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Non Potable Water Discussion Paper Response

Background

Equestrian Park, 208 Cotter Road, Weston Creek, is managed by the ACT Equestrian Association Inc as the ACT's primary equestrian competition facility under licence from the ACT Government. Day to day administration, development and maintenance of the Park is undertaken on an entirely volunteer basis by an ACTEA subcommittee, the Equestrian Park Management Group, comprised of equestrian clubs who use the grounds. As well as being hired for showjumping, cross country and dressage competitions to an elite level, the Park is used on a daily basis by recreational riders.

Equestrian Park requires water to prepare the surface of its event ground for both competition and regular use. To this end both the showjumping area and the five dressage arenas are watered before every competition. In the last decade the use of the Park has increased annually and pre-Covid, some part of the Park was booked for three weekends out of four in almost every month. This high level of use increases the pressure to maintain surfaces to an acceptable level.

ACTEA was granted a Water Allocation of 2ML under the repealed *Water Resources Act 1998.* It increased that to 4ML with an additional allocation in 2015. The main purpose of this Water Allocation is to water the grass showjumping arena using water from the nearby Yarralumla Creek. There is also a dam on the site but without substantial infrastructure its distance from the arenas presently precludes its use.

The driving force behind watering the showjumping area is to create a safe, cushioned surface for horses jumping heights as great as 1.35m that will attract elite competitors to local events. While green grass is nice this is not an aesthetic exercise. Professional and elite equestrians of any discipline will not risk the legs of their very valuable animals on substandard surfaces. This is a matter of animal welfare. ACT Showjumping Club holds monthly training days and club days as well as regular large scale competitions throughout the year. There is also a second club in town conducting fewer but regular competitions. Professional

trainers also use the surface to hold clinics. All this creates wear and tear on the arena surface and compaction of the soil, exacerbated by the effects of the recent years of drought. The sand arenas at the Park also require watering for dust suppression during large dressage competitions as well as to maintain the quality of the surfaces. Dressage clubs that use the Park for events use town water and, in past dry periods, have hired water tankers at their own expense to spread water because until recently the Park has not had any infrastructure to enable it to deliver potable water directly to the arenas.

1.What were the annual costs of operating and maintaining non-potable water related infrastructure in 2019-20 and 2020-21 year to date?

The Equestrian Park potable water operation is pretty primitive. Equestrian Park Management Group pays for a diesel water pump and meter in Yarralumla Creek and annual licence costs.

One off costs

New pump (2017) $1140
Battery (2019) $85
Irrigator $5,000

Annual Costs

Licence Fee $473
Diesel $400 -$700 – varies depending on rainfall

2.Do these infrastructure costs vary significantly from year to year?

Other than fuel costs No

3.Is there capacity to expand non-potable water infrastructure at your club?

The dressage arenas are currently watered with town water. The jumping area is watered with a mixture of both town water and creek water depending on the availability of the latter.

At the moment watering the jumping arena using non-potable water is an extremely labour intensive and time consuming process which limits water use. Things have improved somewhat since acquiring an irrigator, however, to effectively water the arena requires 2 runs of the irrigator. Each run takes approximately 16 hours to complete. Therefore 32 hours over 4 days. This requires a club volunteer to refuel the pump each morning, and prime the intake line before commencing watering, and then returning in the afternoon to switch the pump off.

There is no power available on the jumping arena. Installation of an electric pump would allow the same flexibility and operation as town water while using non-potable water. There is a power pole approximately 60m from the Creek but a transformer would be required as well as some excavation in placing the wires underground and purchasing a new electric pump.

In 2019 the ACT Government upgraded the entire ancient reticulation system at Equestrian Park. The cost of maintaining 50 year old infrastructure eventually outweighed the cost of an upgrade. In the process, the Park was given a non-potable water distribution capacity for the competition arena which is the most heavily watered part of the Park. This system is not yet connected to the Creek.

The ongoing risk in regard to non-potable water is the variable flow in Yarralumla Creek.

To have a permanent access to large quantities of non-potable water the Park would have to install storage tanks that could be replenished from either the Creek or the dam on site.

Most of these costs are beyond the capacity of a not-for-profit volunteer organisation.

4.What were the annual costs of purchasing non-potable water in 2019-20 and 2020-21 year to date?

Year	Water	Cost
2019-20	2.09ML	$618.64
2020-2021	1.00Ml (est)	$300.00

5.How much does the cost of purchasing non-potable water contribute to overall annual operation costs?

Around 3%

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