



Reid Oval

Warrnambool's premier sporting facility

The message throughout this entire project has been to do it once and do it right.

With this in mind, we're excited that from January 1, Reid Oval will be ready for cricket.

You can't rush turf, and while a few months ago, we were hopeful of being able to have the Reid Oval playing surface ready for the start of the cricket season, the centre of the oval has just been too wet for the clay wicket to be prepared.

I think we can all agree that the extra weeks we give the wicket to settle in will be absolutely worth it, leading to a surface that's cherry ripe for a big second half of the cricket season.

That's an exciting look into the future, but I'd just like to take a moment to look back on the past year, and all that's been achieved.



So much has happened on site as we've seen Reid Oval transformed before our eyes, something that's especially impressive when you consider that at the time of writing, Regional Victoria is slowly emerging from its fifth COVID-related lockdown in seven months.

On a typical day in early July, there were about 30 to 35 people on site. Current restrictions have capped this at five, even as COVID restrictions are relaxed in other industries.

And with the pavilion and the playing surface considered the same worksite, this has presented an even greater obstacle.

When you also factor in the difficulty in getting various building supplies during a pandemic, this has had the potential to create a logistical nightmare.

But I'm proud to say that Fairbrother, along with Council's ground staff, have done an outstanding job in managing the work on site under very trying conditions to keep the project moving along.

And as we near the end of the construction phase and count the days to the first game at this state-of-the-art facility, I'd just like to thank all of the clubs, leagues, associations and other stakeholders for their support.

The reason we are carrying out this project is because Warrnambool's sporting community has been united for some time in calling for Reid Oval to become a showcase facility we can all be proud of.

And I'm happy that by January, Reid Oval will once again be the jewel in the city's sporting crown.

Debbie Arnott,
Reid Oval Project Group Chair

The pavilion

Work on the two-storey pavilion continues despite COVID-restrictions severely limiting the number of personnel on site.

The vast majority of exterior work is complete, and the interior is beginning to look like the terrific facility it will soon be.

Plastering and painting is almost finished on the ground floor, the vinyl is down in the wet areas and the lighting is about to go in.

The heating and cooling system is being installed, along with the cabinetry.

The glass work, including the windows and the balustrades is all finished, and the facade to the roof is largely complete.

The terrace seating isn't too far away either. It's currently being manufactured off-site to make for a more straightforward installation process when the time comes.

In the next few weeks, the scaffolding will come down, giving everyone the best view yet of how the finished building will look.



The oval

Council has now begun the maintenance of the Reid Oval playing surface, which was managed by the turf contractor up until this point. Plans are under way for spring renovation works which will include scarifying, aeration, top dressing and fertilisation of the outfield.

Council has hired a full time Groundsperson, Tom Lynch, and a Sports Turf Apprentice, Harry McNamara that will study Certificate 3 in Sports Turf Management. This will be beneficial not only for Reid Oval but also for the other sports grounds within the municipality.

Staff, led by Shane Stenhouse, have been preparing to manage a surface of this standard for quite some time, working with other organisations and turf experts to learn about the best management practices.



Council's new full-time Groundsperson Tom Lynch.

We'd especially like to thank the grounds team in Ballarat (responsible for Mars Stadium, amongst other ovals) for their guidance as well as the Sport Turf Association of Victoria.

After researching what is used at similar grounds in Melbourne and bigger regional centres in Victoria, Council has purchased specialised machinery to maintain the turf which includes a Reel Mower, Aerator and Scarifier.

One of the catalysts for the Reid Oval redevelopment was to improve the playing surface, and with the right expertise and equipment, Council staff are looking forward to managing this exquisite oval.

Other updates

The base is being prepared for the new cricket nets. These nets will be a great addition to Reid Oval, as the lane nets have the ability to retract, creating an open area for various training exercises.

The entire project team would like to thank Nestles Cricket Club for their flexibility in using nets off-site for the first couple of months of the season. But as a club that's had to conduct itself from a changeroom for many years, they know how to be adaptable, and we can all agree that the finished product in early January will be well and truly worth the wait.

The shell is up for the shed for Council's ground maintenance equipment, and the training area to the north-east of the main oval is about to be graded and seeded.

A special shout out to Matt

We just wanted to take a moment to recognise Council's Horticulture Trainee Matt Hardiman, who as well as being a budding green thumb, is a handy drone pilot.

Matt has used his own drone to take some great shots of the construction process, and has always been happy to share them with the project stakeholders.

Good stuff, Matt!