



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Sport and Recreation**

Sport and Recreation
Strategic Plan
Christmas Island

October 2009



*Sport and recreation builds stronger,
healthier, happier and safer communities.*

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List of acronyms in this report

AGD	Attorney General's Department
CDO	Club Development Officer
CI	Christmas Island
CKI	Cocos (Keeling) Islands
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
DOTARS	Department of Transport and Regional Services
DSR	Department of Sport and Recreation
DUP	Dual use path
HHH	Hash House Harriers
IOT	Indian Ocean Territories
NGO	Non Government Organisation
SDA	Services Delivery Arrangement
SOCI	Shire of Christmas Island
SOCKI	Shire of Cocos (Keeling) Islands
WHO	World Health Organisation

Acknowledgements

The support and valuable input from the Shire of Christmas Island (SOCI) is acknowledged and in particular, former CEO Paul Maberly, Coordinator of the SOCI Recreation Centre Oliver Lines, Community Services Officer (Youth) Darren Marsh, elected councillors, other shire personnel, other government and territory agency representatives and the broader community. Appreciation is expressed to all for their time and valuable contributions. Special mention is made of the support and assistance provide by Simon Millcock of the Attorney General's Department (AGD).

The enthusiasm for this project shown by the above agencies and individuals confirms Christmas Island (CI) has the potential to offer positive sport and recreation experiences and opportunities for all residents.

Executive summary

Key issues

- ▶ That all agencies involved make a long term commitment to the SOCI and the community is the basis underpinning this study.
- ▶ The 'boom and bust' economy of CI has a significant bearing on sport and recreation planning. Currently the economy is booming with the services surrounding the asylum seekers.
- ▶ The issues with tenure and jurisdiction warrant attention, especially with reference to operation and maintenance of sport and recreation infrastructure.
- ▶ CI has a significant proportion of Chinese and Malay people living on the island. It is essential to recognise the important, unique and sensitive culture of the Chinese and Malay communities, and their special needs, in all planning areas.

Key findings

- ▶ CI is a safe place to live.
- ▶ Unique and sensitive culture issues of the Malay community exist.
- ▶ SOCI Recreation Centre is under-utilised.
- ▶ Opportunities exist for a variety of physical activities utilising the natural environment.
- ▶ Enthusiasm is growing for soccer participation and overseas competition.
- ▶ A need for a multi-purpose, rectangular playing field on Phosphate Hill with lighting to both training and competition standards.
- ▶ A need to build the capacity for coaches, especially in the area of skill development.
- ▶ A need for after-school programs.
- ▶ A need to expand the volunteer base to relieve the pressure on the 'few'.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the SOCI adopts the following broad strategy statements, which provide a framework for a five year action plan:

- ▶ 'Whole of government' approach is adopted.
- ▶ Develop additional sport and recreation facilities, in keeping with existing and future needs.
- ▶ Provide safe, convenient and accessible sport and recreation facilities.
- ▶ Maximise utilisation of sport and recreation infrastructure through encouraging multi-use of facilities and co-locating compatible activities.
- ▶ Ensure provision of a range of quality sport and recreation opportunities suitable for young people.
- ▶ Ensure a range of sport and recreation opportunities suitable for the elderly.
- ▶ Ensure sport and recreation facilities are appropriately managed and maintained.
- ▶ Optimise sport and recreation opportunities associated with the unique natural assets existing on the island.
- ▶ Encourage community involvement in the planning, development, management and maintenance of their sport and recreation opportunities.
- ▶ Ensure the contents of the sport and recreation plan are regularly reviewed and updated.

- ▶ Establish a sport and recreation advisory group.

In order to build community capacity and associated facilities, the following is recommended:

Creation of Manager Recreation Services position:

1. That the SOCI creates/restructures positions to include a senior position (Manager Recreation Services) to oversee sport and recreation on the island. This position would not be limited to the work undertaken in the recreation centre.

Human resource development, club development, collaboration:

2. That consideration is given to implementing the Club Development Officer (CDO) Scheme across both CI and Cocos (Keeling) Islands (CKI). The CDO Scheme would provide support and assist with the development of volunteer capacity within each respective community. A CDO to be shared by both the SOCI and Shire of Cocos Keeling Islands (SOCKI) and focus on engaging the various cultural groups to become involved in supporting local clubs and groups, and benefit from the rewards derived from community volunteerism.
3. Recommended that consideration be given to pursuing the accreditation of CI as a safe community as certified by the World Health Organisation (WHO). More important than acquiring the status of a 'Safe Community' is the collaborative process of having government agencies and community groups working together to achieve this goal. The legacy of this accreditation process would be the improved lines of communication and the long term networks and relations created as a result.

Coach development:

4. That Coach in Residence funding be utilised to support the development of local coaches and their respective participation base. Coach in Residence funding should be considered in support of the Indian Ocean Islands Games proposal. Development of local coaches in a range of different sports would leave a significant legacy and would ensure CI teams are competitive in an inter-regional sporting competition.

Program development:

5. In partnership with the SOCI Neighbourhood Centre, develop and implement regular school holiday programs for both primary and secondary school students.
6. Professional development training be undertaken to help develop sport and recreation programming at the centre.
7. Use participation in sport, recreation and leisure as a vehicle to connect refugees and new migrants with the broader community.

Facility development:

8. Investigate the installation of solar heating to provide optimum pool temperature for both lap and leisure swimmers.
9. Prepare an asset management plan and include a cleaning policy to combat the risk associated with the slippery sports hall floor. Investigate purchase of specialised cleaning equipment i.e. self-propelled auto scrubber and an industrial blow dryer to remove moisture from the floor.
10. Consideration is given to develop other low cost sport and recreation amenities at CI Recreation Centre to increase utilisation of the centre i.e. bouldering wall, bocce pitches and a mini putting course. Potential to attract more youth participation and engage the CI District

High School in programs at the centre.

11. That the issue of management and tenure be addressed and responsibility for maintenance of the grounds clearly documented. The capacity for undertaking maintenance of the sports grounds should sit with either the SOCI or the AGD.
12. A precinct plan is prepared for the sports ground at Vagabond Road which would include consideration of a multi-functional, rectangular playing field that could accommodate senior Australian Rules football, soccer, rugby and a central cricket pitch between the oval and the soccer pitch. The plan to include investigation on the provision of change room amenities and include the footprint of a synthetic bowling rink.
13. That a lighting consultant be engaged to develop as part of the precinct plan a lighting plan to provide lighting to both training and competition standard across the proposed multi-functional rectangular playing field. Consideration will need to be given to the proximity to the airport in the lighting design, hence the need for a qualified lighting consultant to undertake this project.

That the Department of Immigration and Citizenship be approached as a potential funding contributor for the development of the sports grounds based on the utilisation of the public amenities by their clients.

14. That a maintenance program be developed between the AGD and the SOCI for the upkeep and operation of the school's playing field and tennis courts. As there is community use of the school's sport and recreation facilities there is a reasonable expectation of support from the local government authority.
15. That the CI Soccer Federation be encouraged to utilise the Vagabond Road Sports Ground when the multi-functional playing field is developed with appropriate lighting for both training and competition standards.
16. Badminton competitions be held at the CI Recreation Centre where there is more than one court to facilitate fixtured games.
17. That access issues at the community hall be addressed if the facility continues to be utilised as a community facility and especially with reference to senior activities conducted at the venue.

Basketball:

18. There is a need for casual-use recreation amenities within residential nodes (i.e. Poon Saan), and hence the outdoor basketball court needs to be retained and the court surface refurbished to an acceptable standard for street basketball.
19. That consideration is given to the development of an additional casual-use basketball half court in the Kampong at Flying Fish Cove to accommodate recreational needs in this higher density residential area.

Golf:

20. That the CI Golf Club seeks funding for sustainable energy (www.sedo.energy.wa.gov.au). The club's dependency on fuel and its remote location positions the club well for funding support for this initiative.
21. The CI Golf Club formalises a lease with the Federal Government to establish tenure.
22. The CI Golf Club develops the onsite ground keeper accommodation project and documents the feasibility of the proposal. If the club determines the project is a viable prospect then formal application for funding support is pursued.

Youth development:

23. That the SOCI negotiates with the Chinese Literary Association for a lease in order to develop the outdoor skate park.
24. That the steel skate ramps be rust treated and a maintenance schedule be developed, especially with their relocation outdoors and into a harsh marine environment.

Passive parks:

25. Shade structures over some of the play equipment in parks are considered, especially over the fitness circuit at Drum Site. Appropriate tree plantings would suit best, considering the potential impact of tropical storms and cyclonic weather.

Recreation:

26. Formation of an interagency/community walk trails advisory/steering group to progress the CI Walking Track Strategy.
27. The CI Tourism Association undertakes selection and follows up on the accreditation of the island's premier walk trails for inclusion in the Top TrailsWA branding initiative.
28. Setting of appropriate budgets by National Parks and the SOCI for the maintenance and upkeep of the trails on CI.

Snorkelling:

29. That the SOCI and the CI Tourism Association collaborate on the development of a snorkelling trail at Flying Fish Cove. That funding is accessed via the Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) Trails Grants Program to support the planning and construction of the trail.

The shire, in its endeavours to implement the findings of this report, adopts the following 'Guiding Principles for Sport and Recreation Provision':

- ▶ Effective planning for sport and recreation opportunities – Council will ensure that provision of sport and recreation opportunities accurately reflect community needs and council resource constraints.
- ▶ Effective use of sport and recreation facilities – Council will encourage and assist with maximum utilisation of sport and recreation infrastructure.
- ▶ High quality sport and recreation opportunities – Council will ensure that all sport and recreation facilities are designed and maintained to a high quality, commensurate with the nature and use of that facility.
- ▶ Resourcing the provision of sport and recreation opportunities – Council will identify and allocate resources for the provision of sport and recreation opportunities in an efficient and effective manner.
- ▶ Effective management of sport and recreation facilities, programs and events – Council will ensure that sport and recreation facilities, programs and events are managed in the most efficient and cost effective manner, enabling the community to enjoy safe, well-maintained and managed resources.

Introduction

(Former) Manager of Regional Services for DSR, Ms Andrea Mitchell, visited CI with the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) Contract Manager, Eddie West, from Monday 12 March 2007 returning on Friday 16 March 2007. The purpose of the visit was to conduct a needs analysis on the current and future provision of sport and recreation opportunities on CI.

During the visit, meetings were held with the SOCI and a range of community groups. As a result of the interviews and observations made, it was recommended that:

- ▶ The SOCI develop a five year strategic sport and recreation plan.
- ▶ The SOCI restructures the positions within the organisation to include a senior position to oversee sport and recreation on the island, and not limited to the work undertaken in the recreation centre.
- ▶ The SOCI access and support the experience and abilities of all personnel on the island to maximise the opportunities for persons to participate in sport and recreation.
- ▶ The recreation staff of the SOCI undertakes training in customer service, program development and delivery to provide a greater sport and recreation experience at the centre.
- ▶ Assessment of grant applications utilising the DSR criteria be undertaken and recommendations made to the AGD for financial support.

The focus of a strategic plan was to:

- ▶ Encourage CI residents to be more physically active.
- ▶ Strengthen the capacity of CI sport and recreation organisations.
- ▶ Promote sound infrastructure planning and sustainable facilities.

DSR's Great Southern Manager, Mr Chris Thompson, was appointed on a short-term (four week) contract to:

- ▶ Commence development of a five year strategic plan.
- ▶ Make recommendations to strengthen the capacity of CI sport and recreation organisations.

He initially visited CI for a one-week orientation period from Monday 31 August to Monday 7 September 2009. He completed the second visitation from Wednesday 16 September to Friday 25 September 2009.

Background

CI is located in the Indian Ocean at latitude 10°30' south and longitude 105°40' east. It is approximately 380 km south of Java Head at the southern entrance to the Sunda Strait, approximately 1350 km from Singapore and approximately 2650 km from Perth. The nearest point of the Australian mainland is Northwest Cape, which lies approximately 1565 km to the south-east. The island has an area of 135 km².

The island is the summit of a submarine mountain. It rises steeply to a central plateau dominated by stands of rainforest. The plateau reaches heights of up to 361 m and consists mainly of limestone with layers of volcanic rock.

The island's 80 km coastline is an almost continuous sea cliff ranging in height up to 20 metres. There are 13 places where breaks in the cliff give way to shallow bays and small sand and coral beaches. The largest of these bays forms the island's port at Flying Fish Cove.

The island is surrounded by a coral reef. There is virtually no coastal shelf and the sea plummets to a depth of about 5000 m within 200 m of the shore.

Approximately 63 per cent of the island's 135 km² is national park. The island's close proximity to South East Asia and the equator has resulted in a diverse range of flora and fauna. The CI National Park is managed by the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

The climate is tropical and temperatures range from 21°C to 32°C. Humidity is around 80–90 per cent and south-east trade winds provide pleasant weather for most of the year. However, during the wet season (between November and April), it is common for some storm activity to occur, producing a swell in seas around the island. The average rainfall is 2000 mm per annum.

CI was named on Christmas Day 1643 by Captain William Mynors, the Master of a passing ship. The first landing was recorded by William Dampier in 1688. For the next two centuries, little interest was shown in the island due to its rugged coastline.

Following the discovery of phosphate deposits, the island was annexed by Britain in 1888.

CI was occupied by Japanese forces from March 1942 until the end of the Second World War, and in 1946 became a dependency of Singapore.

By agreement with the United Kingdom, sovereignty was transferred to the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 October 1958 under the 'Christmas Island Act 1958'.

The Settlement – Residential Area

This residential area dates from 1949 when the island was controlled by the British Phosphate Commission. This was the most important phase of mining to Australia, as the application of predominantly CI phosphate to the phosphate deficient soils of Australia, allowed agricultural expansion and supported the food production boom of the 1950s and 1960s.

It includes two main precincts, the European residential area and early Chinese settlement, and the services precinct. The latter was the island's meeting place with retail, health, recreational and other services provided for both Asian workers and European staff.

The Drum Site industrial area includes the remnants of the incline railway, constructed in 1914.

The railway was the main means of transport between the cove settlement and the upper terrace until construction of the modern road to Poon Saan from 1958.

Poon Saan Group, Poon Saan

This area is of significance to the Chinese population and symbolises the Chinese presence on the island and the conditions in which they lived. The whole area exhibits architectural styles imported from Singapore and are rarely found in other parts of Australia.

Industrial and Administrative Group

This area has been the focus of industrial and administrative activity on the Island since its earliest occupation and includes evidence of each phase of settlement on the island.

The second phase of mining and settlement on the island is represented by the CI Club, the main recreational and social focus for the Europeans on the island; the former manager's residence; the Christian cemetery with graves dating from 1907; the carpentry shop which includes original sections of the island gaol built C.1903; and the Padang which was used for sporting activities since the first days of mining and as a parade ground during the Second World War.

Malay Kampong Group, Jalan Panyai

Chinese labourers provided most of the manual labour during the early phase of mining on CI, although later Singapore and Malaya became increasingly important sources of indentured labourers. The buildings in the Malay Kampong area collectively represent the cultural diversity of this group and their endeavours to keep their religious laws and traditions.

The Malay Kampong Precinct was, until the advent of the British Phosphate Commission, the main European residential area for CI. The settlement, comprising timber houses with thatched roofs, was located in a crescent around the foreshore of Flying Fish Cove. The Malay section of the population lived at the north end of the cove, in a group of larger, communal houses.

Phosphate Hill was the site of the first phosphate mining on the island. It is located about 1 km east of Poon Saan, and covers an area of about 18 ha on the eastern slopes of Phosphate Hill.

The historic burial ground is a reminder of the hardships endured by the indentured Asian labourers, many dying of beri beri or dietary deficiencies.

Local Government legislation based on that of Western Australia was introduced in 1992. The Shire Council is comprised of nine councillors and has similar responsibilities to local government on the Australian mainland.

The AGD has overall responsibility for the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT) including the provision of state government-type services. As highlighted in the introduction, DSR provides these services through a Services Delivery Arrangement between the Australian Government and the Western Australian State Government.

Population

CI's population would be best described as 'fluid'. A resident population of 1349 (according to ABS 2006 Census), but with 'Irregular Maritime Arrivals' and associated service support staff the island's population varies on a daily to weekly basis. According to the AGD the current population is approximately 2500.

Demographics

When considering the demographic, social and economic information of CI, the following key issues are most important and must be taken into account when planning sport and recreation programs and facilities:

- ▶ CI has a young community growing at a rate above the national average. More than 23 per cent of the population is under 15 years of age, well above national figures, and increasing at a rate also above the national average. It is important that the provision of programs and facilities be addressed to ensure that provision is consistent and relevant to the size and nature of demand.
- ▶ 49.7 per cent of the population are between 25 and 54 years of age. This represents a large portion of the population who would normally be expected to be active in sport and recreation. This should influence sport and recreation planning and provision of appropriate infrastructure.
- ▶ Currently 43.4 per cent of the population are female. Consideration needs to be given to the current and future provision of programs and facilities in terms of gender, specifically opportunities for equal participation and availability for both male and females. Given that 19.6 per cent of the population are Muslim, providing appropriate opportunities for Muslim women to engage in sport and recreation activities is also necessary.
- ▶ Planning for the predicted ageing population of CI will require special consideration to ensure provision of appropriate programs and facilities that will allow for the changing uses and provide adequate flexibility to meet the needs of older people in the community.

CI does not have a retirement village or seniors home. It appears most retirees move back to the mainland for associated support services, although within both the Malay and Chinese community the extended family support is evident.

Methodology

The project was broken into three phases:

1. Review of literature of previous recreation planning work carried out.
2. Data collected through community and key stakeholder interviews and community forum.
3. Sport and recreation facility review to identify gaps in provision.

Literature search

The following documents, reports and statistical information for all previous planning work and research were studied to assist in developing a community profile:

- ▶ Sports and Recreation Christmas Island Report 2007 (Mitchell Report).
- ▶ Christmas Island Destinations Development Report (Planning for People April 2008).
- ▶ Christmas Island Walking Track Strategy (Planning for People November 2007).
- ▶ Christmas Island National Parks Draft Management Plan 2009 (National Parks Australia).
- ▶ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census (Postal area 6798).

Consultation with community and key stakeholders

Face to face interviews were conducted with most key stakeholders on CI including:

Stakeholder	Organisation
Paul Maberly	CEO — SOCI
Simon Millcock	Director Economic Development — AGD
John Carter	A/Administrator — AGD
Darren Marsh	Youth Development Officer — SOCI
Oliver Lines	Coordinator CI Recreation Centre — SOCI
Marjorie Gant	Manager — National Parks CI
Rod Chisholm	Detention Centre Manager — SERCO
Nigel Jefford	Manager — IOT Health Service
Linda Cash	Marketing Manager — CI Tourism Association
Bill Tatchell	Tourism DO — CI Tourism Association
Othman Dardak	CI Soccer Federation and Malay Club
Charlene Thompson	CI Neighbourhood Centre
Ann Tatchell	CI Neighbourhood Centre
Mark Gregson	Department of Immigration
Khristo Newall	Recreation Officer — Red Cross
Michael Misso	Policy Development — National Parks
Allan Thornton	CI Golf Club
Ian Francis	Head — CI District High School
Greg Riley	CI Volunteer Marine Rescue
Colin Wheadon	Environment Health Officer — SOCI

Key observations/findings

- ▶ Issues with tenure and jurisdiction i.e. responsibility for upkeep and maintenance of walk trails (Dolly Beach and Territory Day Park). There appears to be blurred lines of demarcation when it comes to 'who' is responsible for maintenance of walk trails on CI. Discussions with both National Parks and the SOCI did little to dispel the confusion over who takes responsibility for upkeep of a range of popular walk trails on CI.
- ▶ A need for clear and defining documentation is required to determine tenure and responsibility for trail maintenance and future trail provision.
- ▶ A key finding from the community workshop is that CI is perceived as a safe community and relatively free of crime. According to most residents interviewed, the 'locals' leave their homes and vehicles unlocked and feel safe while moving around the community.

Recommendation 3

Recommended that consideration be given to pursuing the accreditation of CI as a safe community as certified by the WHO. More important than acquiring the status of a 'Safe Community' is the collaborative process of having government agencies and community groups working together to achieve this goal. The legacy of this accreditation process would be the improved lines of communication and the long term networks and relations created as a result.

- ▶ Safe Communities is a WHO endorsed approach that originated in Sweden in the 1970s and the formal approach began in 1989. A Safe Community can be a country, city, local government area or a district focused on safety promotion, injury, violence and suicide prevention, covering all age groups, genders and areas, and is part of an international network of accredited programs.
- ▶ The Safe Communities model aims to understand injury and intervene at a community level. By involving the community in finding its own solutions, it aims to be a catalyst for environmental, structural, sociological and political change that empowers the community – and ultimately the individuals within the community – to change their environment and their behaviours to reduce the risk of injury and increase the perception of safety.
- ▶ Volunteering: Evident through interviews conducted that volunteerism within sport and recreation clubs is predominately Caucasian-based. Considering the Caucasian population on CI is less than 20 per cent, it suggests that the brunt of volunteering is being shouldered by this minority group and could lead to 'volunteer burn out'. Volunteering from the Chinese community was evidenced and appeared to be based on their cultural norm of acquiring status within their community.

Recommendation 2

Recommend that consideration be given to implementing the CDO Scheme across both CI and CKI. The CDO Scheme would provide support and assist with the development of volunteer capacity within each respective community. A CDO could be shared by both the SOCI and SOCKI and have a focus on engaging the various cultural groups to become involved in supporting local clubs and groups and the rewards derived from community volunteerism.

- ▶ Indian Ocean Islands Games: Refer to the AGD Economic Development Officer's IOT Discussion Paper (refer – link with Sport International). The redevelopment of the Vagabond Road Sports Precinct with a multi-functional playing field (under lights) will need to be

undertaken to support this initiative.

- ▶ There are several good examples of demonstrated capacity development whereby local initiatives have seen a number of physical activities developed and prosper on CI. The following organisations and their programs are testimony to their endeavours: CI Literacy Association – sponsored a tai chi Master to travel to CI and teach potential instructors and encourage participation in the activity. The outcome being a revitalised and ongoing tai chi program conducted on a regular basis within the community. The CI District High School initiated a circus skills workshop for students and acquired external funding (via an Arts & Culture grant) to have circus trainers reside on CI and help develop the skill base and confidence of students. The outcome of the program being a number of public circus performances, which demonstrated the achievements of the students. The circus performance is held in high regard by the community and the event was sold out, which reflects the support of the community.

Recommendation 4

Recommend that Coach in Residence funding be utilised to support development of local coaches and their respective participation base. Coach in Residence funding should be considered in support of the Indian Ocean Islands Games proposal. Development of local coaches in a range of different sports would leave a significant legacy and would ensure CI teams are competitive in an interregional sporting competition.

Accessing Sport Development Officers via their respective State Sporting Association or National Sporting Association on a regular basis would also contribute towards improving local capacity on CI.

Map of Christmas Island



Christmas Island Sport and Recreation Facilities Review (September 2009)



1. CI Recreation Centre

CI Recreation Centre is a modern recreation facility that comprises a 25 m lap pool, leisure pool, single court multi-use sports hall, gymnasium, crèche, multi-use function centre, kiosk and various other supporting amenities (changerooms/storage etc). The centre was constructed in 2005 at a cost of \$7.5 million.

The facility is managed by the SOCI and has three full time employees and a range of casual staff appointed to oversee its operations. The SOCI receives an annual \$750,000 grant from the Federal Government (administered through the AGD) for the operation of the centre.

The SOCI conducts a regular community bus service to bring participants to the centre. This service operates Monday to Friday with a morning run at 9 am and an afternoon run at 12.30 pm.

A range of sports are played at the centre including:

- ▶ Basketball
- ▶ Netball
- ▶ Volleyball
- ▶ Indoor soccer
- ▶ Sepak takraw
- ▶ Floorball

Issues identified with the SOCI Recreation Centre:

- ▶ The centre appears under-utilised – as per current programming schedule.
- ▶ The pool temperature is below optimum comfort level for both lap and leisure swimmers –

need to increase and maintain pool temperature around 28–31°C for leisure pool users and lap pool temperature of 26–27°C for lap swimmers.

- ▶ There appears to be a limited storage capacity, especially for equipment to support new sporting initiatives i.e. gymnastics, indoor archery, indoor air rifle.
- ▶ Café is leased to a private operator – café operates along the lines of a restaurant rather than a ‘kiosk’ and offers limited snack food for players attending the centre to participate in programs. Operation of the café under the current structure is financially dependent on income derived from providing meals for the asylum seekers being accommodated in the adjacent construction workers’ dwellings.
- ▶ The sports hall playing surface is a synthetic playing surface and is subject to changes in friction co-efficiency (slippery when damp). This is due in part to the location of the centre at approximately 310 m above sea level and the impact of low level clouds. The hot tropical environment also accelerates growth of mould and fungus and hence causes problems with maintaining reasonable slip resistance.
- ▶ Detained (potential migrant) families are accommodated adjacent to the SOCI Recreation Centre and utilise the centre’s amenities. This has a significant impact on what services can and should be provided.



Recommendations:

Recommendation 1

- ▶ The SOCI restructures the positions within the organisation to include a senior position to oversee sport and recreation on the island, and not limited to the work undertaken in the recreation centre.

Recommendation 5

- ▶ In partnership with the SOCI Neighbourhood Centre, develop and implement regular school holiday programs for both primary and secondary school students.

Recommendation 6

- ▶ Professional development training be undertaken to help develop sport and recreation programming at the centre.

Recommendation 7

- ▶ Use participation in sport, recreation and leisure as a vehicle to connect refugees and new migrants with the broader community.

Recommendation 8

- ▶ Investigate the installation of solar heating to provide optimum pool temperature for both lap and leisure swimmers.

Recommendation 9

- ▶ Prepare an asset management plan and include a cleaning policy to combat the risk associated with the slippery sports hall floor. Investigate purchase of specialised cleaning equipment i.e. self-propelled auto scrubber and an industrial blow dryer to remove moisture from the floor.

Recommendation 10

- ▶ Consideration is given to develop other low cost sport and recreation amenities at CI Recreation Centre to increase utilisation of the centre i.e. bouldering wall, bocce pitches and mini putting course. Potential to attract more youth participation and engage the CI District High School in programs at the centre.

2. Sports ground/Christmas Island Cricket & Sporting Club – Phosphate Hill



The CI Cricket & Sporting Club manages and maintains the oval, which has a reasonable turf surface to support low level community and club use. The club conducts a range of sporting activities including touch rugby competitions, Auskick, Calypso and junior cricket and corporate AFL.

The sport ground also has a single, multi-marked hard court which is floodlit and located adjacent to the CI Cricket & Sporting Club, within the construction workers' compound (now utilised by DIAC). The court surface is deteriorating and will require refurbishing within the next two years.



Issues identified with the CI sports grounds:

- ▶ The location of the Phosphate Hill Detainee Accommodation for family groups increases casual use of the sports ground. This increases casual use of the reserve and the wear and tear of the turf surface, which is maintained by a community group. When AFL matches are played, all other sports are unable to utilise the grounds as there is limited space available.

- ▶ Tenure issues exist associated with the CI Cricket & Sporting Club's use of the grounds and its clubrooms, as there is currently no lease in place. Responsibility for maintenance is not clearly documented and club volunteers fulfil the role of preparing the reserve for sporting activities.
- ▶ The sports ground is not serviced by changerooms. The nearest changerooms are located in the SOCI Recreation Centre and there is restricted access associated with the opening hours of the centre.

There is inadequate lighting to allow for both training and playing of competitive sports in the evening. Physical activity is restricted to daylight hours.



Recommendations:

Recommendation 11

- ▶ That the issue of management and tenure be addressed and responsibility for maintenance of the grounds be clearly documented. The capacity for undertaking maintenance of the sports grounds should sit with either the SOCI or the AGD.

Recommendation 12

- ▶ A precinct plan is prepared for the sports ground at Vagabond Road which would include consideration of a multi-functional, rectangular playing field that could accommodate senior Australian Rules football, soccer, rugby and a central cricket pitch between the oval and the soccer pitch. The plan to include investigation on the provision of change room amenities and include the footprint of a synthetic bowling rink.

Recommendation 13

- ▶ That a lighting consultant be engaged to develop as part of the precinct plan a lighting plan to provide lighting to both training and competition standard across the proposed multi-functional, rectangular playing field. Consideration will need to be given to the proximity of the airport in the lighting design, hence the need for a qualified lighting consultant to undertake this project.
- ▶ That the DIAC be approached as a potential funding contributor for the development of the sports grounds based on the utilisation of the public amenities by their clients.

3. Christmas Island District High School

The CI District High School is located in Drum Site and the school is at capacity with approximately 290 students. The school has a range of sporting facilities, which includes an undersize soccer pitch and two synthetic grass floodlit tennis courts. One court is multi-marked for both tennis and basketball. The playing field is supported by changerooms and toilets. While there is no tennis club in evidence, there is casual use of the courts by the public. Tennis nets are stored in an airconditioned storeroom provided by the school.

The school principal is supportive of community use of the school's sporting facilities outside of normal school hours. The CI Soccer Federation utilises the school playing field for training purposes. It was observed that the soccer players utilised portable floodlights provided by CI Phosphate for training in the evening. This provided limited lighting and did not meet Australian lighting standards for training. Volunteers from the soccer club undertake infill mowing of the school's playing field in preparation for training and competitions on the site.

The AGD funds the operation of the school and the maintenance of the grounds.



Issues identified with the CI District High School:

- ▶ It appears only the multi-marked court is maintained to a reasonable standard for play. The other tennis court is in poor condition and requires refurbishment to remove algae and mould growth from the synthetic grass surface.
- ▶ The school's playing field is undersized and is not suitable to host competition standard soccer matches.
- ▶ There is no suitable floodlighting on this reserve to facilitate safe training under lights.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 14

- ▶ That a maintenance program be developed between the AGD and the SOCI for the upkeep and operation of the playing field and tennis courts. As there is community use of the school's sport and recreation facilities, there is a reasonable expectation of support from the local government authority.

Recommendation 15

- ▶ That the CI Soccer Federation be encouraged to utilise the Vagabond Road Sports Ground when the multi-functional playing field is developed with appropriate lighting for both training and competition standards.

4. Community Hall – Poon Saan



The Community Hall was provided by CI Phosphate and was opened by the New Zealand Commissioner Mr R.B. Tennet on 8 March 1969.

Considering the age of the facility, it is in reasonable condition and appears to be mainly utilised by the Chinese community in the Poon Saan residential area. A range of activities occur at the hall including tai chi, badminton, line dancing and cultural activities. The Community Hall is informally being used as a seniors' centre.

The hall is operated and maintained by the SOCI. It would appear the maintenance is of a high standard.

Issues identified with the Community Hall:

- ▶ As the building was designed in the 1960s there is no provision for disabled access.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 16

- ▶ Badminton competitions be held at the SOCI Recreation Centre where there is more than one court to facilitate fixtured games.

Recommendation 17

- ▶ That access issues be addressed if the facility is to be utilised as a seniors' centre.

5. Outdoor basketball court – Poon Saan



The outdoor, casual-use basketball court at Poon Saan is in disrepair. There is evidence that the courts are used on an informal basis for street basketball activities, predominately by younger participants. The concrete surface is cracking and is creating trip hazards with an uneven surface on which to play. Maintenance and operation of the court comes under the control of the SOCI.

Issues identified with the outdoor basketball court:

- ▶ Risk liability with the current state of the court surface – trip hazards identified.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 18

- ▶ There is a need for casual-use recreation amenities within a residential node (i.e. Poon Saan) and hence the outdoor basketball court needs to be retained and the court surface refurbished to an acceptable standard for street basketball.

Recommendation 19

- ▶ That consideration is given to the development of an additional casual-use basketball half-court in the Kampong at Flying Fish Cove to accommodate recreational needs in this higher density residential area.

6. Christmas Island Golf Club



The club meets all costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the amenities and the course. The only golf course on the island attracts reasonable casual use with approximately 200–300 casual users per week. The club programs activities to stimulate interest and attract new members i.e. twilight golf, corporate golf and match play events. There is evidence of strong corporate sponsorship with local companies utilising staff to undertake specific maintenance work on the course during company time.

The CI Golf Club has a number of development proposals to improve and strengthen its financial base and long term viability. These plans include:

- ▶ Moving to alternate energy supply through solar and wind generated energy. Currently the club is not connected to mains supply, but reliant on a diesel generator power supply, which is costly and laborious to operate and maintain by volunteers. Connection to the Settlements Power supply is estimated to cost \$1.5 million, hence the club's investigation into alternate power supply options, with anticipated federal funding support of this 'green' option.
- ▶ Refurbishment of a ground floor storage room to develop self-contained accommodation onsite for a grounds keeper. This appointment would provide a degree of onsite security and an opportunity to collect all casual-use greens fees, which are currently paid via an honour box system.

Issues identified with the CI Golf Club:

- ▶ Tenure concerning the club's use of the reserve and its long term security of the grounds is a matter that requires resolving.
- ▶ The club's reliance on diesel generated power supply is costly and has an impact on the environment through noise pollution and carbon emissions.
- ▶ Risk audit and assessment of the course to ensure both public and player safety is safeguarded (this is suggested in light of the litigation following an accident and injury during a corporate golf competition).

Recommendations:

Recommendation 20

- ▶ That the CI Golf Club continues with its investigation into alternate power supply and seeks funding for sustainable energy (www.sedo.energy.wa.gov.au). The club's dependency on fossil fuel and its remote location positions the club well for funding support for this initiative.

Recommendation 21

- ▶ The club pursues negotiations to formalise a lease with the Federal Government to establish tenure.

Recommendation 22

- ▶ That the club develops the onsite ground keeper accommodation project and documents the feasibility of the proposal. If the club determines the project is a viable prospect then a formal application for funding support is pursued.



7. Youth Centre – The Settlement (Gaze Road)

The Youth Centre is currently in the process of being relocated from Poon Saan to the Settlement. The reason for relocation is based on its hours of operation and noise impact on adjacent residents. The Settlement site is the former recreation centre for CI and is buffered from residential dwellings, which is more conducive with its youth activities and hours of operation. The youth centre and its services are managed by the SOCI with an appointed Youth Officer who oversees its operations and programs. The centre has a range of steel fabricated skate board ramps that are utilised by skate boarders, inline skaters and BMX riders.



The SOCI is in negotiations with the Chinese Literary Association to lease an area abutting the centre whereby the skate ramps can be relocated outdoors on a concrete apron. The purpose of this development is to free up indoor space for other activities including a youth lounge 'hang out' space, electronic games/IT room and other cultural activities.

Issues identified with the Youth Centre:

- ▶ The indoor surface of the skate venue (flexipave) is breaking down and creating risk for safe operation of skate boards.
- ▶ The centre requires improved ventilation for youth activities to occur.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 23

- ▶ That the SOCI pursue negotiations with the Chinese Literary Association for a lease in order to develop the outdoor skate park.

Recommendation 24

- ▶ That the steel skate ramps be rust treated and a maintenance schedule be developed, especially with their relocation outdoors and into a harsh marine environment.



8. Passive parks

There are a number of passive parks located in the various residential areas (Drum Site, Poon Saan, Kampong and the Settlement), which are maintained by the SOCI.

The parks have a range of play equipment contained within each of them and appear to be well maintained.

Issues identified with the CI passive parks:

- ▶ The hot tropical environment clearly impacts on use of play equipment contained within the passive parks.

Recommendation:

Recommendation 25

- ▶ Shade structures over some of the play equipment are considered, especially over the fitness circuit at Drum Site. Appropriate tree plantings would best suit considering the potential impact of tropical storms and cyclonic weather.



9. Boat ramps

CI is serviced by two public boat ramps. A single lane boat ramp is located at Flying Fish Cove and is maintained by the AGD. The ramp at Ethel Beach is maintained by the SOCI. Recreational boat fishing is a popular activity amongst all cultural groups on the island.



10. Swimming beaches

There are a limited number of swimming beaches on CI due to the impact of daily tides and strong currents around the island. Flying Fish Cove is the easiest and most accessible sea-based swimming venue. An informal swimming group undertakes early morning group swims on Monday, Wednesday and Friday throughout the year at Flying Fish Cove.



11. Trails and dual use paths (DUPs)

CI boasts some of the best nature-based walk experiences in the world. There are a range of walk trails across the island that are either managed by the Federal Government (National Parks) or by the local government authority (SOCl). The 'Christmas Island Walking Track Strategy' was prepared in November 2007 with funding support received from the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS). The report has not progressed to an implementation stage. There is a huge potential to increase physical activity through the development of new walk trails and upgrading of existing walk trails on CI.

Considering the easy access to the reef and its diverse marine life at Flying Fish Cove, there is great potential to develop a world class snorkelling trail in this location.

The SOCl has been allocated \$3 million over three years by the Federal Government for the development of a comprehensive DUP network servicing the residential areas on the island. This work is scheduled to commence in the 2010 calendar year and the SOCl has advised it is currently in the process of appointing a project manager.



Issues identified with trails on CI:

- ▶ Very evident lack of maintenance schedules and specific budgets to support trail networks on the island.
- ▶ The need to clearly define management responsibility across the range of trails on CI.
- ▶ Land tenure is the single most important issue impacting on trail development and management.

Recommendations:

Recommendation 26

- ▶ Formation of an inter-agency/community walk trails advisory/steering group to progress the SOCl Walking Track Strategy.

Recommendation 27

- ▶ CI Tourism Association undertakes selection and follows up on the accreditation of the island's premier walk trails for inclusion in the Top TrailsWA branding initiative.

Recommendation 28

- ▶ Setting of appropriate budgets by National Parks and the SOCl for the maintenance and upkeep of the trails on CI.

Recommendation 29

- ▶ That the SOCl and the CI Tourism Association collaborate on the development of a snorkelling trail at Flying Fish Cove. That funding be accessed via DSR's Trails Grant Program to support the planning and construction of the trail.

Appendix 1

Christmas Island Sport and Recreation Forum
3–5 pm, Tuesday 22 September 2009
Christmas Island Recreation Centre – Function Room

Attendees:

Bill Tatchell – Policy Development Officer – CI Tourism Association
Charlene Thompson – Coordinator – CI Neighbourhood Centre
Donna Poyner – Manager Westpac Bank – CI Hash House Harriers (HHH)
Simon Millcock – Economic Development Officer – AGD
Oliver Lines – Coordinator Recreation Centre – SOCI
Rhett Bowden – President – CI Cricket & Sporting Club
Paul Maberly – CEO – SOCI
Othman Dardak – CI Soccer Federation
Darren Cardwell – Case Worker – Life Without Boundaries (NGO)
Khristo Newall – Recreation Officer – Red Cross (NGO)

Objective:

The object of the forum was to gain an insight into the current status of provision of sport and recreation facilities, activities, service providers and programs and gather information and data on the future needs of Christmas Islanders.

Format:

Participants were asked to consider and discuss the following points and the following responses were recorded:

The good aspects of living on CI (strengths)

- ▶ CI weather (constant 30°C)
- ▶ Accessibility
- ▶ Cultural harmony – multicultural/cosmopolitan community
- ▶ Diversity of activities
- ▶ Community engagement
- ▶ Open, hospitable community
- ▶ Safe, secure
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Resources
- ▶ Infrastructure – supporting a wide range of sporting interests
- ▶ Quality of life – ‘escape from the daily grind’
- ▶ Public transport
- ▶ No traffic
- ▶ Aquatic (sea) connection and the views
- ▶ Land – terrestrial connection

Consider current facilities, both built and natural

Built:

- ▶ Golf course
- ▶ SOCI Recreation & Aquatic Centre
- ▶ Tennis courts – school and Vagabond Road
- ▶ Oval
- ▶ Basketball court – Poon Saan
- ▶ Soccer field – school
- ▶ Community Hall
- ▶ Settlement sports hall
- ▶ Skate Park (Settlement sports hall)
- ▶ Passive parks
- ▶ Walk trails
- ▶ Historical buildings
- ▶ Centre
- ▶ Shops
- ▶ Markets
- ▶ Open air cinema
- ▶ Boat ramps
- ▶ Fitness circuit (outdoor) – Drumsite
- ▶ Sepak takraw
- ▶ Airport
- ▶ Library

Natural:

- ▶ Flying Fish Cove
- ▶ Beaches
- ▶ Reef – snorkelling, scuba diving
- ▶ Fishing
- ▶ Swimming (sea-based)
- ▶ Surfing – seasonal (swell season)
- ▶ Flora and fauna – whale watching, bird watching, crab migration
- ▶ Caves

Disadvantages of living on CI/problems

- ▶ Airfares (costs)
- ▶ Lack of qualified coaches/officials
- ▶ Transient population
- ▶ Demographics – population – reduces competition potential

- ▶ Lack of volunteers
- ▶ Cross cultural communication
- ▶ Lack of ... and poorly equipped playing fields
- ▶ Budget restraints
- ▶ Climate – heat in the middle of the day
- ▶ Lack of DUPs servicing the residential areas
- ▶ Lack of disabled access to public amenities
- ▶ Access to sporting equipment
- ▶ Freight costs
- ▶ Lack of competitive sporting opportunities for children
- ▶ Access to fresh produce
- ▶ Limited accommodation for visiting specialists
- ▶ Lack of strategic planning
- ▶ Support for working families – day care, holiday programs
- ▶ High cost of living

How can CI be made a better place to live?

- ▶ Access – cheaper flights, increased frequency of flights, reduction in freight costs
- ▶ Working together – improve communication
- ▶ Public service mentality – Federal MP representation (on island)
- ▶ IOTs strategic plan
- ▶ Cheaper cost of goods and services
- ▶ Integrated planning strategy
- ▶ Upgrade key facilities i.e. airport and port (cruise ship stop-over)
- ▶ Increase permanent resident population
- ▶ Lighting of active reserve
- ▶ Equipment trailer for the CI HHH

Facility deficiencies and opportunities to improve?

(Workshop participants also had the opportunity to rank which items had priority from an implementation perspective – *voting credits)

- ▶ Overall sport and recreation planning and investment in development (*10)
- ▶ No full-size soccer pitch on CI (*3)
- ▶ Lack of lighting at the cricket grounds (*3)
- ▶ Golf club – no mains power (*1)
- ▶ SOCI Recreation Centre – opening hours, flooring, staffing levels, plan and strategy for maximising its usage (*3)
- ▶ Basketball court – resurfacing
- ▶ Passive parks – upgraded play equipment

- ▶ Drum Site – sepak takraw?
- ▶ Kampong half court basketball/casual use amenities,
- ▶ Poon Saan
- ▶ DUPs – cycling and walking (*5)
- ▶ Water sports – Flying Fish Cove (*1)
- ▶ Better access for disabled (*2)
- ▶ Need to develop community capacity

Outside factors influencing opportunities to improve – ones that you have no control over:

- ▶ Government policy impacting on CI
- ▶ Lack of planning
- ▶ No economic development plan
- ▶ Conspiracy theory – ‘Frisbee to Canberra’– should be a ‘Boomerang’
- ▶ Empty promises
- ▶ Climate – wet season
- ▶ Immigration/asylum seekers
- ▶ Freight
- ▶ Cultural festivities i.e. Hari Raya Puasa

How can sport and recreation opportunities be improved on CI?

- ▶ Increase CI’s overall capacity to host sport carnivals/camps (school residential camps)
- ▶ Air access, accommodation, on-island transport
- ▶ Adventure races – outdoor recreation pursuits
- ▶ Policy and strategic planning – community consultation, identify needs, determine what is realistic and has the best outcome – seek and secure funding and include appropriate and respective management plan
- ▶ United vision
- ▶ Coordinated approach to sport and recreation
- ▶ Resolve land tenure issues
- ▶ Leadership
- ▶ Use of renewable energy
- ▶ Maintain sport and recreation forum – an integrated and coordinated approach

Responsibility – AGD, SOCI, sporting organisations, broader community.

The CI Sport and Recreation Forum endorsed the release of the draft SOCI ‘Sport & Recreation Strategic Plan’ for public review. The release of the draft to be supported by a presentation to the SOCI’s councillors.

APPENDIX 2

Meeting Notes – Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC)

Friday 25 September 2009

Mark Gregson – Case Manager (0409 999 795)

Current DIAC staff population on CI = 45. Staff hours are normal i.e. 37.5 hour week.

DIAC have implemented a corporate health and wellness program for staff that includes covering the cost of using the SOCI Recreation Centre (use of the gymnasium is proving popular).

DIAC acknowledges the important role of volunteers within the community and is in the process of developing a volunteer roster for staff to become involved and to support community volunteer organisations. This is a public relations exercise to improve the agency's profile and reputation within the community.

DIAC has perceived the gaps in sport and recreation provision revolve around improved delivery of organised sport for its staff to access while on CI for their contract period (normally six month duration).

Best mode of communication for DIAC staff to become engaged in community activity is:

- ▶ Islander newspaper
- ▶ Blackboards at the Gaze Road roundabout
- ▶ Word of mouth

DIAC acknowledges that its clients utilise public sport and recreation amenities and this is very evident with its family groups currently located at the Vagabond Road site (next to the CI Recreation Centre).

DIAC identified as a key funding stakeholder in contributing towards the proposed active reserve development at the Vagabond sports grounds.

Meeting Notes – Red Cross

Friday 18 September 2009

Khristo Newall – Recreation Officer (0409 039 238)

Currently Red Cross has a service delivery agreement with the Federal Government to provide support for adults and family groups in detention while on CI. This NGO is managing approximately 30 people, but this number changes on a daily basis as a result of boats arriving at CI for processing.

Red Cross has four staff on CI with a Team Leader, two Case Workers and one Recreation Officer (RO). The role of the Red Cross Recreation Officer is to engage clients in recreation activities while staying on CI. A primary role of the RO is transporting clients to and from engagements.

Interest expressed in further use of sport and recreation activities to assist with assimilating new arrivals into the Australian culture. Primary benefits of participating in sport and recreation are the mental and physical health benefits.

Meeting Notes – Attorney General’s Department – IOT Health Service

Tuesday 2 September 2009

Nigel Jefford (Manager)

A primary health issue on CI is alcohol consumption and the impact of smoking on the community’s health. The current national smoking rate is 19 per cent of the population. However CI smoking statistics reflect 25 per cent of the island’s residents are smoking and this sparks long term health concerns. The excise-free status of cigarettes and alcohol on CI make these items affordable and accessible to island residents and visitors.