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The battle for Shara

The battle lines for the Ocean Shores Sportsfields have been drawn. The ground being fought over has been well defined.

The political arm of the Popular Front for Ocean Shores Sportfields (PFOSS) - The Brunswick Valley Sports Association (BVSA) has walked away from the negotiation table after 10 years. It claims the Environmentalists for Wildlife Corridors (EWC) has tried to take its hallowed sportsfields site at Shara Boulevard with no suitable compensatory site for sport.

The EWC has formed a coalition with Byron Shire Council which like all great powers down through the ages has backed one side then dumped it for the other.

In 1995 Council bought the site for the express purpose of providing much needed sportsfields. By 1999 it had changed sides to the EWC.

The BVSA has commenced action in the Land and Environment Court to stop Council from selling the land to the RTA who will in turn vest it in the Billinudgel Nature Reserve.

There is no doubt that the BVSA has enormous support from the Ocean Shores Community. That community's frustration at the lack of sporting facilities for a population in excess of 5,000 grows proportionately with Council's procrastination on providing sportsfields.

The need for facilities existed in the 1970s

and has only increased as Ocean Shores, North Ocean Shores, New Brighton and South Golden Beach become more populated.

The purchase of the Shara Boulevard site in 1995 gave the community hope. Ten years later that hope is replaced with anger and distrust.

The BVSA has lodged its evidence with the Land and Environment Court this week. It also held a meeting this week and the resolve of members is stronger than ever. The members want to see this legal action go the full course. The Association knows what its members and the community want and need and it intends to stay the course.

Byron Shire Council is on-a-hiding-to-nothing in this matter. The media have been supportive of the community and this is most unlikely to change. If the court finds for the BVSA, Council will be seen as having been unreasonable to one of its communities to the extent that both the community and Council have spent much money in fighting a battle for a community's undeniable needs.

If Council wins, the antagonism will remain because the undeniable need for sportsfields will still exist. That need is Council's obligation but Council has no resources in money or land to meet its obligation.

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It would be a pyrrhic victory for Council with no joy.

The PFOSS and the BVSA have a battle in front of them but now that it has been joined they will not back away from delivering to

that community what it deserves.

The sporting regiments from Byron Bay, Mullumbimby, Bangalow and Brunswick Heads are waiting for their call-to-arms. They will only join one side.