

EWEN PARK

Waterlogged fields

CANTERBURY Council is proposing a plan to have some weekend sporting matches moved from "over-used" Ewen Park to under-used grounds in the south west of Sydney. Poor drainage at Ewen Park means games are often washed out. Greens councillor Linda Eisler said drainage could cost up to \$2 million and the council could not afford the bill without government funding. "The real solution is a regional approach to utilisation of fields and sharing the load of games and practice with other councils," she said.

■ Full report: Page 3

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Nil-all in battle for oval space

RYAN LIPMAN and ADAM VIDLER

CANTERBURY Council has agreed to consider a "fair use approach" to Ewen Park.

Greens councillor Linda Eisler has proposed a strategy to allocate more games and activity to under-used parks in south west local government areas to prevent over-use of reclaimed land by soccer players at Ewen Park.

Despite the addition of two mini soccer fields at a cost of \$30,000 the Hurlstone Park Wanderers, who claim the park as a home ground, still have trouble accommodating their 1200 members.

Future drainage of the park could cost up to \$2 million and may not work, Cr Eisler said.

She said it would be unlikely the council could afford to pay for the drainage without state or federal funding and attempts to do so could cut funding to other areas.

"The real solution is a regional approach to utilisation of fields and sharing the load of games and practice sessions with other councils," she said.



Hurlstone Park Wanderers president Paul Kougiias, Earlwood Wanderers president Vicki Crowe, and Canterbury Juniors president Joe Zappia.



Hurlstone Park Wanderers president Paul Kougiias said he would support any review of ground-related issues by council.

"For us, the main issue is getting kids on the park," he said.

"This isn't about the Wanderers taking over other clubs' grounds, but just trying to spread the burden more equally."

Meanwhile, the Wanderers' Space To Play campaign culminated on Saturday at the club's end-of-season presentation ceremony.

Canterbury Deputy Mayor Bill Kriharas, who handed out medals to players, was also given a petition from the club with 1500 signatures supporting the demand for drainage and other upgrades to the field.

The campaign also gained some heavyweight support with two other big community soccer clubs adding their voices. Canterbury Juniors and Earlwood Wanderers face similar problems at their own grounds, which motivated them to join forces with the Hurlstone Park club.

■ Opinion: Page 21

Earlwood Wanderers spokesman Jason Chin said Earlwood Oval had endured problems with drainage, but Canterbury Council had taken action on that front in 2011, resulting in a much-improved playing surface.

Wanderers president Vicki Crowe said a "fair use" approach to ground-sharing would most likely be unworkable.

"We have about 60 teams at our club and our oval is in constant use all through Saturday," she said. "Hurlstone Park has about 100 teams - where are they going to go?"

Ms Crowe said ground-sharing would also disadvantage the Hurlstone Park club through revenue losses at the canteen, which would be picked up by other clubs.

SHIFT: Are you in favour of some games being moved from Ewen Park to other under-used parks in the south west of Sydney? Email editor@theexpress.com.au

PHOTOS: CANTERBURY JUNIORS