and participation has resulted in the Reid Oval becoming a beacon for female sport and inclusiveness. To highlight this, Council made a decision that first five (5) night matches at the venue during the 2022 season were U18 girls and women's matches and Grand Finals to showcase women and girls football in the region.



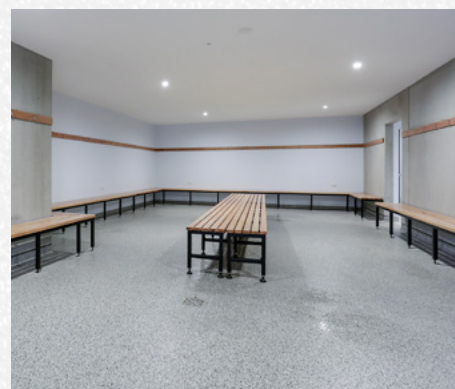


*“The old Reid Oval was tired. The playing surface was patchy, uneven, the pavilion - if you could call it that - was dingy, dark and from an era when people could only dream of an AFL competition that included women. But it was the best we had and it was time to change. We needed Reid Oval to be many things:*

- » *a top level playing surface;*
- » *a pavilion with changerooms that were friendly and accessible regardless of gender;*
- » *a ground and inclusive pavilion that provided accessible viewing;*
- » *a pavilion with adaptable social spaces along with technology and rooms for off-field staff and media.*

*The new Reid Oval is all of the above and more. In its first year it has hosted girls footy under lights, local football home and away games plus finals and the Geelong versus Essendon AFLW game that drew a huge crowd and provided a substantial boost to the local economy. Its accessibility has eliminated barriers to participation for women and girls and the new pavilion and the ground itself are accessible to all. We now have a sportsground we are proud of and that will serve us well for decades to come.”*

**Debbie Arnott**  
Mayor, Warrnambool City Council



# FRANKLAND PARK SPORTING & COMMUNITY FACILITY

Club: Hammond Park Football Club  
 Council: City of Cockburn  
 Venue: Frankland Park

Funding Partners	Contribution
City of Cockburn (incl. \$4.62M of Developer Contributions Plan)	\$8,680,000
State Government - CSRFF	\$1,500,000
Federal Government - LRCI Program	\$200,000
State Election Commitment - Roger Cook	\$150,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,530,000</b>

## OVERVIEW

A Multi-purpose community sporting facility including activity room, function room, commercial kitchen, club room for sports clubs, four gender neutral changerooms, dedicated medical room, storage for hirers, two lit AFL size sporting ovals, 150 car parking bays and seated retaining wall.

The development has allowed the Hammond Park Football Club to grow significantly to over 800 members. The club was using a smaller, single oval facility at Botany Park, which had one oval but no club rooms or a kitchen and had reached capacity.

The club rooms now mean they can hold events and meetings regularly without having to find alternate spaces. The inclusion of a commercial kitchen and bar for events and game day means the club can start to generate its own revenue.

Overall, this facility has enabled HPFC to grow, with future growth to include Colts and Seniors, and provide their members with the best that any AFL community club can provide.

Previous hours of use	0 - 5 hours	Previous SFA score	0
Current hours of use	> 31 hours	New SFA score	107
Combined Male Participation	800	Combined Female Participation	60

## OUTCOMES

- » The facility is co-located with the areas Community Centre which is available for hire. The home clubs (AFL and Baseball) have access to their respective clubrooms, changing areas and storerooms 6 months of the year (seasonal).
- » The clubrooms are 100m<sup>2</sup> regularly but clubs can access the 200m<sup>2</sup> function space to hold 300m<sup>2</sup> functions when required and the canteen abuts the main kitchen so clubs can operate independently or use the kitchen at high traffic times if more space is required.
- » 13% of the budget was to ESD aspects, including LED Lighting, recycled materials, low carbon concrete, solar panels, control systems, water efficient appliances.







*"This venue is great for the club. Our members grew very quickly since 2019 and we could not accommodate all our members on one oval. We now have 2 playing ovals that both have change rooms for both home and away teams. There is a dedicated medical room that we can staff with a qualified person to provide medical care should any player need it. The club rooms now mean we can hold events and meetings regularly without having to find another venue. This means our members not only get to play AFL, but they also get the full experience and social interaction of a community-based club. The club room also has a bar which is fantastic for our social functions. The commercial kitchen means we can provide the best food in our canteen. The canteen generates great income for the club also helping us to provide our members with the absolute best. Overall, this facility has enabled us to grow as a club and provide our members with the best that any AFL community club can provide."*

**Hammond Park Football Club**

**City of Cockburn Recreation Services Manager Dean Burton** said the complex would provide significantly more for residents of the city's southern-most suburb.

*"Until now there has only been one AFL-size reserve to cater for the growing needs of the Hammond Park community where the population is expected to double over the next 20 years," he said. "This attractive modern facility is also large enough to accommodate regional events and tournaments, which is another wonderful opportunity for our community and the clubs that will call Frankland Park home."*



**FRANKLAND PARK PROJECT VIDEO**



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