



## LATE REPORTS AGENDA

Shire of West Arthur  
Ordinary Council Meeting  
Thursday 22 May 2025

### NOTICE OF MEETING

Dear Elected Member

The next Ordinary meeting of the Shire of West Arthur will be held on Thursday 22 May 2025 in the Council Chambers commencing at 7.30pm.

Vin Fordham Lamont  
Chief Executive Officer

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*Forest to Wheatbelt*

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**16 CORPORATE SERVICES****16.1 BUDGET AMENDMENT - DARKAN OVAL EMERGENCY WORKS**

<b>File Reference:</b>	<b>ADM130</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Applicant:</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Author:</b>	<b>Rajinder Sunner, Manager Corporate Services</b>
<b>Authorising Officer:</b>	<b>Vin Fordham Lamont, Chief Executive Officer</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>19/05/2025</b>
<b>Disclosure of Interest:</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Attachments:</b>	<b>1. BGL Report, Darkan Oval - May 2025 <a href="#">↓</a></b>

**SUMMARY:**

The Council is requested to consider amending the adopted 2024/2025 annual budget to accommodate the cost of emergency works on the Darkan Oval.

**BACKGROUND:**

On 7 May, the CEO received a letter from a representative of the Wagin Football Club expressing disappointment that the Upper Great Southern Football League had deemed the Darkan Oval not up to standard and cancelled the planned match on 11 May.

The CEO subsequently contacted Bruno Lopes from BGL Solutions to arrange a visit to assess the condition of the oval and provide some initial advice.

The Manager Works and Services contacted the Wagin Football Club and explained that a number of combined factors have contributed to the current conditions:

- The short length of the grass that the school requested for its sports carnival which is shorter than what is required for football matches.
- The long summer which has extended into a warm and dry autumn.
- Water limitations i.e. if we had pumped all the water in March and April that we needed for the oval, we would not have any water at all to use now, except for the more expensive scheme water.
- The reticulation infrastructure is totally inadequate for its purpose.
- Vermin issues with rabbits particularly digging up the surface.

**COMMENT:**

On 15 May, the CEO, Manager Works and Services, Works Admin Assistant, and Parks and Gardens Supervisor met with BGL Solutions at the oval. Attached is the BGL report detailing Bruno's observations and recommendations. A soil compaction penetrometer recorded readings of over 500 psi, whereas the ideal reading is below 200 psi. To address this, the Shire should consider coring the ground next spring. We also need to delay spraying for weeds until after the football season to allow the new ryegrass to take root. The estimated cost for these activities is \$20,000, which the 2024/2025 budget can cover, due to a saving in the tree lopping program.

The proposed course of action to rectify the current condition of the Darkan Oval is as follows:

1. Friday 16/5/25 - Peruzzo mower will mow the oval down to 10mm.

2. Tuesday 20/5/25 - BGL Solutions will be here to fix and reset the reticulation system; this will be as good as we can get it for now. Upgrading the reticulation system is something that the Shire might need to address in our 2025/26 Budget.
3. Thursday 22/5/25 - Direct seed the oval with Rye Grass. (This will grow through winter and improve the grass area) This is only a short-term fix to have the oval playable for the match on 28/6/25.
4. Meanwhile, the parks crew will reduce the watering to 15 minutes for each station and fertilise the oval.
5. The Oval will be mowed in three weeks. All football training on the oval will have to be suspended until then. Zac South from the football club has been advised of this requirement.

**CONSULTATION:**

BGL Solutions  
Chief Executive Officer  
Manager Works and Services  
Parks and Gardens Supervisor  
Works Administration Assistant

**STATUTORY ENVIRONMENT:**

Local Government Act 1995  
s6.8 Expenditure from municipal fund not included in annual budget.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

Nil

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

\$20,000 is proposed to be transferred from the Tree Lopping (E12230512) expenditure account to the Darkan Oval (E11306012) account.

**STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:**

Community Strategic Plan West Arthur Towards 2031

Theme: Built Environment – well maintained roads and infrastructure which reflects our identity

Outcome: Our built infrastructure is well maintained, attractive and inviting

Strategy: Our parks and gardens are well maintained and attractive

**RISK IMPLICATIONS:**

***Risk management is the removal of uncertainty from business decisions. Risk is expressed in terms of likelihood it may occur and the consequences that may flow from it.*** The consequences may be positive or negative or simply a deviation from the expected. The risk or consequence may be related to health and safety; financial; business or service interruption; compliance; reputation; or the environment. ***Reference to the risk matrix below will generate a risk rating by assessing the likelihood and consequence and multiplying these scores by each other.*** The greater the risk rating, the greater the risk and the higher the need for specific plans to be developed. All items with a risk rating greater than 10 should be added to the Risk Register and specific controls developed.

**Risk Themes:**

A risk theme is the categorising of risk. For example, the collection of risks that represent compliance failure. The risk themes in the shire Risk Register include:

- Business Disruption
- Community Disruption
- IT or Communications Failure

- External Threat or Fraud
- Misconduct
- Inadequate safety or security practices
- Inadequate project or change management
- Errors Omissions or Delays
- Inadequate Document Management Processes
- Inadequate supplier / contract management
- Providing inaccurate advice / information
- Ineffective Employment practices
- Compliance failure
- Inadequate asset management
- Inadequate engagement practices
- Ineffective facility or event management
- Inadequate environmental management

**Risk Matrix:**

Consequence Likelihood		Insignificant 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Major 4	Catastrophic 5
Almost Certain	5	Medium (5)	High (10)	High (15)	Extreme (20)	Extreme (25)
Likely	4	Low (4)	Medium (8)	High (12)	High (16)	Extreme (25)
Possible	3	Low (3)	Medium (6)	Medium (9)	High (12)	High (15)
Unlikely	2	Low (2)	Low (4)	Medium (6)	Medium (8)	High (10)
Rare	1	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Medium (5)

Description of Key Risk	The Darkan Oval will not be available to host the Upper Great Southern Football League match scheduled for 28 June 2025.
Risk Likelihood (based on history and with existing controls)	(4) Likely
Risk Consequence	(2) Minor
Risk Rating (Prior to Treatment or Control): Likelihood x Consequence	(8) Medium
Principal Risk Theme	Community disruption
Risk Action Plan (Controls or Treatment Proposed)	Endorse the budget amendment as presented.

**VOTING REQUIREMENTS:**

Absolute Majority

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATION:**

That Council Approve the following amendment to the adopted 2024/2025 annual budget to accommodate the cost of overseeding the Darkan football oval.:

- Decrease the budgeted allocation to the Tree Lopping operating expenses account (E12203512) by \$20,000; and
- Increase the budgeted allocation to the Darkan Oval expenditure account (E11306012, project Number W113102.22101) by \$20,000.

**From:** BGL <bgl solutions@bigpond.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 15 May 2025 3:19 PM  
**To:** Gary Rasmussen <worksmanager@westarthur.wa.gov.au>  
**Cc:** Vin Fordham Lamont <ceo@westarthur.wa.gov.au>; info@bgl solutions.com.au  
**Subject:** DARKAN OVAL – CONDITION REPORT  
**Importance:** High

Date of Inspection: 15th May 2025

Prepared by: BGL Solutions

### 1. Executive Summary

On 15th May 2025, BGL Solutions conducted a detailed site inspection of Darkan Oval to assess the current turf condition, irrigation performance, and underlying soil and compaction issues. This report outlines our observations and recommendations to guide the development of a strategic renovation and management program tailored to improve turf performance, surface safety, and presentation.

### 2. Turf Condition Overview

The playing surface is currently patchy and inconsistent, with a mixed sward of kikuyu (*Pennisetum clandestinum*) and couch grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) across the oval.

- Kikuyu is concentrated in areas receiving more consistent irrigation or natural water flow.
- Couch is more dominant in dry, stressed sections, indicating irrigation shortfalls and poor moisture retention in parts of the field.
- Turf density is overall low, and several bare or thin areas are compromising surface stability and player safety.

### 3. Weed Infestation

A significant infestation of undesirable species is present throughout the oval, including:

- Guilford Grass (*Romulea rosea*) – False Onion Weed
- Broadleaf Weeds
- Winter Grass (*Poa annua*)

These weeds are actively competing with the desirable turf species and will continue to spread if not addressed. However, given the upcoming turf renovation schedule, selective herbicide treatment is not recommended at this stage.

#### **4. Ryegrass Oversowing Recommendation**

To stabilise the surface and enhance winter playability, it is recommended that the oval be oversown with a high-quality perennial ryegrass blend. This will provide a denser, greener and more resilient surface during the colder months.

Due to the timing of this intervention, post-emergent weed spraying should be deferred for at least 6–8 weeks, until ryegrass has fully established. Applying herbicides prematurely could inhibit germination and damage young seedlings, compromising the success of the oversowing program.

#### **Rabbit Activity Consideration:**

During the inspection, extensive rabbit damage was noted in the form of surface holes and soft spots. It is expected that once ryegrass is established, the improved turf density and root structure will help reduce rabbit digging and surface disruption.

However, we advise that rabbit activity may temporarily increase during the early stages of seed establishment due to fresh organic material and softer ground conditions. This factor should be monitored closely, and wildlife management measures may be required if damage escalates.

#### **5. Soil Compaction Analysis**

A compaction assessment was carried out using a penetrometer, revealing the following:

- 150mm soil depth: Pressure resistance recorded between 400–500 psi
- 200mm soil depth: Resistance exceeded 800 psi

These figures are significantly above ideal thresholds for healthy turf growth and root development. High compaction is limiting infiltration, impeding root penetration, and exacerbating turf stress. Aeration and deep decompaction should be prioritised during the next renovation window.

#### **6. Thatch Layer Assessment**

An excessive thatch layer measuring approximately 45mm was identified across multiple zones of the oval.

- This layer of undecomposed organic matter is acting as a barrier to water, oxygen, and nutrients, and contributes to shallow rooting and increased disease risk.
- Mechanical removal through scarifying or de-thatching is recommended as part of the long-term renovation plan.

#### **7. Irrigation System Audit**

A full irrigation audit identified the following concerns:

- 18 sprinklers are non-functional or underperforming and require replacement to ensure adequate water coverage.
- Station 1 and Station 10 have had non-original sprinklers retrofitted, which has led to a significant drop in water pressure and uneven distribution across these zones.



- Recommendation: These additional sprinklers should be removed, and the system returned to its original configuration to restore hydraulic balance and ensure effective operation.

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#### **8. Next Steps & Soil Testing**

A comprehensive soil analysis, including nutrient profiling, pH levels, and organic matter content, is scheduled for 28th May 2025. The results will inform the development of a tailored nutrition and renovation program, including any required applications of lime, gypsum, soil conditioners, and fertilisers to improve soil structure and turf health.

#### **9. Conclusion**

Darkan Oval is currently in a state that requires immediate attention to restore safe playability and long-term turf quality. Key priorities include:

- Oversowing with ryegrass to establish a consistent winter surface
- Delaying herbicide applications until ryegrass is established
- Monitoring and managing rabbit activity
- Addressing compaction and excessive thatch
- Rectifying irrigation inefficiencies

Once the ryegrass is established and the soil test results are received, BGL Solutions will be in a position to deliver a structured renovation plan and ongoing maintenance strategy to ensure this asset is maintained at a high standard for the local community.

Best Regards

Bruno Lopes



Dip horticulture / Dip Irrigation / Cert 3 Landscaping / Cert 3 Parks and Gardens / Pesticides licensed

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