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# \$3.7m La Trobe Uni set-up to benefit northern suburbs 'We need new fields'

Hockey | Cody Winnell

THE development of a \$3.7 million hockey centre at La Trobe University's Bundoora campus is gathering momentum.

A La Trobe University Hockey Club subcommittee is holding talks with local politicians regarding funding for the proposed centre, which would see two new synthetic hockey fields installed.

Club hockey manager Travis Dowling, who heads the subcommittee, said he was pleased with the initial response from local politicians and the university.

The club has about 120 players on its list but is planning to expand.

Dowling said the club catered for people from all walks of life and socio-economic backgrounds, with cheaper-than-average fees making hockey more accessible for those struggling financially.

In 2010, the club will branch out, entering a junior team in the

Victorian Hockey Association competition.

He said the club had four senior men's sides and three women's teams but predicted more players would join if the club's facilities were based at La Trobe University.

The club's field is about 1km from the university campus, meaning players – two-thirds of which are females – have to take the tram late on weeknights for training.

"Uni students make up half of the club's members," Dowling said.

"Sixty-four per cent of our club are female players, so two-thirds are women even though we have more men's teams.

He said the facilities also failed to cater for female players as there were no women's changerooms available.

"We only have one clubroom and it's in very bad condition," Dowling said.

While a new hockey centre would give the club an on-campus home, Dowling said other northern suburbs sports groups would benefit from the all-weather hockey fields.

"We've looked at partnership arrangements with the Latrobe University Football Club, the rugby team, the cricket, soccer, women's netball and tennis teams. Also we'd like to make them (the fields) available for other sporting groups in the northern suburbs who want to use it as a training facility," he said.

The subcommittee has earmarked the gravel carpark near the Bundoora campus football ground as a possible area for the hockey development. The next step for the club is securing funding agreements.

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HARDER THAN IT NEEDS TO BE: La Trobe University students have to lug their gear on to the tram, often during the night, during hockey season.

Picture: KRIS REIGEL SS14/PP66