

Infiniti Golf's \$15m proposal for par three Balyang golf course site

Plans for a \$15m golf facility can be revealed for the first time, as the fight for a prime piece of Newtown land picks up pace.



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A render of the Infiniti Golf facility proposed for the site of the par three Balyang golf course in Newtown. Source: Lachlan Shepherd Architects.

The site of the Balyang par three course in Newtown will be transformed into a state of the art, family-friendly golf facility under a \$15m proposal put forward by a local trio.

Jared Toyne, Justin Cole and Lachlan Shepherd are behind Infiniti Golf, a project that would see the creation of a three-level driving bay, mini golf course, and food and function options.

The trio have met with Geelong council chief executive Ali Wastie to pitch the concept.

It would include a series of scoring “buckets” located within the hitting field, allowing users to compete with friends in an environment designed to attract people of all ages and ability.



A render of the Infiniti Golf facility in Newtown. Source: Lachlan Shepherd Architects.

Mr Toyne said his father, Peter, proposed a driving range for the site decades ago, but council instead made the “terrible decision” to open a par three course in 1993.

“The idea to revisit is on the back of the evolution of golf into more of an entertainment activity,” he said.

“The golf industry has experienced tremendous growth since Covid and the emergence of screen golf and subsequently the improvement in technology, now makes golf more accessible to a wider demographic.”

Mr Toyne, who operates his Golf Imports business out of North Geelong, said the proposed facility would allow for participation “without the intimidation of playing a round of golf”.

Council wants to cease its management of the site and in August it [put the call out](#) for “innovative solutions” ahead of a formal lease process.



Located on council-owned land, interested parties were last year encouraged to put forward “innovative solutions”. Source: City of Greater Geelong.

The Sharp Group, owner of The Range @ Curlewis, has also expressed interest in the Newtown site.

“We are in the hands of council with what they want to do there ... we’ve told them we would be interested,” director Lyndsay Sharp said.

Councillors heard from existing members a fortnight ago on why the par three course should remain.

“We are not against the proposal to lease the site, but we stand united in the view to oppose the redevelopment,” member Troy Freeman said.

A report expected to be presented at council’s May meeting would a see vote determine the next steps in a process that stems back to November 2022 when City Hall adopted its golf facilities strategy that committed to third-party management.



Lachlan Shepherd is part of a group wanting to modernise the site of the existing par three Balyang golf course in Newtown. Picture: Alison Wynd.

Mr Shepherd, [a Torquay-based architect](#), said the group's plans were well advanced, aided by a site survey that assisted with the design.

"This specific style of facility is not common within Australia currently," he said.

"If the City of Greater Geelong were to select us to lease and develop the site, this would elevate Geelong golf onto a more global platform with 'adventure golf' being an up-and-coming (offering) with a new style of interest being shown from a broader segment of the community."



Mr Shepherd said planning consultants Tomkinson had confirmed the development fell within the current planning framework.

“We see this development as a positive way to reinvigorate the site and importantly, no changes to planning overlays or zoning are required,” he said.