

DR MARISA PATERSON MLA SPEECH

November 2021

e-Petition: Lighting for the Waramanga Playing Fields

As a local member for Murrumbidgee, I am pleased to support this petition from residents of Weston Creek and throughout the ACT who use and value the Waramanga District Playing Fields.

This petition calls on the ACT Government to install an LED lighting system on the two remaining unlit irrigated fields at Waramanga – a key sporting ground in the suburb I call home within Murrumbidgee.

Between the online portal and hard copy, 555 community members have signed the petition, with signatories noting that ‘demand for the use of the Waramanga District Playing Fields by the Weston Molonglo Football club at night far outweighs the capacity of the four fields currently lit with floodlights’.

The petitioners request the Assembly to ‘install an LED lighting system on the two irrigated fields at the bottom of Waramanga (between Arawang Primary School and the Mt. Stromlo High basketball courts)’.

The demand to engage in team sports is growing, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a community, we stayed indoors to keep everyone safe, but now, it is time to get back out on the sports field and engage in some friendly competition.

The Weston-Molonglo Football Club, which calls the Waramanga District Playing Fields home, currently caters to around 1,400 Canberrans who are eager to get back out on the field. It’s important that we support Canberrans in their efforts to stay active and healthy.

Demand for lit playing fields spikes in the winter months when evenings are darker, earlier. To keep the players safe, and to provide a suitable environment, lighting is a necessity.

Currently, the Weston-Molonglo Football Club is struggling with the significant demand for the limited number of lit fields in the mid-week period. With four fields currently lit and demand continuing to increase, the potential to light another two

fields provides a perfect opportunity to create the safe space required for people to practice and play.

Providing lighting for extra fields also comes with reduced wear and tear on certain fields, through greater distribution of teams across further fields. This will have the double benefit of providing a better condition for all users, as well as reduced, ongoing maintenance costs for the ACT Government.

I note and support the ACT Government's commitment to the Canberra community through the provision of high-quality sporting fields.

Facilities such as these provide a wide range of positive mental and physical health and wellbeing outcomes for Canberrans.

The Waramanga District Playing Fields have, and always will, serve as a hub to develop the talent of young players throughout the area, and to provide an outlet for competitive spirit, skill, and exercise.

I commend the ACT Government on its continued commitment to the construction, upkeep, and modification of sporting fields and facilities to ensure that any Canberran who wishes to engage in local teams has the opportunity to do so.

Canberran who wishes to engage in local teams has the opportunity to do so.

I am very pleased to have sponsored this petition on behalf of 555 Canberra residents about lighting for the Waramanga District Playing Fields. I thank the many residents who took the time and effort to sign the petition, and the Weston-Molonglo Football Club who brought this matter to my attention.

I look forward to the response of the Standing Committee and Minister and for their consideration and a positive outcome to meet the needs of Murrumbidgee and Canberra residents and contribute to ACT Government policy and ambition.

Thank you.