

Item: Geraldton Amateur Basketball Association (GABA). - Fire Management System & Changerooms

To: Jerry Clune, Mayor and Ross McKim, CEO of the City of Greater Geraldton

Prepared by: Scott McDowell, GM Infrastructure, BWA and Peter Brown, President, Geraldton Amateur Basketball Association (GABA)

Date: 30 June 2026

Summary

The GABA is required to spend approximately \$2m on two necessary capital projects, being:

- A full fire management system, including early detection; and
- Female changerooms and umpiring changerooms due to the introduction of Geraldton Buccaneers Women's team into the NBL 1 West league in early 2027.

Urgency of the issue.

There is a known risk that the fire management system at the Geraldton Basketball Stadium does not meet the current regulatory standard. The building was constructed prior to amendments being made to fire management system requirements. Notwithstanding, any work on the stadium can only occur if the fire management system is upgraded.

Confirmation by a building surveyor that the existing building and services available for the building fall below the current National Construction Code and Australian Standard compliance requirements is attached.

Works are required as the Geraldton Buccaneers are entering a Women's team in the NBL1 West league for the 2027 season. This requires new changerooms be constructed as there are not enough at the facility to cater for Men's and Women's home and away teams at the facility. Retaining the current level of changerooms will pose child safeguarding risks and would require Men's and Women's teams sharing changerooms during matches, which creates unacceptable challenges and risks to manage.

The stadium has recently been used as the community evacuation centre during Cyclone Narelle. As the largest indoor venue in the City of Geraldton, it is likely the Activewest Stadium will again be used as a community evacuation centre in the future. The GABA continues to support the potential use of its stadium as an evacuation centre for the benefit of the Geraldton community, however, we are unsure about the practicality of its use for this purpose, as well as the legal consequences of continuing to use where there is a known risk to occupants of the stadium because of the fire management not meeting compliance standards. Our concerns would be heightened if there were an event causing many residents to be evacuated to the Activewest Stadium and a fire occurred within the stadium. A swift resolution of this issue will mitigate the risk of a tragic incident arising where State and Local Government were aware of the risks.

We have designed our system so that it could be connected to cover the netball stadium if required, saving substantial costs for netball.

The lead time to resolve this issue is still significant with lease issues to address and project management of the installation of a compliant fire management system. The GABA is hopeful of resolving this issue so that:

- The Activewest Stadium meets compliance requirements
- it can focus on preparing for the introduction of its Women's team into the NBL1 league
- The Activewest Stadium can continue to be used as an evacuation centre with reduced risks of a tragic incident eventuating whilst evacuees are inside the stadium
- It does not need to withhold access to Activewest Stadium for emergency evacuation measures without appropriate legal protections being provided to GABA, and its representatives, based on known risks of stadium non-compliance.

The operations of the stadium will not be materially impacted during installation of the fire management system. Most of the work is on the exterior of the stadium and thus normal basketball operations can continue. Construction of the additional changerooms will involve some disruption inside the stadium, however, the majority of this can occur in off-peak times (i.e. morning and early afternoon prior to after school hours' basketball activities occurring).

If the fire management system is not installed, the following consequences may occur:

- i) The GABA may be ordered to cease its occupation of the stadium until it meets the compliance standards. This would impact nearly 5% of Geraldton's population with GABA having more than 2,400 unique participants involved in its various basketball activities
- ii) The GABA may be ordered to restrict the number of people who can be in the stadium, which would adversely impact on the commercial viability of its operations, including the Geraldton Buccaneers NBL1 program
- iii) The Activewest stadium may not be safe enough to use as a community evacuation centre in the event of a future natural disaster
- iv) The GABA will be unable to modify the stadium footprint for any purpose in the future. This will elevate child safeguarding risks as well as other unacceptable challenges and risks relating to the Geraldton Buccaneers Men's and Women's teams sharing changerooms during matches.

The following steps are required to resolve this issue:

- i) GABA must surrender its current lease on the site and enter a new lease with the City of Geraldton as the fire management system requires a small amount of additional land outside of the current lease footprint.
- ii) Confirmation from the GABA of the project timelines, including how the project will be scheduled to minimize disruption to basketball operations as well as facilitate the entry of the Geraldton Buccaneers Women's NBL1 West team.

- iii) Confirmation of transitional arrangements for access to changerooms for the 2027 NBL1 West competition if the project is not finalised prior to March 2027. GABA has had an informal discussion with the Geraldton Tennis Association, and this is a realistic option.
1. Confirmation of the project scope and for GABA to obtain updated costings for the fire management system and new changerooms. GABA has incurred considerable time and money to manage, scope and deal with contractors who would be involved in the capital projects. The preliminary costings for the project are as follows:

Component	Item	Est. Cost (excl GST)
Fire Management System	Fire Pump and Tank Room – building works and construction	\$236,169.19
	Fire Hydrant System	\$493,000.00
	Fire Detection System	\$189,800.00
	Sub Total	\$918,969.19
Changerooms	Upgrade and New Changerooms	\$866,467.73
TOTAL		\$1,785,436.92

We expect the total costs of the projects to be approximately \$2,000,000.

Funding

- GABA is proposing the capital projects be funded via:
- A 25% contribution from the City of Greater Geraldton
- A 50% contribution from the State Government
- GABA to contribute 25% which represents a significant amount for a not-for-profit community sporting association. GABA is also prepared to underwrite any additional costs incurred above the \$2 million estimate.

We have received positive feedback from the State Government about their willingness to commit to the proposed funding arrangements, which is encouraging given the deferral of a new round of the Community Sport and Recreation Facility Fund program.

Basketball Western Australia have been helping to coordinate the support from State Government. Feel free to contact Scott McDowell, GM Infrastructure at Basketball Western Australia on 0429 159 519 if you would like to discuss the capital projects directly with Scott and Basketball Western Australia's CEO, Fabian Ross.

I look forward to hearing from you and am happy to discuss any aspect of this proposal should you require any additional clarification.