



Friday 27th April, 2018

## **Re. Basketball Stadium Developments -The Past, Now and the Future**

You will have noticed in recent times significant works taking place at Eltham High School. I'd like to take this opportunity to explain this development, what has occurred in the past and what we have in planning for stadiums in the future.

The current project has the Eltham Wildcats Basketball Club investing \$1.15M of our club's money into upgrading the amenities of the Eltham HS stadium. This is the third stage of financial investment into this facility by the Wildcats. On this occasion, the State Government has provided \$100,000 toward the project from the 'Female Friendly Facility Funding' grant program.

We are a not for profit organisation just like most sporting clubs, but for over 50 years, the Wildcats' primary focus financially, has been on re-investment into facility development. The facilities our community enjoys at Eltham HS, Eltham Leisure Centre and Montmorency SC for a total of 7 courts, are largely due to funding provided by the Eltham Wildcats Basketball Club. Proudly, we do not rely on an income stream of bar sales or pokies; the money we have re-invested is money generated from our local community; from you and past members for the benefit and security in the future of our club.

With our extraordinary recent growth (over 50% in junior domestic over the last 5 years) this investment over time has ensured that we have 5 courts (Eltham HS -3 and Montmorency SC -2) with long term Joint Use Agreements in place. As a result, we have less dependence than most neighbouring clubs and associations on annual lease and rental decisions made by third party management groups, meaning more money is kept within our region for local projects and opportunity.

To keep our Eltham HS stadium amongst the leading school facilities in Victoria, we needed to improve and this has been a long-term project for us. A feature for our players will be the new home and away changerooms on court 1, which will include an education/lecture space at the home end. This will provide our Wildcat teams playing on court 1, whether that is our U8 kids or our Senior Men/Women; the chance to prepare in their own change rooms in preparation to play. The space will also allow for video/educational sessions for coaches, teams, referees and other groups when required.

For the first time, our referee branch which is already one of Victoria's strongest, will have their own room at the stadium. This space will allow for them to receive pre and post-game coaching and allows for their own change and toilet facilities, separate from the public. Our referees will tell you, this has been a long time coming, but it also brings us into line with Sport and Recreation Victoria recommendations for officials, so we are pleased to be able to provide these.

We are significantly changing the front entrance to our stadium. To do this, we are building for the Eltham High School; a new staff room, storage area and entrance which will be located where we currently see the exit door next to the men's toilets. For the school, this provides terrific benefit for the teachers with more space and greater access to their sports equipment.

We are not for profit, but long term saving and planning has allowed your community basketball club to invest \$1.15M in 2018 back into local facilities at no cost to the local council or the school itself and we are pleased our club can play this role.

However, the single greatest concern raised to me, is the quality of some of the local courts and our need for more of them. Let me assure you, we are well aware of the issues and have been working for some time toward fixing the issue.

Our need for courts isn't a local issue, it is a state wide problem, but with the investments we've returned to community facilities; that our club, its members and our region is due a favour or two. For some time now we have been researching, planning and negotiating behind the scenes with Council and State Government regarding potential sites for a new basketball courts. In recent times, we have identified the potential to upgrade and extend existing facilities and progress to this point is looking positive. We are very thankful to our local schools that are community minded and interested in having facilities that are not only good for the school, but of benefit to the local community.

It is important to note, that we are in no way involved in the green space/land sales debate in the Nillumbik region and consider ourselves very separate of this issue.

Both sides of state politics and both Banyule and Nillumbik Councils are being very helpful and supportive of us achieving our goal for more courts. We will circulate more information relating to sites for new courts in due course. Personally, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank David Wightman and Leighton Lewis for the time they've volunteered so far to these projects for the sake of the future of our club.

People ask how they can assist us in achieving new facilities. The answer is very simple.

When you are provided the opportunity to speak to a government official of any level, highlight our need. We all know that we need more courts and improved courts, so now is the time that our 5,500 playing membership and their families need to share this with those in power. Make sure they are aware that your basketball club has already invested \$1.15M into stadium development in 2018, on top of significant contributions toward building two stages of Eltham High School, and the courts at Eltham Leisure Centre and Montmorency Secondary College stadiums.

Thanks to our Wildcats community for making our club what it is. You can be proud as to the history of the club in what it has done, how it has contributed to the community and how it plans to contribute in the future. Our past members and our members of today have financially contributed more than their fair share toward basketball stadiums and we are now looking for our region to be helped in meeting the needs of the basketball community.

Regards



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