

Pukekura Park fans stumped by cricket plans

By LEIGHTON KEITH - Taranaki Daily News
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CAMERON BURNELL/ Taranaki Daily News,

Fillis St resident Kay Lynskey does not want to see practice cricket wickets built at one of the picturesque entrances to Pukekura Park. Inset: What the proposed nets would look like.



Pukekura Park lovers are disgusted by plans to build new practice cricket nets at the park.

The New Plymouth District Council approved in principle the location of the permanent facility, next to the Pukekura Kindergarten, on Fillis St, during its draft annual plan discussions in 2008.

The Taranaki Cricket Association made a submission to the council to build the 50m long by 10m wide and 4m high structure to meet New Zealand Cricket's warrant of fitness requirements for longer matches (three to five days).

The project would require the removal or trimming of a number of trees near the site.

Taranaki Cricket would fund the construction of the nets and would lease the land from the council.

Fillis St resident Kay Lynskey said her family was pro-cricket but the facility violated the beautiful space that was there.

"I think it would be an absolute travesty for that space to be used," Mrs Lynskey said.

She described the structure as looking like a hideous big cage and believed it could be positioned in another area.

"I think that they could have them up behind the back of the park."

She was only aware of the proposal because neighbours had told her about it.

"I think that the wider community should be able to have their say," Mrs Lynskey said.

Sara Kovac, of Strandon, said the development would destroy the area. "What they are proposing to put in there is a huge monstrosity," Ms Kovac said.

The facility would be at an entrance to the park that was the pride and joy of New Plymouth, she said. "It doesn't just affect the residents of Fillis St. I think it should have been more widely advertised."

TCA chairman Neil Sulzberger said various options for the nets had been considered by New Zealand Cricket, Central Districts Cricket, the Taranaki Cricket Association and the New Zealand Players' Association.

"It is the only option that we really have to put it, if it's to go ahead," Mr Sulzberger said.

Not building the facility could spell the end of first-class cricket, including international matches, at the park, which is classed as a pre-existing international venue by the International Cricket Council.

Pukekura Park is set to host three domestic Twenty20 games, two 50-over matches and one four-day game over the summer.

The council had directed the association to consult with the likes of Friends of Pukekura Park, which will discuss the proposal at a committee meeting tonight. Mr Sulzberger said the association would respect the outcome of the consultation.