

marrickville matters

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Camperdown Dulwich Hill Enmore Lewisham Marrickville Newtown Petersham St Peters Stanmore Sydenham Tempe



The Mayor of Marrickville Councillor Sam Iskandar and Member for Grayndler and Minister for Infrastructure Anthony Albanese turn the first sod to mark the commencement of work at Mackey Park earlier this year

“MAGNIFICENT” MACKEY PARK WILL BE CARBON-NEUTRAL

Marrickville Council has announced that Mackey Park will be Council’s first carbon-neutral project.

The solar array of photovoltaic cells being installed at Council’s Depot building in St Peters will offset 100 per cent of the power needs at Mackey Park.

Installation will be completed by the end of the year, just in time for the planned official opening of the Mackey Park refurbishment in December 2010.

The Mackey Park improvements include two full sized soccer fields, two half sized soccer fields, a full sized cricket field, pedestrian paths and fencing, and a full upgrade of amenities including male and

female change rooms, a kiosk and club room.

The Mayor of Marrickville Councillor Sam Iskandar said that Mackey Park in south Marrickville will become a magnificent asset to the local sporting community. He said that sport and recreation in Marrickville will receive a huge boost when the Mackey Park refurbishments are complete.

“I would like to thank the local sports clubs – particularly the soccer clubs - for their patience,” said Councillor Iskandar. “But I assure them, the wait will be worth it. The new Mackey Park is going to be really something very special.”

The \$3.1 million Mackey Park refurbishment is funded by a \$2.265 million grant under the Australian Government Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program as part of the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan, and Marrickville Council. (continued on page 2)

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THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

Almost every Friday night over the past three months, a crowd of 60 or so young people gather in Marrickville South. But this is no bored group of kids getting into mischief. Instead, they are learning life skills, addressing teen issues, eating nutritious food – and going home exhausted after four strenuous games of basketball.

In other words, according to participant Nela Afu, they come for “a good time, some food and a bit of fitness.”

Dina Petrakis, Coordinator Community Partnerships and Places in Council’s Community Development section explains that Midnight Basketball ticks a lot of boxes: “It’s a youth initiative, a multicultural initiative, a community safety initiative, a sport and recreation initiative and a healthy lifestyle initiative,” she said.

“It starts at 7 o’clock with a nutritious meal, then a pre-tournament briefing and four games of basketball with a workshop in between. The kids are not out and about on a Friday night. And after playing four games of very energetic basketball – you should see them, they are total balls of energy – they are delivered home very tired and safe and sound.”

Midnight Basketball is open to anyone between the ages of 12 and 18. It attracts young people from a wide variety of cultural groups within the local area.

Nela Afu is a university student, a member of Marrickville Council’s Youth Council, and a keen Midnight Basketballer who says he enjoys the social side of the evening. “We develop bonds and friendships. Hanging out with people and playing in teams, everyone is learning teamwork and what’s right and what’s wrong. It helps keep kids off the streets. Rather than going out and causing trouble they are inside playing basketball.”

The workshops that are an integral part of Midnight Basketball deal with anger management, drug and alcohol use, living skills, safe recreation, health, and nutrition. Charlie Coorey, Marrickville Council’s Strategic Community Projects Officer - Youth Services, said the workshops tackle the key issues identified in Council’s Youth Strategy 2009 – 2011. “And they are not too serious. It’s important that the workshops are presented to the young participants in a fun and interactive way.”

The program is supported by Midnight Basketball Australia and a Community Committee: TAFE NSW provides youth work students to act as team managers, the Metro Migrant Resource Centre’s Multicultural Women’s Cooking program caters the food, Marrickville Youth Resource Centre and Barnardo’s provide qualified youth workers, MTC Work Solutions and Street Beat deliver the kids home, Glebe Referee Association provides the referees, and Commonwealth Bank and Marrickville Centrelink provide volunteers. The Committee helps Marrickville Council run the evening. “We couldn’t do it without them,” said Dina. “All in all, it’s a pretty special event.”

Nela agrees. “I used to stay home on a Friday night and watch the Rugby, but now I have basketball. It’s an enjoyable thing to do on a Friday night.”



Nela Afu (right in red) at Midnight Basketball



Multicultural Womens Cooking Group members Nazmun Nahar, Losena Fuko, Fatmata Bangura, Salma Yasmin serve food to (centre) Peter Aspres Junior Development Officer Glebe Basketball and Rashid Kamara.