

Geelong is being passed over for regional and state-level soccer events due to a lack of facilities

The City of Greater Geelong has highlighted nearly 10 different locations for a new regional soccer hub which could host A League and international fixtures.



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The City of Greater Geelong's proposal for a new soccer hub. Picture: City of Greater Geelong.

Plans have emerged for a new soccer facility which could host up to 5000 people for A-League and international fixtures.

The City of Greater Geelong has been investigating several options for a regional soccer hub across nine different locations, including at new sites or redeveloping existing facilities.

There is currently no designated regional soccer facility in the area that can host grassroots through to semi-professional and professional fixtures, meaning it is often overlooked for regional or state-level events.

It comes following the public release of five council documents to this masthead which were only shared with Football Geelong previously, which highlighted a shortfall of approximately 22 football pitches.

One report identified a need for a facility in Geelong's south in the medium term – with Armstrong Creek, Grovedale and Mount Duneed anticipating big participation increases – and a larger facility in the north in the longer term.

The larger facility was proposed to feature up to eight soccer pitches, including a dedicated “show pitch” with a grandstand seating up to 2000 people — it could be temporarily expanded up to 5000 for special events, one report revealed.



A render from one of City of Greater Geelong's proposed soccer hub. Picture: City of Greater Geelong.

The show pitch could host elite competitions, including National Premier League, A and W League and international fixtures, and help build stronger ties with Western United.

The site would ideally be 12-14 hectares in size; close to key destinations, community and educational services and offer opportunities for commercial partnerships.

“Consultation with Football Victoria indicates that without a designated regional football hub, Geelong is limited in its capacity to host carnivals, tournaments and higher-level events which would stimulate the economy and drive participation outcomes,” one of the reports revealed. “The municipality will see a shortfall in its capacity to support talented player pathways through programs, education and exposure to professional sporting teams.”

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The City of Greater Geelong is investigating where it could build a regional soccer hub. Picture: City of Greater Geelong.

This masthead revealed in 2023 a sub regional [soccer hub would be built at Armstrong Creek by 2031](#).

Meanwhile, in a statement to this masthead, Cr Eddy Kontelj said planning was underway for a bigger regional soccer facility in the city's north, with Myers and Sutcliffe reserves live options.

He said with Geelong the state's fastest growing regional city, it lacked a dedicated soccer hub like ones found in Ballarat, Bendigo, Mildura and Shepparton.

A \$26m facility was built in Port Adelaide Enfield, while \$21m was spent in Shepparton and \$14m in Ballarat.

It comes after this masthead revealed there had been [a near doubling of the local participation rate inside a decade](#), with Cr Kontelj saying the women's game was "booming".

"Female participation in soccer has more than doubled in Geelong since 2015, and is expected to increase by another 40 per cent by 2041," he said.

"With our region's population and soccer's popularity increasing, we need bigger and better facilities to allow the sport to expand.

"This is a cause that's close to my heart, which I intend to continue to champion."

Cr Kontelj said a new facility in the north would be a regional home of soccer for Geelong and the broader region, with \$700,000 of design and planning work proposed in one of the reports.

"It will allow Geelong to host regional and national tournaments of scale, offer greater opportunities for participation and programs at all levels of the game, including player and coach development, and could even host occasional A-League and international matches," he said.

"These projects are vital for the long-term expansion of soccer in our region, and will support growth in a variety of other sports."

Cr Kontelj said previously forecast participation numbers for 2030 had already been surpassed due to significant growth.

The suburbs of Bell Park, Bell Post Hill, Lovely Banks, Lara and Batesford were expected to see participation spikes in the longer term.

Meanwhile, another report found that a future regional hub would be best located north of the Barwon River and offer year-round usage for multiple sports, and host A and W League matches.

"The venue should not be aligned with any one club to ensure access and

availability is equal," it found.

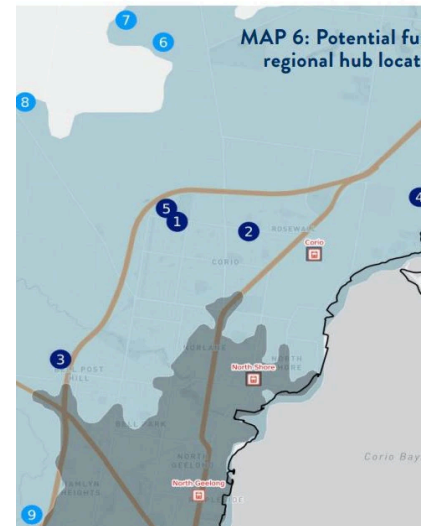
"A future hub will require the support of other sports and all levels of government

to generate widespread outcomes and investment."

The council's acting executive director of City Life, Amie Higgs, said it had completed studies to understand the future needs of soccer in the region.

"These studies have identified the need for both a future subregional and regional soccer facility to meet the growing participation needs of the sport," Higgs said.

"The city will continue to investigate suitable sites and advocate for funding to deliver this much-needed infrastructure."



The City of Greater Geelong proposed a number of locations for a soccer hub. Picture: City of Greater Geelong.



The City of Greater Geelong has plans for a new soccer hub to host crowds of up to 5000 people. Picture: City of Greater Geelong.