



10 January 2025

To whom it may concern,

I write to you to express my deep objection to the proposed development of the Mingara Recreation Club Seniors Housing at Tumby Umbi.

As an athletics coach with 50 years involvement in the sport, I was over the moon when I found myself living on the Central Coast with a synthetic facility in my neighbouring suburb 15 years ago. Prior to this, I have resided in the Northern and Western parts of NSW.

I have experienced great success developing athletes in these areas over many years, on grass, and sometimes grass-less fields and I know how difficult it is for athletes to achieve their dreams from regional and rural areas.

To have a facility like Mingara Regional Athletics Centre is a rare occurrence outside the Sydney Metropolitan area, and one that significantly benefits those who have access to such a venue.

Since residing on the Central Coast, I have personally attracted athletes to train at this venue on a regular basis from Bathurst, Tamworth, Lithgow, Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and the Sutherland Shire. I have even had athletes move to the Central Coast to live and train with me at Mingara.

Since COVID, however, the management of the facility has become one of restriction rather than growth.

Being open for training for only 16 hours per week has limited the opportunity to capitalise on a growing sport. One only has to look at the numbers of athletes and spectators attending major carnivals such as the Sydney North Secondary School Sports Association championships, NSW Country Championships, Treloar Shield meets or the Winter Track Series Finale to know this facility can attract a crowd.

At all of these meets, as well as on the weekly Friday night competition, the carpark, the area designated for this proposed development, is full. This is a picture of my car looking back towards the venue when leaving a meet that I arrived slightly before start time, and was one of the last to leave, taken in 2017, and the sport has grown significantly since then. This is in the middle of the space that the proposed development will occupy. To expect the Recreation Club carpark to cater for this volume of traffic is, quite frankly, delusional, especially on a Friday night.

What it will do though, is deter people from utilising the facility and engaging with the sport of athletics. A unique sport that caters for a diverse range of people and allows them to participate in physical activity when they otherwise may not.

This facility is a gem on the Central Coast with the potential to be a gold mine. With strategic management and sensible policies and practices, this would be realised. Instead, the club seek to destroy its potential through a development that will ensure it is underutilised.

Regards,

Kerry Smith (Momentum Track and Field)

