

# New optimism for precinct planning

By **KEN MATTS**  
senior journalist



THE community has benefitted despite the City of Albany missing out in July on Regional Development Australia funding to implement the Centennial Park Recreation Precinct Plan.

There has been time for greater consultation with those sporting groups directly involved, and the community will be given the chance to better understand the vision that is expected to benefit Albany and the region for years to come.

The City's Community Services acting executive director Cameron Woods said that although the funding to kick-start major work on the \$13 million project was not forthcoming, the City was confident of being successful in the future.

He said the Centennial Park master plan was a visionary document of what could happen to the 80 hectare area and was not simply aimed at being a multi-sport precinct.

"It is a whole of community amenity, more than just for sporting clubs," he said.

"It's a 20-year plan with a broader vision."

Earlier this year, the City received funds from the Department of Sport and Recreation to identify priorities

to redevelop Centennial Park into a premier sporting precinct.

The City has \$4.7 million in the bank provided by the State Government ready to be used on the project and will match this through other funding applications.

It has already spent more than \$3 million on the precinct, with the completion of Albany Leisure and Aquatic Centre, raising the level of the soccer grounds and drainage works.

A total of 11 project areas were identified and these were submitted to the steering committee which is driving the master plan for consideration.

The plan will then be taken to Council in a month with medium- to long-term goals determined.

Council will then decide whether it will progress.

In the meantime, the City continues to chase funds from other agencies to get the staged development under way.

It has been supported all the way by government agencies and state sporting organisations.

Plans for the recreation precinct have been ongoing since 2001 with the City liaising with sporting groups following Albany Recreation Strategy recommendations.

The plan took 12 months to

complete and at the time, involved extensive community consultation, and detailed investigation and consideration of several options.

Components include roads and parking, the redevelopment of Centennial Oval and ovals west of ALAC.

Other components already done are the hockey turf, youth centre and youth precinct comprising the current BMX track, skate track and freeform dirt-jumping track.

One of the major problems for the area is the poor drainage.

Work has begun trying to draw water away more efficiently to the Yakamia Creek to make the area flood-proof.

The Living Stream Project that has converted a stormwater channel on North Road to mimic the characteristics of a natural stream capable of safely conveying large flows, is one part of the precinct work.

This was funded with help by a grant of \$195,000 from the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program (RLCIP) Round Three.

Community help has also been instrumental in beautifying the area.

A corporate day three weeks ago was used to plant local wetland species.

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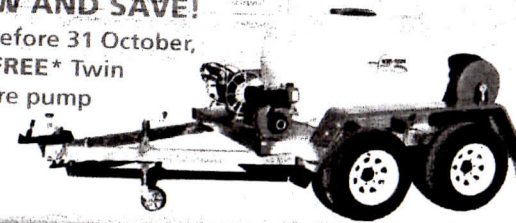
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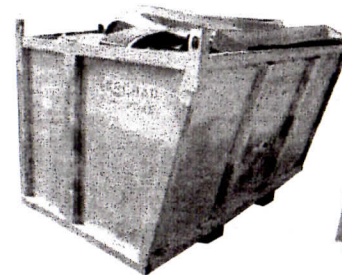
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