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## Grafton basketball stadium gets \$30,944 extension



LEFT: (L-R) Social Futures 'Reconnect Program' rep Sonya Meares-Lynch, Grafton Midnight Basketball youth worker Melissa Livermore, Member for Clarence Chris Gulaptis, Grafton Midnight Basketball participants Taneesha Strong, Chahaya Loney and Chelsea Dwyer, Grafton Midnight Basketball coach Pat Connelly, CEO of North Coast Community Housing John McKenna and CVC mayor, Cr Jim Simmons. Image: Contributed.

**Grafton Sports Centre on Powell Street is about to get a much needed extension and cooling upgrade with a grant of \$30,944 from the NSW Government's Social Housing Community Improvement Fund (SHCIF).**

The project funding was applied for by North Coast Community Housing (NCCH), the only local social housing office in the Clarence region. NCCH liaised with Clarence Valley Council to develop a project that would benefit local youth, especially those in social housing.

The resulting Grafton Basketball Stadium project involves an exciting renovation to the local Grafton basketball court. Midnight basketball is one of the only remaining youth programs occurring in Grafton at present, and has been running for over five years. This program engages 90 youth from South Grafton High and Grafton High. This project will install an air-conditioning unit within the main meeting room of the basketball stadium and introduce bi-fold doors and a covered area along the back wall. In addition to opening up the space this will enable youth to freely engage with workshops

run by Grafton Police and Community organisations in conjunction with this successful program.

This project is one of five, totalling \$216,800 NCCH was successful in winning in this round of SHCIF funding.

Clarence MP, Chris Gulaptis, who is an avid supporter of Midnight Basketball welcomed the grant and said it was great to see NCCH develop a project that benefits local youth, especially those from low socio economic communities.

"Midnight Basketball is a terrific program that gives kids something positive to do with their time in a safe environment.

"They were recently awarded funding under the NSW Government's Community Safety Grants Fund to assist in running this valuable program in Grafton so it's terrific to see further funding support to allow this much needed upgrade to take place.

"This is all about turning social housing areas into strong, vibrant communities that our residents are proud to call home, and I congratulate NCCH on its successful application," Mr Gulaptis said.