

Plan Change 81 Dargaville Racecourse – Independent Expert Assessment

Prepared for

Dargaville Racing Club Inc



8 May 2023

Report Disclaimer

In preparing this report it has been necessary to make a number of assumptions on the basis of the information supplied to Global Leisure Group Limited in the course of investigations for this assessment. The assessment has been conscientiously prepared based on our knowledge of sector practices and trends in recreational open space provision.

The authors did not carry out an audit or verification of the information supplied during the preparation of this report, unless otherwise stated in the report. Whilst due care was taken, Global Leisure Group Limited does not take any responsibility for any errors nor mis-statements in the report arising from information supplied to the authors during the preparation of this report.

Authors

Peter Burley & David Allan

Contact:

Global Leisure Group Limited
PO Box 2147
Stoke
Nelson

Davea@glg.nz

1 Introduction

My full name is Peter William Burley. I am a senior consultant with Global Leisure Group.

I hold a Master of Applied Recreation Management (obtained in 1989) from Victoria University, Wellington. I teach recreation policy and planning at Lincoln University and have done so since 2020.

I have 43 years of experience in the sport and recreation profession. I have worked as a parks and recreation manager (Whangarei District Council), as an educator and as a sport and recreation consultant since 2001.

My expertise includes parks and recreation planning and management, community recreation, hub formation and governance, event and facility management and research.

My name is David Keinan Allan. I am Managing Director of Global Leisure Group

I draw on over 40 years' experience in the sport and recreation profession, including over 25 years as a consultant planner. I was an early graduate of the pioneering Diploma in Parks and Recreation Management

from Lincoln University (1981-1983). My career path reflects many of the major developments in the sector including Funding Manager and Development Manager for Kiwisport at the Hillary Commission; seconded as Private Secretary to the Minister of Recreation and Sport; Sponsorship Manager for the Health Sponsorship Council; and CEO of Sport Tasman (a regional sports trust).

My expertise includes facility network and park master planning, with strengths in demand analysis, need and feasibility assessment and policy development. I have provided expert witness input into formal planning processes in relation to demand and need assessment.

I am familiar with Dargaville and have a good knowledge of its recreation network having visited key sites and undertaken community consultation in completing two planning assignments which lead to the development of Sportsville Dargaville hub:

1. Dargaville Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Plan (2012)
2. Dargaville Facility Feasibility Study (2014)

I have provided background briefings for Peter Burley as well as completed quality assurance input of this evidence.

We have read and agree to abide by the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses as specified in the Environmental Court's practice Note 2023. This evidence is within our area of expertise. We have not omitted to consider any material facts known to us that might alter or detract from any opinion expressed.

We have no conflict of interest to declare.

1.1 Evidence brief

This evidence is in respect of an application by Dargaville Racing Club Inc for a Private Plan Change 81 Dargaville racecourse.

The brief for this assessment is to answer the question posed related to the provision of sport and recreation infrastructure (land and buildings) within the proposed development on the Dargaville Racecourse land, Dargaville.

Question: *Is there adequate recreation facilities given the number of houses proposed?*

We have interpreted recreation facilities to include provision of outdoor sport and active recreation space and supporting amenity infrastructure. Provision of indoor active recreation facilities has also been considered.

In answering the question, we will respond to points raised by submitters e.g., including suggested lack of sporting facilities, lack of green space areas for engagement in active lifestyles and lack of good transport options. We will also assess the amount and type of recreational open space proposed in the development and what form it takes.

We were also asked to recommend amendments to recreational open space areas (if any are required) with a particular focus on what's needed to deliver to the Hauora (health and wellbeing) of residents with a focus on youth focused active recreational facilities.

2 The Strategic Context

Adequacy of active recreation infrastructure (facilities and open space) and whether a formal active sports park is required given the likely population in the development and proximity to Dargaville (given the overarching design philosophy statement).

2.1 Characteristics of proposed residents

Population and need in Dargaville

Dargaville is identified as a town with approximately 5,000 residents, with higher numbers in older age groups, with expected growth around 20% to 6,000 residents by 2050. There is expected drop in per household population from 2.37 in 2019 to 2.14 in 2051. Dargaville has high deprivation (2018 NZDep score 9-10), with median income of \$22,000 pa.¹ There is a high percentage of Māori at 35% of total population (national average is 16%). Rental property is in great demand. Houses for first home buyers are needed because they struggle in the market, there is also need for 1-2 bed units and for retirement age housing.

School age population recreation and sport participation

In the existing Dargaville town population, approximately 500 (10%) are in primary school and 300 (6.5%) are in secondary education². Kaipara wide student counts increase the numbers to (Primary 550, Intermediate 151, High School 427).

As a general trend based on data from Sport NZ Insights tool, residents' in Dargaville play more (playing, playgrounds) for those in younger age groupings; in the general population there is greater than average involvement in fishing and tramping but residents have less-active lifestyles overall (inactive 29% as compared with a national average of 26%). They participate at lower levels in many indoor sport and fitness related activities. There has been an overall 3.7% decline in school sport involvement (Kaipara District) since 2004.

Current school sport participation (Kaipara) indicates small increases in basketball, volleyball and 'other' activities and small decreases in field and court sports. Notably involvement is highest overall for 'other 12.4%', rugby 9.5%, netball 9.2% basketball 8.8%, volleyball 8.1% and football 7.3%.³

PPC81 plan change proposed housing and population

PPC81 General and Large Lot Residential (GRA) 23.67 ha and (LLRA) 3.44 ha are summarised as:

- Medium density residential up to 200 allotments of av size 300m²
- General residential up to 213 allotments (Some MURD) of av size 450m²
- General residential 22 allotments of av size 1,000m²

There is also allocation within the development for:

- Neighbourhood (NCA) .28 ha
- Open Space Area (OSA) 5.75ha

Actual lot sizes and numbers may vary however for the purposes of attempting to understand the number of residents present when the sub-division is fully developed we have assumed the following:

Category of housing	No of lots	Estimated Average/per/household
General and large residential	279	4*
Retirement	156	1.8

* Average per household Dargaville (2.37), however expectation with Multi-Unit Residential Development MURD housing is for a higher number per lot

Given the above estimates the population of people likely to be present would be:

¹ Dargaville Racing Club – PPC s32 Evaluation Report v4 Final

² <https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/insights-tool/>

³ Insights NZ (Sport NZ Insights tool) School tabs

435⁴ lots at (279*4) and (156*1.8) which gives a total population estimate at (N=1397) persons

Given that 280 are in retirement age the general (non-retired) population is indicated to be (N=1117) and within this number are the active residents who are likely to be users of active park land (sports fields and the like). This is not an indication that those in retirement years would not be involved in use of walking tracks and passive open space and or indoor sport, community and recreation infrastructure but they are unlikely to be users of active sports parks.

These figures will be used to determine demand for sport and recreation provision.

2.2 Description of proposed facilities

Open space

Within the TDA four types of open space area (OSA) are proposed⁵

- I. Hillside OSA (proposed to have Dargaville wide value and to be vested as a Reserve in the future. Key is that this area is designated for 'informal recreational activities (ha 5.75) (Appendix 2 Maps).
- II. Hauora OSA (open space connector with Neighbourhood Centre Area NCA). Hauora OSA is not defined and will be determined as part of the Hauora hub definition.
- III. Neighbourhood OSA (pocket park) for informal recreational activities and community uses (walking running, cycling, relaxing, socialising, picnics). Size and location not determined at this time.
- IV. Blue-Green OSA having dual use as stormwater management and walking/cycling linkage and food gathering (Hauora). To be determined as part of the stormwater management plan

Facilities (built infrastructure)

Community facilities were described as areas that:

"can include shared community spaces (e.g. hall), health care facility, and early childhood facilities (e.g. kohanga reo)". Ibid p 29.

The key location for facilities is the Neighbourhood Centre Area (NCA) which will be located within the Hauora Hub. These potential spaces will sit inside a residential area (zone) and it is noted:

"floor area for...community facilities will be limited to ensure they are compatible with the intent of the NCA and to ensure the NCA complements, and does not compete with Dargaville" ibid p29.

An area of 300m² for community activity is identified within the NCA. 1 lot of size 1,431 m² is identified as for Neighbourhood (e.g. Community Hall)⁶. The Dargaville racecourse – Market Demand Analysis indicates:

"demand for some amenities and services for future residents on the site was identified...health services hub was mentioned plus dairy, hair dressers, however general community services perceived in the report as a 'risk' (p32)".

Reasons given were the potential to undermine services located centrally; site too small (scale); lack of pedestrian infrastructure along the main road an issue.

Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) by Landform Consultants, 2021 suggest mitigation impacts on Tāngata Whenua in a number of ways. One comment relevant to this analysis was:

⁴ Estimate from Figure 13 Trifecta Development Area – proposed Map 10A in Operative District Plan (refer Appendix 2). Published in PPC81 Initial Review of SW Management 18112022.

⁵ Dargaville Racing Club – PPC Evaluation RPT v4 Final 17/2/22 ibid p 29

⁶ Transport Assessment Table 4-1: Average area of the proposed PPC Land uses, Draft Concept Plan Fig 4-1

“a purpose-built community hub, incorporating a communal building and other facilities, shall be established as a part of the future development.” P 37

Active transport

There was suggestion of the need for an active transport link to mitigate the need for services from a smaller scale development at the racecourse (Dargaville racecourse – Market Demand Analysis, p33).⁷

2.3 Expected participation patterns

Approximately 16.5% of the Dargaville population are in the primary and secondary school age groupings. Using this ratio and the estimate figure of 1,117 residents who are likely to be in the active general population in the new subdivision, it is likely that approximately (N=165) children (again as a general estimate) would be of school age within the new sub-division when fully settled. The average participation by sport for a cohort of this size (given current participation figures in Dargaville) is shown in the table below:

Sample of mainstream traditional sports	% of school age people who play this sport in Dargaville	Extrapolation to PPC81 plan change area once fully occupied (Number of potential participants)
Rugby	9.5	16
Netball	9.2	15
Basketball	8.8	14
Volleyball	8.1	13
Football	7.3	12

- Note these numbers do not include adults who play these sports who would also be present within the new area.

GLG research into sport field requirements⁸ indicates that for every 239 people (aged between 5 years – 49 years) in the active population of New Zealand (60% of general population) one winter sport team would be generated.

Given an estimated resident population of 1,117 (60% of whom would be active) giving a total pool of (N=670) divided by 239 means that the area would generate approximately the equivalent of 2.8 (rounded to 3) winter sports teams mostly aged between 5 and 16 years of age.

2.4 Relevant standards of provision

Active Sport Parks

There is no definitive standard for active sport park provision (ratio of parks active sport space per no. citizens etc). Much of the key work in recreation and sport infrastructure is about providing for networked quality provision, utilising hubs, making facilities accessible and inclusive and consolidating provision.⁹

Similar size communities to Dargaville (around 5,000 population) have the following policy related statements:

Katikati (Western Bay of Plenty) (Sportsville Policy: “it is more efficient for communities to provide facilities for active recreation in combined locations rather than spreading these across the town or ward”

Paeroa (Hauraki District Council), objective 6, p 25: “Parks (often quite large areas) set aside and developed for sport recreation activities, recreation facilities and buildings, often multiple use. ...the use of infrastructure required to support this by encouraging the development of sporting hubs across

⁷ Active transport link See Appendix 5 Integrated transport Assessment Section 7.3 p 24 Proposed Dargaville Racecourse PPC

⁸ GLG baseline National data and spreadsheet based on research 2007-2023 indicating the number of sportsfield required for a given active population

⁹ Dargaville Sport & Recreation Infrastructure Plan GLG Report 17 September 2012, Dargaville Feasibility Report Final 2014.

the district". (p31). Policy 4.3.1, 2b. managing recreational use on a network wide basis, recognising not all opportunities can be provided in every reserve.

Sportsville Dargaville

Evidence assembled through research and assessment by GLG in the early 2010's pointed to a history of fragmentation of sport infrastructure in Dargaville (and commonly found across New Zealand) and the need for a:

...strategy to consolidate the vast majority of infrastructure provision for organised community sport on the Memorial Park – Rugby Park Precinct. (Dargaville Feasibility Report Final GLG Sept 2014)

This work led to the deliberate decision to consolidate future provision of sports fields, courts, clubrooms and change spaces and other facilities at the park. The configuration which became known as Dargaville Sportsville resulted in infrastructure designed to maximise efficiencies whilst providing higher quality training and sport play environments. Dargaville established a Sports Hub¹⁰ entity one of the first of its kind north of Auckland to gain the benefits of this consolidated infrastructure through strong leadership and governance oversight, and good management. This development was supported by Sport Northland.

3 Assessment and recommended provision

Recommended provision and or any variation from that provided/proposed taking into account Hauora for future residents of TDA¹¹ with a youth emphasis.

The commitment to the active transport off-road paved shared pathway link between Dargaville and the proposed subdivision has major implications from a recreation and sport provision perspective. It means subdivision residents will be able to access the recreation and sport provision in Dargaville without requiring a car, including whanau, rangatahi and many tamariki. Accordingly, our assessment and recommendations take provision of this link into account.

Passive Open Space (for a range of recreation activity including walking, running, picnics)

- 1) In our opinion there is significant and adequate provision of passive open space for recreation activity within PC81 Dargaville Racecourse.
 - a) 5.75 ha are allocated within the Hillside OSA, within Hauora OSA and Blue/Green OSA contributing to this
 - b) The proposed Blue Green OSA areas are described as having the multiple purposes of stormwater, freshwater management, habitat for mahinga kai (food gathering areas), and cultural harvest e.g. harakeke (flax), plus passive recreation (mostly walking/cycling)
 - c) The active transport paved pathway link between Dargaville and the proposed subdivision will, if linked to the Blue Green OSA, provide an opportunity for people within Dargaville township to explore through the sub-division right up into the Hillside OSA. This will optimise the Blue Green OSA as a recreation opportunity
 - d) The Blue Green OSA, and the Hillside OSA are well suited to a range of outdoor passive activities associated with the health and wellbeing of residents including, opportunities to go walking, cycling and running. Much of the proposed passive recreation reserve would also provide views, potentially picnic areas and should be well positioned in proximity to the proposed Retirement age focused housing.

¹⁰ <https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/hubs-and-sportvilles-introduction-and-contacts/>

¹¹ Trifecta Development Area

Indoor Sport and Community Facilities (Sport centres, recreation and community centres, halls and public assembly facilities)

- 2) The scale of the development does not suggest a need for a dedicated indoor sport and recreation facility. In our view and over time there will be a need for a space for community gatherings and for a range of community activity.
 - a) We suggest further refinement and definition of the Hauora Hub and the NCA plan is the instrument to address this need in the future design phases
 - b) Localised provision (communal meeting, social and connecting space) that is 'local' in nature is important and is a steppingstone and complementary to more specific and specialised provision (indoor facilities for sport, recreation, community activity, public assembly) in Dargaville
 - c) We would recommend co-location and sharing of social and community spaces be explored with any retirement village and be located as part of the Hauora Hub

Formal Sports Parks (Sports fields, tennis and outdoor netball courts)

- 3) There will be tamariki and rangatahi within the resident population who will participate in formal sport related activity. This is a relatively small number.
 - a) There will be by our estimate approximately three (3) field sport teams generated by PC81 Dargaville Racecourse and in our view, this would not be a sufficient number to require the provision of a full-size sport field.
 - b) Formal sport space (sports parks, amenities like change rooms and clubrooms and indoor facilities) should continue to be consolidated in Dargaville and not be provided in a fragmented way across the wider Dargaville area and in this sub-division at its current size.
 - c) This would be in keeping with the preferred model of sportville and sport and recreation hubs where quality sport fields and facility infrastructure is clustered for convenience for whanau, efficiency and affordability as is the case with the Dargaville Sportville.
 - d) Should further sub-division occur in proximity to this area then this assessment would need to be reviewed.
 - e) To mitigate the impacts of a lack of formal active sport park land within PPC81 Dargaville Racecourse area we would endorse the need for active transport to support those within the community who will travel to sport practices and game days.

Informal Active Recreation Spaces (Hauora OSA)

- 4) In our view this development will need to provide informal activity space in lieu of sports fields giving local tamariki and rangatahi an area "to develop ball skills" and "kick or pass a ball around". There is a lack of provision for a larger grouping of residents of those in teenage years who may or may not be involved in formal sport but would have a need for some form of active recreation communal space.
 - a) We recommend this area be in the Hauora OSA which will be adjacent and linked to the NCA. This would enable users of the area to easily access the facilities and services within the Hauora area such as a public toilet and shop for food and drinks
 - b) Proximity to shops and community space allows for line-of-sight community supervision for the informal active recreation space
 - c) This would be in keeping with patterns of provision of facilities in urban areas where specific form park spaces are provided for those who are interested in occasional and informal active sport and recreation opportunities. This park is independent of the proposed Neighbourhood OSA pocket park
 - d) This form of informal active recreation space provision typically has designated basketball half courts to watch play, skate space, pump track (temporary or otherwise) and an area to kick a ball around on

grass with supporting infrastructure and services such as some seating (possibly with a small shade/ rain shelter), a water fountain, a power source for devices and access to a nearby toilet

- e) This is a strong trend in the sport and recreation participation literature where the casualisation of sport and recreation experiences¹² and increased localism and informal groupings make it more likely that young people will congregate informally if relevant spaces are provided for them
- f) Teenage activity is becoming more sedentary, and computer based, there needs to be opportunity for physical activity and social interaction in a third space (not home or school/work). Making provision for this need in PPC81 Dargaville Racecourse will lead to improved physical and mental wellbeing for residents
- g) We recommend that this provision be integrated and be co-located within the Hauora Hub in a roughly rectangular area of about 3,500 sqm (70m by 50m) to accommodate a combination of paved court area and a flat open grass area
- h) We recommend the paved court area should be a minimum of 20m by 20m. It would be used for casual activities such as practicing shooting goals or hoops or pick-up games of 3x3 basketball. It is a multi-purpose area used for a variety of sports and games with several features installed such as 3x3 basketball backboard, tennis volley wall, netball hoop. If the area was larger (20m by 40m) it could at times have portable skate, scooter and bike structures located on a part of it
- i) The flat grass area would be used for casual activities such as kicking and passing a ball around, throwing a frisbee, or pick-up games
- j) A rangatahi (teen and young adult) focused area would need to be sufficiently separate to those areas that would be more whanau focused (E.g., family picnic areas). If the two areas were too closely located, this would detract from the active rangatahi (youth) experience

Neighbourhood OSA Pocket Park/ Playground

- 5) Typically pocket parks are smaller spaces with some play apparatus/ equipment and seating, sometimes a picnic table and toilet
- 6) It is unclear as to the design and use of the pocket park area within PC81 Dargaville Racecourse and it would be our recommendation that a pocket park (play area) be provided within the GRA
 - a) An area of approximately 500 sqm (one section size) should be set aside for this purpose and be located to ensure all residences have a walking distance/ journey of a few minutes to a park space. The location is important to allow for as short a walking distance as possible to all residential homes within this subdivision.
 - b) The Pocket Park should be focused on whanau with pre-school and junior primary age tamariki
 - c) A small playground area with nearby seating or picnic tables for whanau groups
 - d) A grass area for learning basic skills such as catching, passing or kicking a ball or games of chase

¹² <https://sportnz.org.nz/media/1640/secondary-age-review-2020.pdf>