



Major Infrastructure Proposal Assessment

Department of Local Government,
Sport and Cultural Industries

State Hockey Centre Upgrade
Summary Assessment Report



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Acknowledgment of Country

Infrastructure WA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Western Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures; and to Elders both past and present.

Major Infrastructure Proposal Assessment Summary Report

Purpose

This assessment report has been prepared in carrying out Infrastructure WA's (IWA) legislative function to assess and report to the Premier on major infrastructure proposals. The assessment is of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries' (DLGSC) State Hockey Centre (SHC) Project Definition Plan (PDP) and supplementary Covering Note. Additional supporting information received, including an earlier business case, had already been considered by government and therefore was not subject to formal review by IWA. Consultation with key stakeholders was also used to support the analysis. IWA's assessment is primarily focussed on the deliverability and risks of the publicly announced SHC upgrade.

1. IWA observations

Key aspects of the proposal have already been endorsed by the state including its merits, continued location of the SHC at Curtin University and the key scope items of the upgrade.

The upgrades will deliver significant improvements including additional competition level and training pitches, improved change room facilities; high-performance strength and conditioning and sports medicine facilities, Hockey Australia High Performance Program (HAHPP) facility requirements, two indoor air-conditioned full size international standard indoor hockey pitches and the ability to cater for up to 10,000 spectators.

The proposed upgrades were necessitated in response to a Hockey Australia initiated Expression of Interest (EOI) process to host the HAHPP beyond 2024 and to establish a single hub hosting both the HAHPP and supporting Hockey Australia administration headquarters, which are currently located in Melbourne.

2. Context

2.1 Project background

The SHC, opened in 1979, is Western Australia's premier hockey facility. It is the location of the offices of Hockey WA (HWA) and the HAHPP, which services the Hockeyroos (women's national team) and the Kookaburras (men's national team).

The HAHPP is Western Australia's only nationally based sporting program, with an agreement between the state and Hockey Australia to host the facility at Curtin University until December 2024. In 2021 DGLSC commenced a business case to investigate and evaluate options for delivering a new SHC to continue to host the HAHPP and allow HWA to continue to grow the sport of hockey, conduct competitions, and manage development pathways for junior athletes.

In March 2022 an EOI process was announced by Hockey Australia to establish a single hub hosting both the HAHPP and administration headquarters, including scope requirements. Following development and lodging it was announced in December 2022 that Western Australia was successful in its bid to Hockey Australia to continue to host the HAHPP, with proposed investment of \$135 million to upgrade the facilities at the SHC.

Key bid items included the provision of three international standard hockey pitches, a specialist goalkeeper training facility, an indoor hockey centre and extensive recovery, gym and support facilities, with seating for up to 10,000 spectators.

It is intended that the upgrades will be completed during 2028.

Strategic merit

2.2 Alignment

The SHC, located at Perth Hockey Stadium (PHS), is identified within the *State Sporting Infrastructure Plan Review 2019* as a key component of the State's stadium hierarchy, supporting the need to provide an outdoor stadium facility which allows the hosting of state, national and international competition into the future, with an estimated capacity of 5,000 – 8,000. A major upgrade was identified as being required in the medium (6-9 years) to long term (10+ years).

The *State Infrastructure Strategy* indirectly identifies the State Hockey Centre upgrade through Recommendation 88:

Optimise use, improve accessibility and ensure facilities are fit for purpose by increasing investment in existing and new arts, culture, sport and recreation infrastructure, including:

(e) delivering priority capital works proposed in the State Sporting Infrastructure Plan subject to business cases

2.3 Problems and opportunities

The PDP and business case identify the primary problems seeking to be addressed by the proposal as the upcoming expiration of the two agreements (ground lease with Curtin University and agreement with Hockey Australia to host the HAHPP), both of which affect the viability of PHS. Without action as of 31 December 2024, Western Australia risks no longer having access to the existing SHC and/or losing the rights to host the HAHPP.

Options proposed by DLGSC to address the identified problems were:

- Find a new site for the SHC, and develop a new facility
- Extend the lease with Curtin University and continue with the current facility or seek to redevelop in some form
- Take no action (subsequently considered as unviable, based on the ongoing need for a SHC to support competition and development in WA)

3. Options assessment

As part of the business case, a long list of seven potential sites were investigated, including the existing site at Curtin University, to identify a preferred site, with three sites shortlisted for more detailed investigation. Curtin University was determined as the preferred site, scoring highest in the qualitative scoring and having the lowest estimated capital cost of the three.

Three design options were subsequently developed for the existing site to inform the nature of the upgrade ahead of the submission to Hockey Australia. The selected option was based on fulfilling the scope requirements of the Hockey Australia EOI, with an additional indoor hockey pitch.

4. Societal impacts

4.1 Economic and financial assessment

While there is description in the business case and supporting documentation of likely sporting, community and economic benefits of the upgraded SHC, it is not clear as to how this compares to existing levels and therefore the anticipated improved position. It would have been beneficial for the business case or PDP to detail expectations such as increased participation, events and visitor numbers to be able to quantify these benefits.

While IWA considers sufficient rigour was undertaken in estimating the anticipated project cost for the new facility, the project will need to be closely monitored, noting recent escalation and market capacity issues effecting the local construction industry and shared cost agreements required.

4.2 Social assessment

The business case identified that WA has the highest per capita field hockey participation rate in the nation, with the number of teams affiliated with Hockey WA increasing by 11% since 2010.

PHS is used extensively for entry level community programs as well as elite level sport. The venue is used by clubs, schools, regional associations and social competitions as well as for local and club competition. This provides a benefit through additional sporting facilities within the metropolitan area, additional access by a range of user groups, and flow on benefits of increased activity levels and general wellbeing within the community.

IWA supports the proposal's commentary that the SHC can be seen to provide benefit across economic, health and social outcomes. WA has a strong sporting identity and sporting clubs and activities bring people and communities together, with the positive impacts of an active lifestyle on physical and mental health widely understood.

IWA considers that it would be worthwhile to establish future performance measures by which the project objectives and investment benefits could be assessed, in order to demonstrate whether or not envisaged outcomes are achieved. One example might be expected hockey participation and increased community use.

As part of the next phase of project development and delivery it is expected that an Aboriginal engagement strategy will be developed and implemented.

4.3 Environmental assessment

Technical reviews have been undertaken as part of the PDP to assess flora, vegetation and fauna impacts. While the reviews identified no threatened or priority flora or ecological communities at the site they also recommended that consideration be given to retaining as many larger of the trees identified within the site as possible, particularly those identified as having a 'high retention value'.

A report was prepared to review potential sustainability opportunities for the SHC, which included recommending targeting a world-leading 6-Star Green Star Buildings certification level. IWA is supportive of agency efforts on climate mitigation and adaption measures to reduce carbon emissions and achieve net zero outcomes.

5. Recommended option and project definition

The proposed scope is to deliver:

- One competition pitch to Fédération Internationale de Hockey (FIH) standards, including lighting, LED boards and broadcast infrastructure
- One competition pitch to FIH standards, including lighting
- One full-size training pitch to FIH standards including lighting
- A one third sized training pitch, fully netted and lit, for corners and goal keeping practice adjacent to the training pitch
- A central building located between the two premium pitches incorporating change room facilities; high-performance strength and conditioning and sports medicine facilities; HAHPP facility requirements; tiered seating for approximately 1,000 spectators facing the competition pitch
- Overlay to suit 5,000 to 10,000 spectators; amenities provision for spectators
- Office and meeting room space for Hockey WA and Hockey Australia administration
- Two indoor air-conditioned full size FIH Indoor Hockey Pitches

- A site plan and building layout/design that allows for future integration of further pitches
- A building layout/design that allows for inclusion of function room and associated food and beverage facilities through event overlay and shared spaces
- On-site car parking
- A workshop area, store and compound for site maintenance equipment and materials and space for bulk storage that is easily accessed by vehicles
- A landscaped environment that enhances the environmental value of the site

6. Deliverability

The project will be delivered by DLGSC with support from Department of Finance.

While there is evidence of proper project management and initial investigations to inform the PDP, further work will be required to finalise leasing arrangements, procurement options and operational models, as well as progressing necessary due diligence investigations.