



LIGHT REGIONAL COUNCIL MEDIA RELEASE

Shovel-Ready! Freeling Agricultural Multi-Purpose Centre

Light Regional Council and the Freeling Community Recreation Park Management Committee are excited about reaching a key milestone to deliver the Freeling Agricultural Multi-Purpose Centre. The project's Steering Committee joined the project team on site recently to mark commencement of the construction phase.

With the help of a grant from the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund, the Freeling Community is partnering with the Council to deliver this critical economic and community growth project, for which a need was identified 10-15 years ago.

Now, with critical funding in place and a lead contractor engaged, this exciting new facility will start rising out of the recently-cleared site between the Freeling Oval and Hanson Street, from late June 2018.

The project has already seen an early win for the local community, with the football and cricket clubs benefiting from an innovative approach to providing temporary football changerooms for 2018, after the old changerooms needed to be demolished to build the new facility. This approach involved the swift construction of a permanent shed that can be temporarily used as a football changeroom while the build is underway, then will be transitioned to cricket club use once the football club has access to the high-standard changerooms that will form part of the new facility. Freeling Football Club President, Dominic Shepley, acknowledged the local support to make this happen: "Our team of local tradies and farmers worked really well with the Council to deliver a super-fast and high-quality build that is a real bonus for the clubs, even if we only finished the night before the first home game, and we still needed a generator!".

Local firm Ahrens Group Pty Ltd is also a big winner from the project, as they have been successful in securing the contract for design and construction. Ahrens' Industrial Building Manager, Adam Madrussani, said that "Ahrens has been, and will continue to be a long-time supporter of the local community. As locals ourselves, we understand how hard the Freeling community has worked over such a long period of time to secure the necessary funding to make this facility a reality. It will be our privilege to deliver a community asset that not only provides recreation benefits, but also aligns with Ahrens deep roots in the agri-business sector".

Freeling Community Recreation Park Management Committee President, Ian Carmichael, reflected on some of the key design decisions made by the Steering Committee to-date: “The choice of floor material in the hall, and the layout of the kitchen and café have required the deepest consideration on our part so far, and we are so grateful for the feedback we received from various community members to help us make these decisions. This will hopefully see us deliver the most flexible facility possible, to meet the needs of as many different groups as possible”.

Light Regional Council’s Manager Strategic Projects, Simon Sherriff, who is coordinating delivery of the project on behalf of Council and the Freeling Community Recreation Park Management Committee, said that the recent Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast provided a unique opportunity for the Steering Committee to learn of the multi-use suitability of the very latest in hall floor surface type technology in action: “Hall floor surface is perhaps the most critical element to the success of this project, due to the combined sports and agricultural use of the Multi-Purpose Centre. With our need to drive heavy machinery on the floor, while also providing a quality floor for multiple sports and community events, the improved Aura Pulastic 2000 flooring emerged as the preferred choice for this project, reinforced by feedback on the successful use of this floor in multi-sport venues at the recent Commonwealth Games. Pulastic 2000 is a high quality and durable indoor cushioned synthetic floor, specially developed to bring comfort and safety in sports, combined with a very high level of multi-functional characteristics and very low maintenance requirements”.

As the build gets underway, Steering Committee members will be getting in touch with local businesses and individuals to explore how contributions to this high-profile project can ensure operating costs for the new facility are minimised, so that facility fees can be minimised under a user-pays system. Those who previously made pledges in the months following the tragic Pinery Fire will also be contacted to ensure these pledges can be appropriately realised and acknowledged.

Light Ward Councillor Lynette Reichstein summed up the buzz around the community at the prospect of seeing the facility completed in time for the 2019 football season: “As we got out there to talk to people about what they were looking for in the design of the kitchen and café area of the building, we were humbled by the energy and enthusiasm that everyone brought to the table. As a rural community, we just can’t wait to use this new building to help keep us moving, keep us learning, and keep us connected”.



IMAGE CAPTION: View from Hanson Street Entrance (artist's impression)



PHOTO CAPTION: The Steering Committee and Project Team Leads for the Freeling Agricultural Multi-Purpose Centre gather on site to mark commencement of the construction phase.

From L-R: Kieren Chappell, Ian Carmichael, Dee Heinjus (Steering Committee Members), Jason Schell (Ahrens' Project Manager), Wayne Schiller (JBG Architects), Cr. Lynette Reichstein (Steering Committee Member), Simon Sherriff (Council's Project Manager), and Gavin Schuster (Steering Committee Member). Steering Committee members absent from photo: Dominic Shepley and Brian Carr.

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