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Weekly

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Residents rage at \$90m Norwood Oval redevelopment plan

JOHN THOMPSON-MILLS

Residents from the Norwood council area are angry at the lack of consultation over plans to demolish Norwood Oval and replace it with an all-seater stadium.

Work on the project estimated at \$90 million is due to begin in January next year, but residents say they only recently became aware of it.

The stadium is due to be completed by the end of 2010 and should have a seating capacity of 30,000 people.

The project is believed to be primarily funded by the State and Federal Governments.

The stadium will have seating on two levels, and includes a conference room and world class training facilities for athletes and the general public.

The Norwood Action Group said it learned of the plans only a few weeks ago and is very angry.

Chairwoman Mary Bettes said the residents contacted the council, which is also believed to be a major contributor to the project and they were told the project is definitely going ahead.

"All we were told is that we'd have a chance to have some say on things that don't really matter, like the design of the foyer and the colour of the seats," she said.

Local resident Jim Pitten, who lives across the street from the soon to be demolished Norwood Oval, said the project was first brought to his attention last week when he received a letter from the council.

"You'd think that seeing it's going to affect all of us living around here they'd have let us know a bit earlier," he said.

"What if we wanted to object to it? We didn't get a chance."

The new stadium will host SANFL football matches and is expected to be an alternative venue for the AFL.

It will also have the capacity to host international soccer and cricket matches.

Features of the new stadium will include video screens at each end of the oval, television-quality lighting and a three storey car-park.

The existing oval has been used as a sporting venue since the 1890s, and can hold 22,000 people, including 3,900 seats in its two grandstands.

"What if we wanted to object to it? We didn't get a chance."

Announcing the new development, South Australian Recreation and Sport Minister Michael Wright said the revamped Norwood Oval would greatly benefit the area and not just athletes.

"The new facility will be world-class and will really put Norwood on the map.

"With a top-class facility of this type, we will be able to attract international competition to Adelaide.

"With the new redeveloped oval at Norwood, we will be able to combine suburban convenience with the atmosphere of a long sporting tradition with world-class facilities for both competitors and spectators," he said.

Mr Wright said that in addition to SANFL and international matches, the oval could host an Adelaide team in a revitalised Australian Baseball League.

The oval was the home ground for the Adelaide Giants baseball team before the league folded in the late 1990s.

The Mayor of Norwood, Payneham and St Peters Robert Bria, said the facilities at Norwood Oval were not up to current standards, and the existing venue was becoming expensive to maintain.

He said the new stadium, along with the \$30 million Parkade redevelopment on The Parade, would provide a significant boost for the local economy.

"As more people come into the area to go to sporting events, our traders will benefit ... The extra car parking will also be great," he said.

"One of the problems we've had for a long time is that there wasn't any parking nearby, so streets were clogged with cars on match days.

This'll take the traffic off the streets and give residents a break," he said.

Norwood Football Club is also behind the proposal.

Club spokesman Harry Williams said the redevelopment is just what Norwood needs.

"We're looking at building a stronger team and an even stronger club, and this is just the way to do it.

"Our members will be repaid for their loyalty with a top-class venue, with comfortable seating and good lighting.

"We can bring more sporting events to the oval, and give our members even more value for their money." However, not everyone is convinced about the value of the project.

Residents' group chairwoman Mrs Bettes said Norwood Oval has lots of character.

"The current oval may be a bit lacking in facilities, but it has got character and it fits in with the character of the area," she said.

Calls for endangered frog habitat funding



There may be as few as 400 orange-toed tree frogs in existence.

ANDREW ANDREWS Environment reporter

Environment groups say money needs to be spent urgently to save the habitat of the endangered orange-toed tree frog.

The frog, which is found only in South Australia and western Victoria, is considered highly endangered.

Estimates of the orange-toed tree frog population put the number of frogs at between 400 and 800.

One of the frog's main habitats is around the Onkaparinga River, in Adelaide's south, and environmentalists say the State Government and local councils need to inject funds into preserving this habitat.

Fauna Care SA spokeswoman Ms Jenny Barry said the frog population had been badly affected by the degradation of waterways in South Australia.

She said the frog had once populated most of SA's major rivers, as well as many in Victoria's west, but the population had been reduced to a few hundred frogs around the Onkaparinga and a few hundred more in the area of the Glenelg River near the Victoria/South Australia border.

"It's not too late to save this frog, but time is running out.

"Unlike many other types of endangered species, it's just about impossible to successfully raise frogs in captivity, so the money needs to be spent on making sure their habitat is protected," she said.

A State Government spokesman said yesterday the matter would be investigated.

Bike trail plans hit dead end as costs soar



ANDREW PETERS

Plans to develop a 20km north to south bike trail through Adelaide's eastern suburbs have been put on hold because it is going to cost considerably more than first thought.

Work on the project, a joint venture by the Magill, Rostrevor and Montacute Councils, was due to begin this December, but it is now unlikely to begin before the middle of next year.

A Magill Council spokesman said the cost of the project had blown out from \$450,000 to more than \$700,000 because of increases in the costs of materials, and because sections of the path near Morialta Falls would need extra reinforcement due to land instability.

He said the three councils were renegotiating their commitment to the project, but that finalising details was likely to take some time.

Health Dept cancels overtime ban

PETER PETERS



The Health Department has cancelled an instruction to ban the payment of unauthorised overtime to the state's junior doctors.

Andrew Murray, of the Salaried Medical Officers Association, says a memo issued by the department would have affected junior doctors at most major public hospitals in Adelaide.

There is a growing concern that doctors are working far too long without breaks.

Patient wellbeing is also under threat as doctors are becoming increasingly tired and making mistakes.

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AEC: school signs breach electoral rules

Canberra: The Australian Electoral Commission says signs used to promote the Government's economic stimulus projects and placed in front of schools are in breach of electoral rules.

The signs have been erected at thousands of schools around the country, and the Government has mandated they cannot be taken down until early 2011.

This could be up to a year after the next election when many schools will be used as polling booths.

Last week the Government moved to put authorisation stickers on the signs to ensure they complied with the Electoral Act.

Hungry thieves in fast-food takeaway

Eleven popular fast-food restaurants in several southern suburbs have been targeted by knife-wielding bandits over the past week.

Two bandits have robbed takeaway restaurants in Aberfoyle Park, Blackwood and Reynella since last Thursday.

Police say the thieves—of medium build and wearing blue balaclavas—stole cash and escaped on foot, most probably to a car parked near-by.

Upper Sturt house goes up in smoke

CFS firefighters were called to a blaze early this morning that caused an estimated \$180,000 damage to an unoccupied house at Upper Sturt.

Volunteer fighters from Crafers, Upper Sturt and Mylor arrived at the house just before 3:30am to find it well ablaze.

By the time the fire had been brought under control, three bedrooms and a family room had been badly damaged, while an adjoining garage may have to be demolished.