



Hockey club registrar Rob Walker and city councillor Alex Mcphail join players in celebrating the fundraising milestone. *Picture: Martin Kennealey*

Hockey club scores goal

AFTER years of planning, the Melville City Hockey Club finally has enough money to lay a synthetic turf surface on its pitch.

Club president Hans Geers described the \$1 million project as one of the most significant achievements in sport south of the river and said it had been a gruelling process.

A club committee has been working full-time on the project for two years and it was jubilant last Tuesday night when Melville City Council agreed to lend more money.

The council passed a motion to lend the club an additional \$120,000 for the project.

Half of the amount must be paid back within 12 months while the other \$60,000 will be added to the existing self-supporting loan of \$200,000 that council has already authorised.

Mr Geers said the project would include laying the synthetic turf and other infrastructure such as car parks, lighting, retaining walls and fencing.

The club has received funds from sources including Hockey WA, the Department of Sport and Recreation and the Australian Sport Foundation.

"We have been fortunate to have an outstanding group of people with the skills and energy to carry the project forward," Mr Geers said.

He said having the synthetic surface would be of great benefit to the club and would help develop the sport.

"Synthetic turf is a lot quicker... it's easier to trap balls and hits and passes are more accurate," he said. "The speed and intensity of the game is strengthened as well."

Mr Geers said the club hoped to have the new

surface completed by July and would hire the facility to other clubs to help finance the loans.

"We have an arrangement with Hockey WA to lease the grounds to them and other clubs will pay to train on it. We hope to make it available to schools during the day as well."

He said the club would like to involve other sports such as lacrosse and gridiron in the future.

There are about six other synthetic turf pitches throughout the metropolitan area.

The club was commended by a number of councillors last week for its leadership and commitment.

Cr Mark Reynolds said the project had come before council several times and it was an asset to be proud of for many years to come.

His comments were supported by Cr Duncan Macphail and Mayor Katherine Jackson.

Field of dreams a reality

MELVILLE Hockey Club has achieved a long-term ambition of installing a turf pitch at a cost of \$1.2 million – with \$130,000 coming from members.

The club's first competition on the new pitch will be seven-a-side round starting on October 17.

The sevens are scheduled to run for the summer throughout the week. Players are to be recruited from the under-11s to seniors, with veterans on Wednesday evenings and social mixed hockey on Sunday evenings.

The turf pitch was club engineer David Porter's dream for some 10 years but an earlier committee failed to get the concept up and running.

Hans Geer took over as president and called for expressions of interest about three years ago.

David Timmel successfully chaired the committee for three years and provided strong leadership and direction to the group.

Hockey club's \$1.2m upgrade 'world-class'

Turf's up in Melville

MELVILLE City Hockey Club's home ground will get a \$1.2 million facelift to keep pace with bustling membership growth.

The club's Morris Buzacott Reserve digs in Kardinya is set to be transformed with new synthetic turf being laid.

Club president Hans Greers said the unrivalled upgrade would allow neighbouring schools to use the world-class standard facilities.

"The new synthetic turf allows our top sides to have some home fixtures, it allows us to have summer competitions and we will be able to play under lights at night," he said.

"Also, it allows the large number of neighbouring schools to use the facilities for inter-school events as well as allowing access by other hockey clubs - for a maintenance fee of course."

Bitumen

The club has ripped up four grass hills and created a bitumen road base with 6000sqm of a soft rubber underlay to be able to lay the artificial turf on top.

Through the WA department of sport and recreation plus contributions from Melville council, loans

from Hockey WA and donations from the club's members, laying the new turf has become a much sought after reality.

Department facility planning boss Bruce Campbell said the government's \$300,000 grant would help the sport to evolve further south of the river.

"This was a significant project because synthetic turf assists in the skill development of all players and is the link in the pathway to the elite levels," he said.

The turf has to be continually watered and is seen as an ideal surface for younger players as it actively reduces injuries and abrasions to players due to its unique qualities.

Plans for the wonder turf were raised six years ago and through the hockey club's members, who contributed largely to the ground's upgrade as did the City of Melville, it has finally come to fruition.

Through the Community Sport and Recreation Facility Fund, the department can provide up to one-third of a project, to a maximum of \$1.8 million. Applications for the 2006-07 CSRFF are now open and enquiries can be made with your local government.



• Hans Greers is ready to use the Melville City Hockey Club's new turf. Photo by Adam Orlando