

Elizabeth Benson and John Punch

5 November 2015

Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly of the NT

Dear PAC members,

Ref: Inquiry into funding of Rugby League facilities in Darwin

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comment on the development of Rugby League facilities in Darwin.

Our position is that we do not believe that a \$20million upgrade of Richardson Park is value for money. We also abhor the fact that there was no community consultation conducted for this project.

The Chief Minister spoke on ABC radio saying that Richardson upgrade was value because of the cost of creating a new facility would be more in the vicinity of \$140million. We don't follow the logic. If the project is flawed, unpopular and badly costed there is no point in spending \$20million.

A new facility should be built either at Marrara , Palmerston or dare I say it – Weddell. Richardson Park is unsuitable because of wet season flooding. The salt water inundation and drainage is such that turf does not grow in spite of research and trials conducted when the grounds were used for rugby.

20,000 seats equates to a ton of traffic. The current access and parking are entirely inadequate and dangerous if an emergency arose. Have issues such as rezoning, land clearing, road and associated infrastructure works and sound barriers been costed into the \$20million. Currently the neighbours of Richardson Park are being vocal in their opposition to this development and its impact on their lives. If neighbours a bit further a field were to realise the impact this traffic will have on them I think there would be a lot more opposition.

We also object that land be stolen from the school for the project.

What is wrong with Marrara complex. Is it not working? If it isn't why can't we be told. From my point of view it is doing its job. It is connected to power, water, transport and parking. It has a vibrant relationship with the Department of Sport and Recreation and community of all ages. The construction of a rugby facility at Marrara would value add for everyone.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Benson and John Punch