

BACK TO BELMORE

EST 2005

Back to Belmore Incorporated
Incorporation No: INC9886178
PO Box 87, Belmore NSW 2192
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Monday, 9 December 2024

Ms Anna Nowland
Principal Planning Officer
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Subject: Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs Centre of Excellence
Reference Number: SSD-69627466

Dear Ms Nowland,

Since 2005, Back to Belmore has served as an umbrella group harnessing the collective strength of community stakeholders seeking to promote the advancement of Belmore Sports Ground – the spiritual home of the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs – as a multi-purpose sporting facility.

Belmore Sports Ground is synonymous with local sport. It has been a focal point for sport in the Canterbury-Bankstown district for generations. From the early 1900s, Belmore had its own local cricket club known as “Belmore Cambridge” and the team played on the parcel of land now known as Belmore Sports Ground.

All communities deserve top-class sporting venues. In our neck of the woods, sport is an integral part of life. Participation in sport is essential in the development of young men and women to help them achieve a successful and balanced life. Sporting facilities are equally essential to the success of sport and to nurture the talent of future generations of sports players.

Over the years, Belmore Sports Ground has contributed significantly to the development of up and coming sports players. This is an important facility with a long and interwoven history with the Canterbury-Bankstown district. We want Belmore Sports Ground to be able to recapture its previous status as a major venue for sporting events. Returning the historic venue to the purpose for it was intended is our foremost endeavour as a community organisation.

Strong local communities add up to a strong Australia. Upgrading sporting facilities like Belmore Sports Ground boosts economic activity in terms of job creation in the short term but also builds the community infrastructure that is required to safeguard the venue for the next generation of athletes.

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In this sporting heartland, open space and community facilities are at a premium. A state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence at Belmore Sports Ground would ensure that jobs are created in the short-term with the construction phase but the community will benefit for years to come. It would make a massive difference for the morale of the local community but it needs to be done in a collaborative way that delivers a facility that will benefit current and future generations.

Whenever the Bulldogs return to Belmore Sports Ground, it is always a massive coup for the Canterbury-Bankstown district. Major sporting events at the historic venue inject hundreds of thousands of dollars into the local economy, bringing an immeasurable windfall to small business owners and delivering major flow-on effects for local businesses.

Since 2015, the Bulldogs have successfully staged fourteen NRL premiership matches at their spiritual home, which means over \$5 million has been pumped into the local economy over the past decade through spending by locals and visitors on game days. That is a massive win for our community. Local retailers get a surge in foot traffic with an increase of up to 70% in their walk-in trade on match day. These fixtures impact residents and retailers in Belmore in a positive way and visitors utilise the cafes, eateries and restaurants on Burwood Road before and after the games, supporting local businesses and fostering long-term sustainable growth in the Canterbury-Bankstown area. Evidently, the mercantile interests of Belmore are best served by having as many events as practically possible at Belmore Sports Ground.

A basic element of our philosophy is that the interests of Belmore Sports Ground are best served by working with all community stakeholders in a collaborative and cohesive manner to restore, preserve and safeguard the historic venue for current and future generations. It is a fundamental policy of Back to Belmore to support measures that will promote Belmore Sports Ground as a multi-purpose sporting facility. How successfully the next generation of athletes can fulfil their goals depends increasingly on how we look after Belmore Sports Ground and how we best use the venue's amenities. Their tomorrow depends on our actions today.

The Bulldogs and Back to Belmore have long championed the creation of a Centre of Excellence at Belmore Sports Ground. The facility would underpin economic growth, greater productivity and economic prosperity in the local district. We wish to create a precinct that highlights the Canterbury-Bankstown district's proud history but also gives the people in the area a multi-purpose space where members of our culturally and ethnically diverse community can come together to learn from each other about each other and develop a narrative for the future.

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There are many reasons why the Canterbury-Bankstown region deserves the creation of a new Centre of Excellence as well as additional facilities at Belmore Sports Ground. They include:

- To enhance the existing facilities: improving access to those who already use the area, and to welcome new users to a revitalised precinct.
- To enable increased use of the facility, providing opportunities for a number of groups from the arts and sport communities.
- To provide the best rugby league facility in the country catering to NRL and NRLW, elite junior pathways and grassroots rugby league within one specialised venue.
- To lead the way in highlighting the power of culture and sport in promoting effective integration of diverse communities.
- To celebrate one of the most multicultural populations in Sydney, with over 45% of residents in the City of Canterbury Bankstown coming from countries where English is not the first language. The ten major countries represented include China, Lebanon, Greece, Vietnam, Bangladesh, India, South Korea, Italy, Indonesia and New Zealand.

A project of this magnitude will require the financial commitment of all funding partners to ensure its successful completion. As the peak body for advocating the preservation and restoration of Belmore Sports Ground over the past twenty years, it is our fervent hope that the funding partners can secure both capital and on-going funding to ensure this worthwhile project becomes a reality.

Yours in Belmore,



LUKE CEVOLANI
President
Back to Belmore Inc.



STEVEN CATALDI
Vice President
Back to Belmore Inc.



LUKE R. BRAILEY
Patron
Back to Belmore Inc