



5th April 2019

Annual Plan Submission
Chief Executive
Taranaki Regional Council
Private Bag 713
STRATFORD 4352

Dear Sir

Yarrow Stadium Submission - Preferred option two with an upgrade to option four if funding allows

Taranaki Rugby Football Union (TRFU) takes this opportunity to thank the Taranaki Stadium Trust (TST) and the Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) for providing Yarrow Stadium as the premier regional events centre to the public of the Taranaki region since 2003 through to December 2017. During this time the TRFU was a tenant at the facility in what was considered one of the best venues in New Zealand and an iconic stadium throughout the world.

Over this 15-year period, a Berl report completed in October 2018 estimates the total economic value to the Taranaki region of the Yarrow Stadium Regional facility was \$100M. Events at this regional facility over the same period have attracted 245,000 visitors to the Taranaki province and an estimated \$45-\$55M added to Taranaki GDP.

There is no argument that the Taranaki region needs a Regional Facility for a multitude of purposes. Hosting a significant variety of events, with the iconic Yarrow Stadium the jewel in the provinces' crown, provides a sense of pride to our region where the above noted economic value is testament.

The challenging position that the region now faces due to the earthquake prone issues with the east and west stands at the venue which have deemed the facility unfit to host significant events is frustrating and a serious detriment to the province. We have lost our ability to bring major events to Taranaki and to our 118,000 people. We require a collective 'Team Taranaki' approach to remedy this situation to ensure that we at least reinstate the facility back to previous capacity as a minimum to continue to attract these key public occasions.

The TRFU thank the TST and TRC for working within their limitations and providing option two where they are proposing to repair both stands and update facilities which the TRFU fully supports. The TRFU is also supportive of option four which is a repair of both stands, additional seating and community facilities that will provide the region with a true national convention centre if the extra funding for this option can be found.



Taranaki Rugby is in its 134th year of existence being the sixth oldest province in New Zealand, a foundation member of NZ Rugby and the sixth highest producer of All Blacks with 82. We are a not for profit organisation with the core purpose to foster and develop the game of rugby throughout our region across 19 affiliated rugby clubs, 13 secondary schools and 72 primary schools.

In 2018 the TRFU exceeded 7,000 registered rugby players for the first time in our history with over 2,000 of these women. Taranaki rugby is the fastest growing female sport in the region with an 11.7% increase in 2018. Participation rates in our region are the highest in the country with a population of 118,000, approximately 6% of the province play our game.

Taranaki Rugby also field a semi-professional team in the National Provincial Championship. The Yarrows Taranaki Bulls play in the Mitre 10 Cup, the premier domestic competition in world rugby and our home ground is Yarrow Stadium.

To foster the dream for a young child to play the national game, it is important to have pathways and role models to aspire towards. The Yarrows Taranaki Bulls had six All Blacks in 2018 – Beauden, Jordie & Scott Barrett, Waisake Naholo, Te Toiroa Tahuriorangi and Angus Taávaio.

The Barrett brothers epitomise the pathway that Taranaki Rugby provides where we have three brothers growing up in the Pungarehu community, playing for the Coastal Rugby Club, attending Francis Douglas Memorial College, playing for Taranaki and becoming All Blacks.

It is important that the Yarrows Taranaki Bulls play at a premier regional facility to showcase our talent and inspire our region. 2014 is testament to this when the Taranaki Bulls won the Mitre 10 Cup final at Yarrow Stadium in front of a sold out 22,000 capacity crowd. This occasion, the sense of pride and achievement is vital to well being of the Taranaki Region and the aspirations of our people with a particular focus on our youth.

Yarrow Stadium is a significant and important piece of infrastructure that plays a major role in the region and the earlier we get it operating back to full capacity for the well being of the province, the better off we will be.

Currently there are no other viable options in the region to host these major events. From a rugby perspective there is TET Stadium in Inglewood, and the TSB Hub at Hicks Park in Hawera. Both are fantastic community facilities but not at the capacity required with minimum standard lux lighting for televised nights games, world rugby minimum standard changing facilities, 8,400 covered grandstand seats to accommodate the crowds and the lounges associated to service corporate partners.



Taranaki Rugby have a long association with the land that Yarrow Stadium sits upon which was previously Rugby Park. This land was owned and operated by the TRFU before it was gifted back to the community in 1999 to allow the Yarrow Stadium development. Taranaki Rugby is about lifting the opportunities for everyone that calls this place home and about creating an identity for the region and we believe this key iconic asset is critical to our affinity to the province.

Yarrow Stadium is the spiritual home of Taranaki rugby, steeped in history with the field and lighting world class. The reinstatement back to capacity with the proposed option two will ensure that the region can continue to host key events including club finals day, five to seven Mitre 10 Cup fixtures a year with the return of Super Rugby matches and All Black tests imminent.

The key events over the last fifteen years from the Crusty Demons and Nitro Circus, NRL and Warriors Rugby League matches, Phoenix football games, FIFA U20 World Cup, Rugby World Cup 2011, Mitre 10 Cup Rugby, Super Rugby and All Blacks matches play an integral part of this region creating a vibrant community where we all want to live, being Taranaki.

The television broadcasting of the above key events provides significant advertising of our region. Yarrow Stadium, with the famous Mount Taranaki as a backdrop, promotes the Taranaki province as a key destination for visitors. This exposure is vital to attracting and adding to the 245,000 people who have already made the journey to New Plymouth and Yarrow Stadium for an event. The night that the All Blacks played Argentina in September 2017 the television broadcast that went out across New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and the UK alone was to in excess of 1,000,000 viewers.

TRFU support option two in the first instance with an upgrade to option four if additional funding can be found. The earlier the work begins on Yarrow Stadium to bring this regional facility back to operation the better the wider province will be.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit on this matter and wish to present in person to our submission at the hearing scheduled for 13/14 May 2019.

Kind regards



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