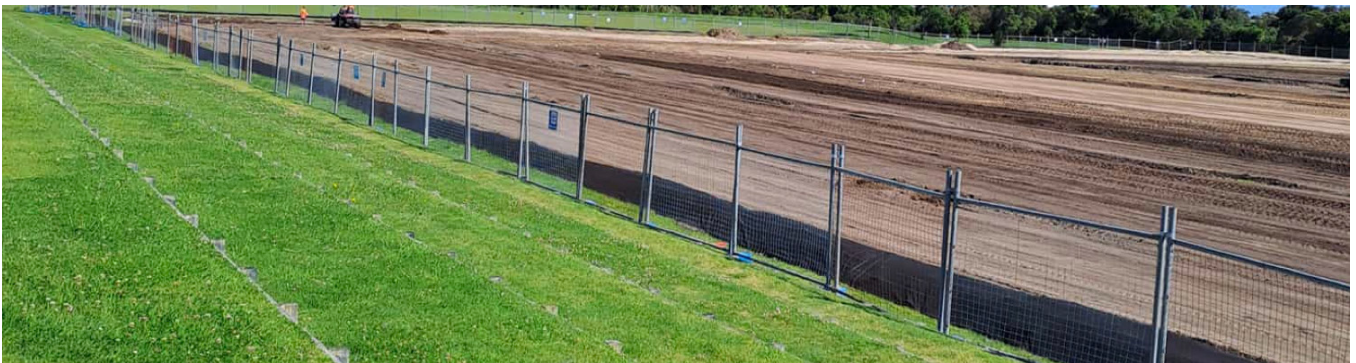


Appendix B: Case studies

Gordon Spratt Reserve

Optimising existing platforms



Optimisation

Grass type conversion

Water constraints

Setting

Tauranga City Council was experiencing significant capacity constraints across the sports field network and needed to increase available hours of use, while improving resilience to climatic conditions and high-intensity use. Gordon Spratt Reserve, as the primary sports precinct serving the rapidly growing Pāpāmoa catchment, was identified as a priority site for field works to effectively meet current and future demand.

Original site setting of Gordon Spratt Reserve

- Sandy loam fields which are free draining but with low nutrient/water retention.
- Reliance on town water supply which was capped and couldn't be used most summers for irrigation.
- Various field platform levels (3 rectangular field platforms with drainage swales between them).
- Use of cool-season grasses (ryegrass and *Poa annua*).
- High field demand – increasing and sustained demand for sports fields arising from growth in community, club, and social sport participation across both winter and summer seasons, creating significant competition between user groups.

2023/24 response

1. **Reshaping:** the field platforms were merged to create a single flexible platform.
2. **Bore installation:** a new bore was installed to reduce reliance on the municipal water supply.
3. **Irrigation:** a new automated irrigation system was installed.
4. **Optimise sand subgrade:** gravel banding was installed to link the surface with the underlying sand subgrade, optimising the site's naturally free-draining coastal soils.
5. **Grass type conversion:** Couch turf (a warm-season grass) was established to improve tolerance to the warm climate and intensity of use.
6. **Field configuration:** fields were reoriented on the single platform, increasing capacity from 3 to 4 full-sized fields. This also enabled the inclusion of a clay cricket block between fields.
7. **Increasing demand:** High usage and limited seasonal down periods meant approaching delivery with a 'do it once' methodology, strategically phasing the upgrade of various fields in such a way that 'business as usual' disruptions was the necessary approach.
8. **Cost:** \$660,000.

Lessons learnt

- Increased capacity can be achieved by optimising existing field platforms, without necessarily upgrading to alternative field types. This can include reshaping and reorienting platforms, and selecting grass species suited to the local climate and intensity of use.
- A range of options should be explored to reduce or remove reliance on municipal water supply.

Impact

- Capacity increased through the provision of an additional full-sized field and a natural cricket block.
- Transitioning to a warm-season grass and introducing a non-potable irrigation source has improved field performance and enabled more consistent year-round use.
- This approach has been rolled out more widely across Tauranga, with additional warm-season grass conversions undertaken. In many cases, this has been a relatively straightforward process involving removal of existing cool-season grasses, laser levelling, and re-establishment of couch. This approach was also applied to 2 additional fields at Gordon Spratt Reserve in 2024/25.