

Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project – Consideration of Submissions

SF/5247

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report considers submissions received on the *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre (BIRC) Redevelopment project*.

BACKGROUND

On 23 May 2023, the Honourable State Member for Northern Victoria – Jaclyn Symes announced \$15 Million funding for the redevelopment of the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre (BIRC).

The Council, at its meeting on 11 October 2023, resolved to award the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Architectural Services Contract to architects Brand & Co Pty Ltd.

The Council, at its meeting on 13 December 2023, adopted the *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Community Engagement Plan* and placed the *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project* on public exhibition.

Community engagement commenced on 14 December 2023 to 9 February 2024. The focus of the first stage of community engagement was to determine the Benalla Rural City communities preferred site for the redevelopment.

The three sites provided by Council for consideration were:

- current Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre – Ackerly Avenue, Benalla.
- disused Benalla P-12 College Barkly Street Campus – 41-55 Barkly Street; Benalla.
- Churchill Recreation Reserve – 103 Waller Street, Benalla

Feedback was received from more than 700 submitters. The submissions revealed varying preferences among community members, with the disused Benalla P-12 College Barkly Street Campus emerging as the most favored potential site.

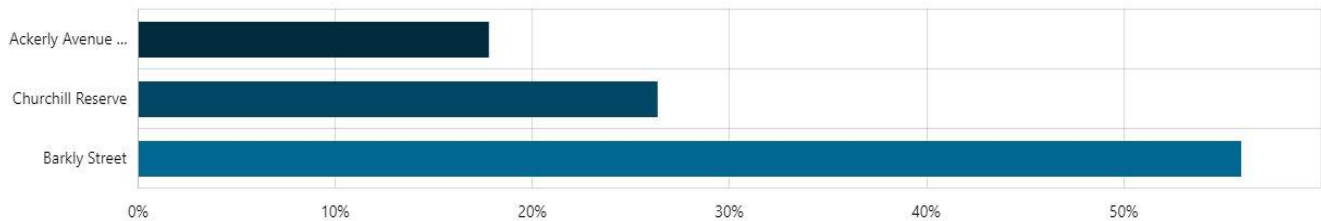
DISCUSSION

The response from the community to the BIRC redevelopment project has been significant with a total of 716 surveys completed. 642 surveys were completed electronically through the project's website and 74 paper surveys were completed. The project website has been visited over 2,000 times and over 300 people have subscribed to updates and future consultation opportunities.

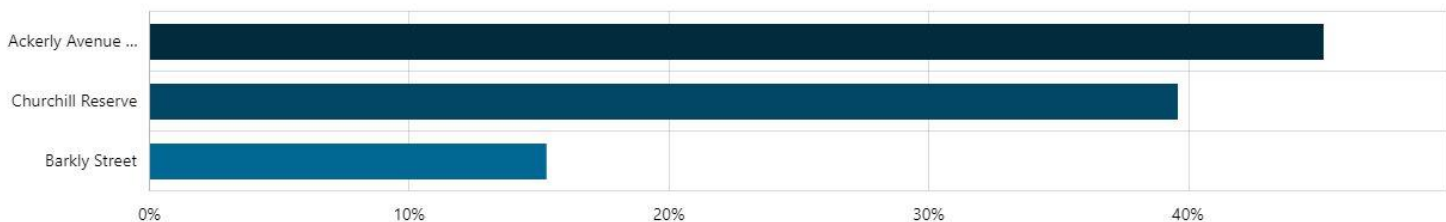
A review of the surveys submitted revealed contrasting trends between the electronic and paper-based surveys.

Electronic Survey Data

- Benalla P-12 College Barkly Street was the preferred location for the project 55.9 percent (359 votes), 26.3 percent (169 votes) prefer Churchill Recreation Reserve and 17.7 percent (114 votes) selected the current Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre at Ackerly Avenue.



- The current Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre at Ackerly Avenue was the least preferred location at 45.2 percent (290 votes), followed by Churchill Recreation Reserve 39.5 percent (254 votes) and Benalla P-12 College Barkly Street 15.3 percent (98 votes).



Paper-Based Surveys

- The current Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre at Ackerly Avenue was the preferred location for the project at 83.8 percent (62 votes), 12.1 percent (9 votes) prefer Benalla P-12 College Barkly Street site and 4.1 percent (3 votes) selected Churchill Recreation Reserve.
- Churchill Recreation Reserve was the least preferred location at 59.1 percent (39 votes), followed by Benalla P-12 College Barkly Street site 34.8 percent (23 votes) and current Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre at Ackerly Avenue 6.1 percent (4 votes)

Combined Data

- Most preferred site: Benalla P-12 College Barkly Street site received 51 percent of votes, the current Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre at Ackerly Avenue received 24.5 percent of votes and Churchill Recreation Reserve received 24.5 percent of votes.
- Least preferred site: the current Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre at Ackerly Avenue received 41 percent of votes, Churchill Recreation Reserve received 41 percent of votes and Benalla P-12 College Barkly Street site received 18 percent of votes.

The community was also given the option of including a comment as to why they had selected their first preference. These comments as well as a summary of the electronic submissions received are attached as **Appendix 1**.

Themes

Many submissions have included a statement to support their choice. There are some common themes that have emerged based on people's preferences.

Disused Benalla P-12 College Barkly Street, Benalla

'Barkly location is close to the town centre. Users will find it attractive to use other businesses within the CBD when attending events at this site. Proximity to the CBD means there would be less impact to residents from increased traffic. Proximity to the Train Station, and access to local buses increases accessibility.'

- Proximity to CBD and convenience for users.
- The site is in very poor condition and in need of redevelopment.
- Lower risk of flooding.

Churchill Recreation Reserve, Waller Street, Benalla

'Churchill Reserve is an established and valued sporting facility. There is an opportunity to look at the area as a sporting precinct rather than just a single building. The project should take in the broader precinct and look at opportunities to complement other existing and new sporting and community opportunities.'

- Opportunity to develop sporting precinct – existing users could benefit from new, shared, facilities.
- Provides a needed new facility for Benalla West's growing community.
- Lower risk of flooding.

Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Ackerly Avenue, Benalla

'Make sense to revamp the current location instead of disrupting a new site. I'm not in favour of having the centre in a residential area due to the disruption to traffic, parking and noise. I opted to live a quiet part of town and this will change the dynamic of my suburb'

- The site is already fit for purpose and has multiple neighbouring sports.
- Is not in a residential area.
- Costs less than building a new stadium and has existing masterplan.

***COUNCIL PLAN 2021-2025* IMPLICATIONS**

Community

- *A healthy, safe and resilient community.*
- *A connected, involved and inclusive community.*

Livability

- *Vibrant public spaces and places.*
- *Connected and accessible roads, footpaths, transport and parking.*

Economy

- *Thriving business and industry.*
- *Flourishing tourism.*

Environment

- *Healthy and protected natural environment.*

Leadership

- *Engaged and informed community.*

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Victorian State Government has allocated \$15 million towards the *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre (BIRC) Redevelopment project*.

The Council at its meeting on 11 October 2023 resolved to award the BIRC Architectural Services Contract to architects Brand & Co Pty Ltd.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Community Engagement Plan* was adopted by Council at its meeting on 13 December 2023.

Community engagement on the *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project* commenced on 14 December 2023 to 9 February 2024. The focus of the first stage of community engagement was to determine the Benalla Rural City communities preferred site for the redevelopment.

Community Engagement was undertaken at the 'Involve' level under the International Association for Public Participation's IAP2 public participation spectrum as per the *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project Community Engagement Plan*.

Feedback was invited via the Council's 'Have your Say' website. The project website has been visited over 2,000 times and over 300 people have subscribed to updates and future consultation opportunities.

Community Engagement techniques used to promote the *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project* included:

- post on Council's social media accounts.
- notices in the *Benalla Ensign*.
- Multiple large posters on display at the three potential locations.
- promotion and paper-based surveys made available at the Benalla Library and Council's Customer Service Centre.
- Council Staff meeting with local sporting groups and stakeholders.
- Councilor pop-up sessions in the central business district, Churchill Recreation Reserve and the current Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre.

Following the first stage of community engagement, Brand & Co Architects will continue to work in partnership with the Council to manage tasks and priorities with ongoing consultation with the community on the project.

The survey and consultation period closed Friday 9 February 2024.

LEGISLATIVE AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

It is considered that the report is consistent with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any general or material conflicts of interest in this matter.

CONCLUSION

That a report on the *Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre Redevelopment Project* be presented to the Council at its meeting on 24 April 2024.

Recommendation:

That the report be noted.