



Ross Creek Recreation Reserve

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

FINAL REPORT | 2023



GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Acknowledgement of Country

Golden Plains Shire spans the Traditional lands of the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar people. We acknowledge them as the Traditional Owners and Custodians.

Council pays its respects to Wadawurrung Elders and Eastern Maar Elders past, present and emerging. Council extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of the Golden Plains Shire.

The Ross Creek Recreation Reserve is located on the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung people.



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ROSS CREEK RECREATION RESERVE MASTER PLAN UPDATE 2023

PREPARED FOR:

Golden Plains Shire Council

PREPARED BY PROJECT CONSULTANTS:

Master Plan Update 2023 - TRUE Resource Group

Original Draft Master Plan 2015 - Morton Dunn Architects

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

A special thank you to the community groups, committees of management, key stakeholders and Council officers for their commitment and valuable contributions to the Master Plan update process. This plan has an important unified and local focus and has been driven by evidence of need and stakeholder insights.

DISCLAIMER:

This report has been prepared in good faith and in conjunction with Golden Plains Shire and the user groups of the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve, as an update to a pre-existing plan. It is reflective of a higher-level direction for the Reserve and is intended to facilitate an understanding of the proposed concepts and recommendations.

The information contained in this document has been provided and relied upon from the original master plan documentation, stakeholder consultation and anecdotal evidence, research and contributions from existing Golden Plains Shire related plans and strategies. Information contained in the Report is current as at the relevant dates stated in the Report and may not reflect any event or circumstances which occur after the stated date.

The report along with all illustrative plans, perspectives and imagery contained within are indicative impressions to illustrate conceptual ideas only and all recommendations will be subject to further planning, consultation, detailed design, cost planning and approvals.

The document is solely for the use of Golden Plains Shire and is not intended to, and should not be used or relied upon, by anyone else. Neither TRUE Resource Group, nor its servants, consultants, agents or staff accept any duty of care or shall be responsible in any way whatsoever to any person in respect to the report, including errors or omission therein.



Introduction and Site Context

Introduction

In 2015, a Master Plan was developed for the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve to guide the future development and improvement of the reserve. Golden Plains Shire has sought to refresh and update the pre-existing Master Plan to ensure it reflects and responds to the changing needs of the user groups and broader community.

The update considers the issues and opportunities as they relate to the development and improvement of the Reserve. It brings together the key findings captured throughout the development process and provides the necessary context to better understand the justification behind the recommendations, proposed responses and prioritisation.

The Master Plan Update aligns with Council’s vision for sport and active recreation and ensures that the long-term development aspirations of the tenant clubs, community groups and residents are taken into consideration.

The plan addresses functional issues with the existing landscape (such as playing areas, drainage, connections and safe pedestrian and vehicle movement) with a strong focus on multi-use and fit-for-purpose recreation facilities to encourage greater participation and community use of the reserve.

The focus of the master plan update is on the active part of the Reserve however it does provide some recommendations to improve the interface areas with the Woody Yaloak Primary School and provides some specific advice on the improvement of the adjoining nature reserve or associated trails.

Objectives of the Master Plan Update are to:

- Consult with key stakeholders to understand current experiences, needs and aspirations.
- Assess the demand and needs for community, sporting and other recreational facilities.
- Review the condition and functionality of the facilities (e.g. buildings, playing field, tennis courts, carpark, site access, roads, fencing, interface areas and other supporting infrastructure).
- Test the existing plan and identify future capital and strategic development opportunities to support greater access, connection and participation.
- Produce an updated plan which lists the recommended works at the Reserve and indicates the priorities, and
- Produce a visual site plan showing the indicative location of the recommendations.

The Master Plan Update has been informed by and tested with tenant clubs and will be made available for community feedback, before producing a final report.

In order to achieve the project objectives, the following project stages were undertaken including:

- ① Stage 1 – Project Inception + Site Visits
- ② Stage 2 – Background Review, Research + Renew
- ③ Stage 3 – Stakeholder Consultation (Internal + External)
- ④ Stage 4 – Draft Master Plan + Concept Design
- ⑤ Stage 5 – Final Master Plan + Concept Design



**This document is the
Final Master Plan
Update Report.**

Site Context

The township of Ross Creek is located in the ‘Haddon-Smythesdale and District’ area of the Golden Plains Shire and is approximately 14 kilometres south-west of Ballarat.

The Ross Creek Recreation Reserve is a passive and active recreation reserve centrally located on the Sebastopol-Smythesdale Road in Ross Creek next to the Woody Yaloak Primary School and in close proximity to the general store.

Ross Creek is a predominantly rural area, although the site is zoned Township Zone (TZ).

It is the only significant public open space parcel in and around the main township and it, along with the Woody Yaloak Recreation Reserve in the neighbouring town of Smythesdale (7.2km away), are considered the only active recreation reserves servicing the area.

The passive component of the Reserve comprises a large nature reserve and wetland providing a series of walking trails and a creek running east-west, to the north-east of the playing field.

The active component comprises a large football / cricket oval with a synthetic wicket, 4 tennis courts (non-cushioned hard courts), a single-storey pavilion with a multi-purpose community hall, basic social room and change areas, BBQ shelter and playground, cricket shed / shelter and public toilet facilities.

The community pavilion physically adjoins and shares a common entry with the primary school hall to the west. This in addition to other interface points along the eastern boundary provide access and shared-use opportunities between the Reserve and the school.

The reserve is home to a range of community groups and clubs including Ross Creek Tennis Club, Ballarat Fire Brigade Cricket Club, Woody Yaloak Primary School, Ross Creek Landcare Group and various community groups, all of which collectively represent the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve Committee of Management, except for the school.

The Tennis Courts are used every second Saturday for competition and for training and casual use during the week, the hall is used for Cardio Drumming and box’a size class once a week and for various community meetings and the Ballarat Fire Brigade Cricket Club (BFBC) are running 3 sides in the Ballarat Cricket Association in 2022/23 with over 40 players.

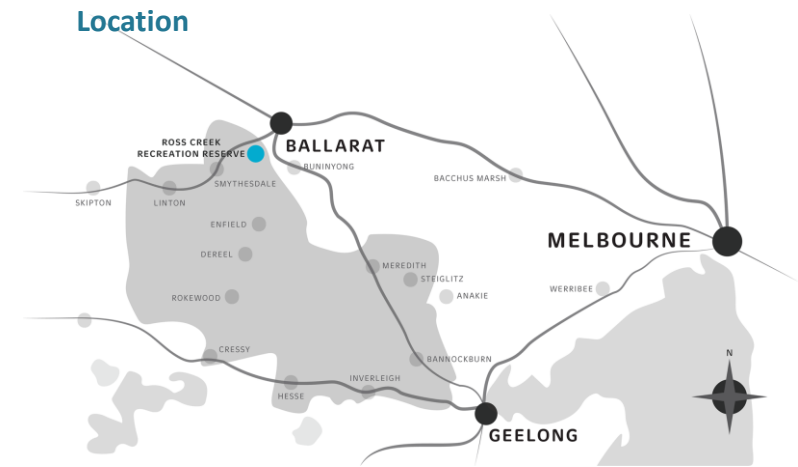
With 148 students in 2023, the Woody Yaloak Primary School is a regular user of the site for school activities and by the local community

Although this area is predominantly used for local level community sport, it is also used by local residents and students for informal play, community and social events and passive activities like walking for pleasure. The addition of the boardwalk in the nature reserve and creek area adds an extra perspective to a very pleasant walk and the walking tracks offer the chance for the community to experience nature.

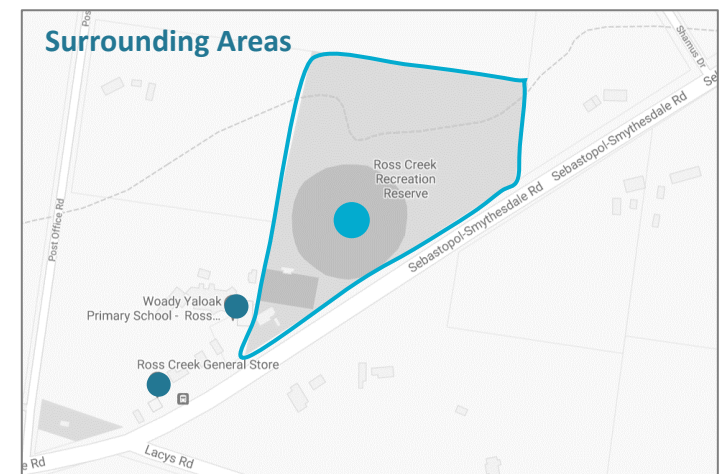
Ross Creek is also considered a Neighbourhood Safer Place. A 'Neighbourhood Safer Place' (also known as a 'Bushfire Place of Last Resort' or NSP-BPLR) is a place of last resort when all other bushfire plans have failed in a community. It provides a simple clearing that creates separation and distance from the bushfire hazard (e.g. nature reserve and local grass fires).

ROSS CREEK RECREATION RESERVE

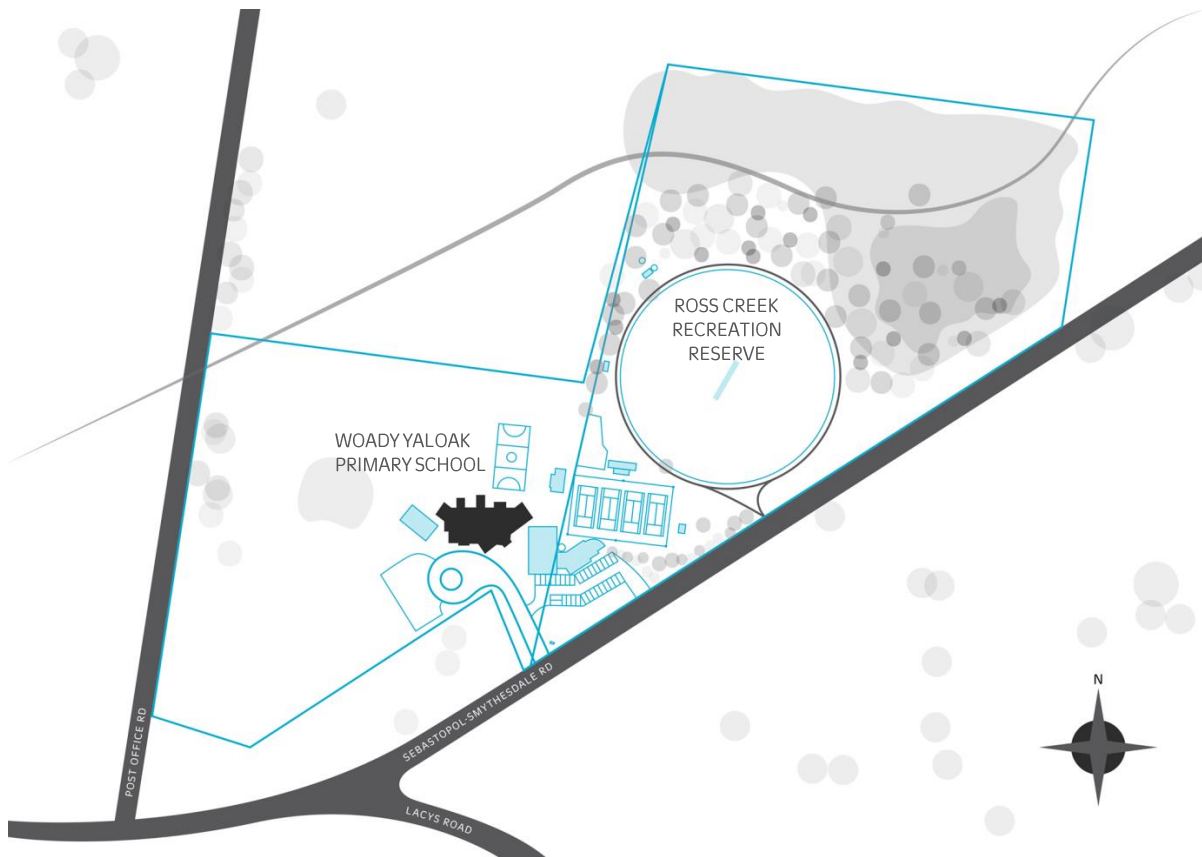
Location



Surrounding Areas



ROSS CREEK RECREATION RESERVE (EXISTING)



Property Details

PROPERTY

ADDRESS: 655 Sebastopol-Smythesdale Road, Ross Creek, Victoria 3351

CROWN DESCRIPTION: Allotment 8A Section N Parish of Yarroowie

STANDARD PARCEL IDENTIFIER (SPI): 8A-N\PP3971

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA: Golden Plains Shire

COUNCIL PROPERTY NUMBER: 41400035

PLANNING SCHEME: Golden Plains

DIRECTORY REFERENCE: Vicroads 76 E4

UTILITIES

RURAL WATER CORPORATION: Southern Rural Water

URBAN WATER CORPORATION: Central Highlands Water

MELBOURNE WATER: Outside drainage boundary

POWER DISTRIBUTOR: Powercor

STATE ELECTORATES

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL: Western Victoria

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY: Buninyong

REGISTERED ABORIGINAL PARTY: Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation

PLANNING ZONES

PLANNING ZONE: Township Zone (TZ)

PLANNING OVERLAYS: Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) and Salinity Management Overlay (SMO)

OTHER

Designated Bushfire Prone Area and a Water Course through the site.

National Construction Code Building Class 9b. Class 9b buildings are assembly buildings in which people may gather for social, theatrical, political, religious or civil purposes including sporting facilities.

State of Play

The following provides a summary of the existing conditions, attributes and deficiencies at the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve:

SITE LAYOUT

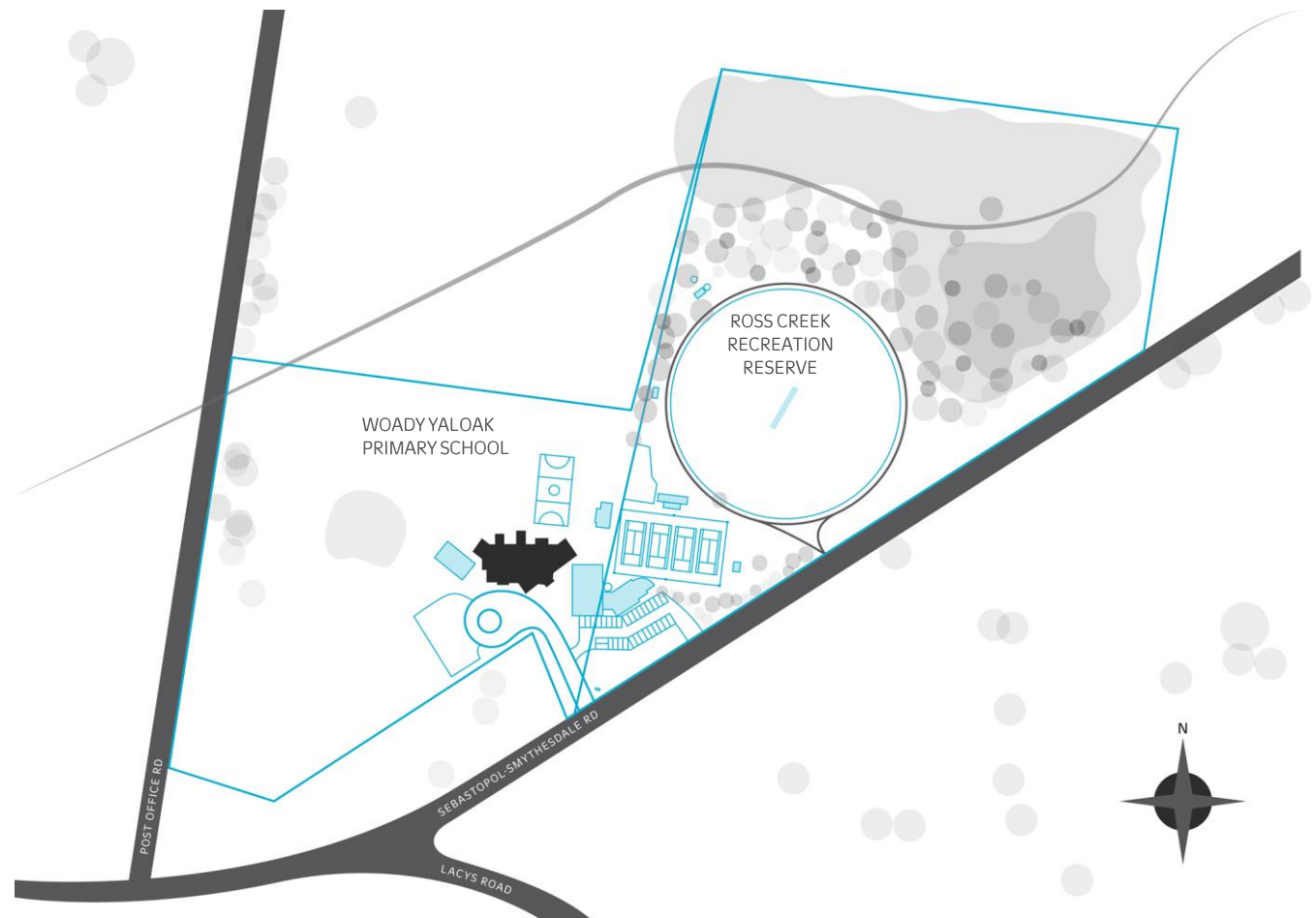


The Reserve is located in an attractive and unique setting, with a large playing field, tennis courts, play space and supporting facilities bounded by a highly valued and protected nature reserve, creek and trails to the North and East, and a primary school to the West. Expansion opportunities at the site are limited (encroaching into the nature reserve is not supported).

The interface areas between the various spaces is unsealed, however recent improvements have created a clear distinction between pedestrian access and roadways, and in poor condition in most parts. The installation of bollards creates a barrier between pedestrian movement, vehicle control and visual connection between activity areas and the main clubrooms, the pavilion, courts, toilets, Oval, exercise equipment, trails access and important interface areas with the school.

There is limited wayfinding signage throughout the site and on the approach to the reserve.

ROSS CREEK RECREATION RESERVE (EXISTING)



ACCESS AND PARKING



The Reserve is situated on the busy Sebastopol – Smythesdale Road, with a narrow entry and limited opportunity for additional parking or vehicle movement within the existing reserve footprint.



There are little to no traffic management devices within the reserve, meaning that vehicle movement and parking is largely uncontrolled, allowing vehicles to park in a haphazard fashion in almost any area of the reserve, including evidence of vehicle access to the playing field itself.



Car parking and access near the oval is informal and unsealed. The carpark area next to the existing building is reasonable however the opportunity for additional parking to facilitate high-use activities and school drop off and pickup times, would be beneficial.

CIRCULATION AND MOVEMENT



There is no formal pedestrian or vehicle circulation system and there is a need to enhance pedestrian safety and amenity throughout the Reserve. Emergency and fire access is also constrained in parts.



At present there are no suitable bike / walking tracks linking the site to any surrounding areas. The interface area between the school and reserve is informal, however there is ample space for future improvements in this space.

FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE



A multi-use shared facility is currently being used for three sports and a range of informal recreation opportunities.



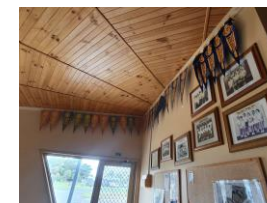
The pavilion / clubhouse is not well-located being South-West of the site, between the hall (interface with the school) and tennis courts, with limited to no spectator viewing of the playing field. Access to the facility is not considered DDA compliant.



The current building was last updated in 1999 and functions as a clubroom, change rooms, meeting rooms and a multi-use community hall. The building is in reasonable condition however it is tired looking, small and lacks proper change, kiosk, and other facilities suitable for a community sport and recreation reserve. The kitchen is basic and in need of renewal.



The adjoining hall is used by community groups and the school, and has had some investment to become more inclusive and multi-purpose (e.g. installation of an acoustic ceiling treatment) however as seen in the rest of the building, it does not have adequate heating and cooling and AV equipment to support a broader range of activities.



The Community Hall links to the School Hall via a common entry / foyer. Part of the School Hall crosses and encroaches into the Reserve property boundary.

FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE (CONT.)



The public toilet block is in good condition and is located in close proximity to the tennis courts and playground. The recent installation of lighting has addressed safety concerns.



The Reserve has an excellent shelter that has recently been upgraded, with a BBQ area, seating and picnic space.



The playground has recently had a significant upgrade along with the installation of exercise and fitness equipment. This is well located close to the school and other supporting amenities.



The site boasts a large playing field that is utilised during peak and off-peak times (by the school).



The centre cricket wicket has been upgraded and is in very good condition. The grass cover over the playing field is consistent, the playing surface is uneven and undulating in sections.



The playing field does not have adequate irrigation or drainage and is not well-defined giving rise to an eroding perimeter. The transition areas to access the playing field require high levels of maintenance.



The playing field does not have training lights or supporting infrastructure such as cricket nets and permanent and/or functional coaches' boxes / player shelters. Some existing park furniture is in poor condition.



There is a water tank and services shed located on site but is overgrown and not easily accessible.

General landscaping around the facilities and infrastructure in the reserve is not present.



A cricket shed has been extended to include a shelter; likely due to the lack of shaded viewing or player shelter space and social capability within proximity to the playing field. This structure is located East of the playing field and is not fit-for-purpose. It appears to be used as a social space with evidence of smoking and alcohol consumption in the reserve.



The four tennis courts are in reasonable condition but are not floodlit. They are located within a fenced compound close to the existing social space, but with limited spectator viewing from that aspect. The shelter located on the north side of the courts provides ample shaded spectator viewing.



Trail heads are hidden to the north of the reserve and are lacking a sense of cohesion and connection with the broader site / adjacent school.



Planning and Policy Context

Planning and Policy Context

An assessment of the policy, planning and other site-specific context was undertaken to understand the policies, planning controls and preferences impacting on the area, and to better understand the physical, environmental and cultural characteristics of the Reserve.

The following documents were reviewed, and where appropriate, used to inform the development of the Master Plan Update:

- Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (2020-2030)
- GPS Council Plan 2021-2025 Draft (incorporating the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan)
- GPS Access and Inclusion Plan 2013-2016
- GPS Open Space Strategy 2013-2017
- Golden Plains Paths and Trails Strategy 2013-2017
- GPS Asset Management Improvement Strategy 2010-2030
- Golden Plains Shire – Water Supply Management Study (2015)
- Preliminary Land Capability Assessment For Development Feasibility Study Ross Creek Recreation Reserve, Ross Creek, St Quentin (2020).
- Ross Creek Smythes Creek Community Plan – Future Reserve Master Plan Concept (2014-2016). Prepared by Ross Creek Smythes Creek Community Coordinators.
- Ross Creek Committee of Management Master Plan Projects and Priorities update (2020) and the Original Master Plan (2015).
- Ross Creek Recreation Reserve – Usage Data and Insights (Council records, 2020-2021)
- Golden Plains Shire: Playing field assessments (2015)
- Golden Plains Tennis Facilities Review (2015)
- Ross Creek Recreation Reserve: Playground Redevelopment Plans (2020)
- G21 Regional Tennis Strategy (2015)
- G21 and AFL Barwon Regional Towards 2030 Strategy (2021) and AFL Goldfields Regional Strategy (2017)
- G21 and Cricket Victoria Barwon Region Cricket Strategy (2019)
- Victorian Cricket Infrastructure Strategy (2018-2028) – Central Highlands Region and Barwon Region
- AFL Preferred Facility Guidelines - State, Regional, Local, School and Remote Facilities (2019)
- Cricket Australia Community Cricket Facility Guidelines (2016)
- Tennis Australia: Tennis Infrastructure Planning, Design and Delivery Resource (2018)
- Golden Plains Shire Council Planning Scheme.
- Victorian Population Health Survey (2017)
- VicHealth and Sport and Recreation Victoria's 5th year, joint research project into organised community sport participation in Victoria in 2019.



The following section provides a summary of key findings and implications relevant to the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve Master Plan Update 2023.

KEY POLICY AND PLANNING FINDINGS

The following provides a summary of key findings and implications of the document review as they relate to the improvement of the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve.

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION IN GOLDEN PLAINS

In 2020, Golden Plains Shire developed the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (2020-2030) with the aim to positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community, promote liveability and foster community connectedness by ensuring that there is a diversity of fit-for-purpose, affordable and accessible, formal and informal, recreation opportunities (programs, services and facilities) that encourage participants, local residents and visitors to be physically active.

The endorsed vision for sport and active recreation ensures that the focus of planning and investment remains on three core pillars: Activity, Connectedness and Liveability which are unpinned by planning and policy.

Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (2020-2030) sets the key outcomes that Council wishes to achieve and the principles to be applied in relation to sport and recreation planning.

Ten (10) planning principles have been developed to support the strategies vision and these principles will form the strategic framework for over the next 10 years.

- Everything that Golden Plains Shire does in relation to sport and active recreation will be aligned with and assessed against these principles, as depicted in the following Figure 01.
- A strong focus on planning and investment remains on three core focus areas: Active and Healthy, Connectedness and Liveability, unpinned by planning and policy.
- Any sport and active recreation programs, services or facilities instigated by Golden Plains Shire will be assessed against the strategic planning principles.
- Council has a clear mandate to positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community, promote liveability and foster community connectedness by ensuring that there is a diversity of fit-for-purpose, affordable and accessible, formal and informal, recreation opportunities (programs, services and facilities) that encourage participants, local residents and visitors to be physically active.
- The master plan update should aim to ensure that quality recreational facilities are well utilised; designed to adapt to future trends and needs and made accessible to people of all abilities, ages, genders and cultural backgrounds. It should also aim to provide multi-purpose places and spaces that are welcoming, safe, connected, functional and sustainably designed, well maintained and cost effective to develop and operate.

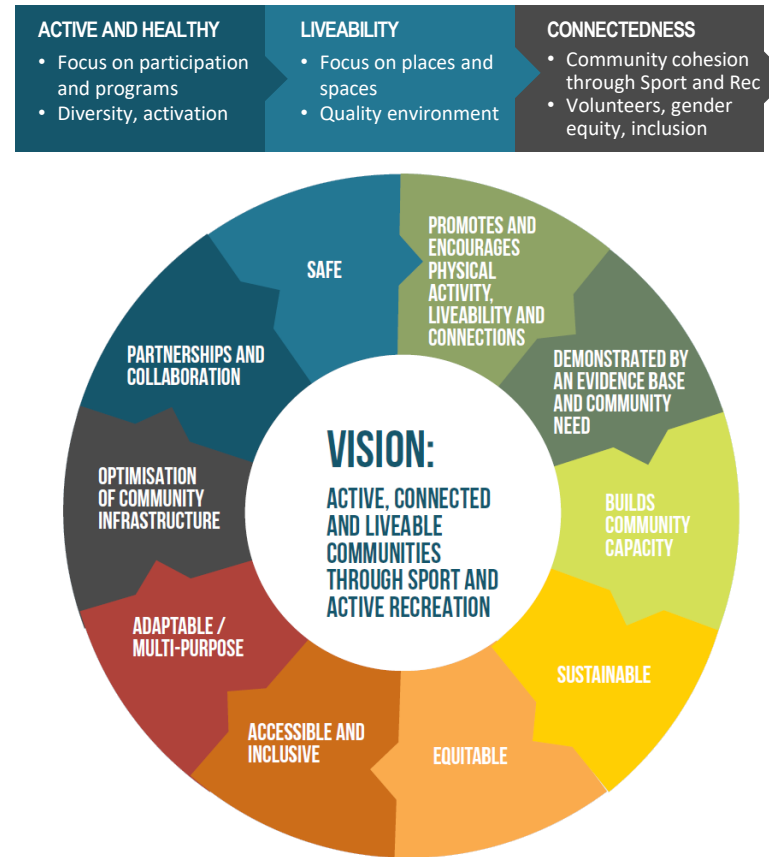


FIGURE 01: Golden Plains Shire Active Recreation Pillars and Principles

COUNCIL'S VISION AND PLAN

The master plan update should aim to achieve Council's 2040 Vision of, 'A healthy, safe, vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community supported by strong leadership, transparent governance and community partnerships', and mission outlined in the Council Plan (2021-2025), through:

- Demonstrating good governance and involving the community in decision-making.
- Working and advocating in partnership with our community to address social, economic and environmental challenges.
- Promoting gender equality and equity and inclusion for all.
- Sustaining a focus on long-term outcomes and delivering increased public value through good decision-making and strategic spending, and
- Building awareness and strategic alliances with government, regional groups and the community.

It will be important to ensure that the master plan update is based on an understanding of how residents, students, clubs and groups use and interact in the Reserve.

Relevant issues and priorities identified by the community, through the Council Plan engagement in 2021, should also be considered including a focus on:

- Safety
- Community events and activities to encourage health and wellbeing
- Supporting and connecting community and community groups.

- Access to active and passive recreation, footpaths, walking and bike tracks, and community buildings / facilities that support health and wellbeing, and
- Environment and bushland management including the protection of native vegetation, cultural heritage and eco systems.

MUNICIPAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The master plan update should aim to implement the key strategies of the Public Health and Well-being Plan (2021-2025), with a commitment to work in a collaborative and coordinated way to create supportive, inclusive and empowering environments that enable all of community to achieve optimal health and wellbeing outcomes.

Acknowledging the broader Victorian and regional context for community health and wellbeing planning, Golden Plains will take the following approaches to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for all residents including, place-based approaches and local solutions, sustainable progress, and increasing access.

Priority areas of focus include:

- Improving mental wellbeing
- Increasing active living
- Preventing family violence and advancing gender equity
- Increasing healthy eating, and
- Tackling climate change and its impact on health.

The master plan update should recognise how the places where people live, learn, work and play have an important role in shaping community health and wellbeing, social connectedness and in delivering local solutions to local challenges.

Facilitating increased and equitable access to local places and spaces and increasing recreation participation opportunities at the Reserve, particularly for older adults, children, youth and women will be important.

There is also an opportunity to improve the physical accessibility and a sense of safety of all facilities and areas of the Reserve that are used by the public.

OPEN SPACE STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

The master plan update should be consistent with the principles and directions outlined in the various Recreation, Open Space, and Paths and Trails strategies, and aim to achieve their objectives and recommendations. This means:

- A greater focus on high quality open space,
- Adequate resources allocated for the maintenance of open space areas,
- More shade and shelter in open space areas,
- Optimal use of open space areas,
- New and larger change facilities, and
- Improved lighting and improved connections between areas.

ASSET MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

A visual inspection of the site was conducted in 2021 in context of recent developments and other site assessments including information provided in the Preliminary Land Capability Assessment for Development Feasibility Study (August 2020). The recommendations of the various condition audits relating to the playing field, pavilion, tennis courts, new toilet block and playground at the Reserve were also reviewed and tested.

While many of the issues identified in 2015 remained relevant in 2021 some key improvements had been made, or are underway, at the Reserve, notably; renewal of the 4 acrylic hardcourt tennis courts, new public toilet block, a sealed car park in the front of the hall, centre wicket improvements (due 2021/22), wetland boardwalk improvements, and a major play space redevelopment (2022). The new and significant \$550,000 play space project delivers a new playground, fitness equipment for adults, new barbeque and picnic facilities, and expanded walking trails at the Reserve.

Despite these improvements the overall condition, functionality and appearance of the building and playing field is still not fit-for-purpose. The master plan update should take into consideration the findings and recommendations of the 2021 site inspection findings – See Section 1 for a site analysis summary.

A review of asset maintenance programs suggest that interventions can be ad-hoc and reactive in nature. Council's current approach to asset management and maintenance requires greater clarity and could benefit from a long-term strategic plan to support the provision, development, management, use and subsidy of sporting facilities, open space, and paths and trails.

The master plan update should consider some 'soft infrastructure' recommendations to support the delivery and outcomes of the 'hard infrastructure' recommendations. For example, include an asset management plan be developed for Ross Creek Recreation Reserve in line with the Golden Plains Asset Management Improvement Strategy 2010-2030, a Reserve Management Plan for the Ross Creek Nature Reserve and other related facility provision, service standards and management arrangements.

CURRENT USAGE, MANAGEMENT AND OCCUPANCY ARRANGEMENTS

The playing field, outdoor tennis courts, pavilion and community hall at the Reserve are used by the Ross Creek Tennis Club (every second Saturday and training weekdays), Ballarat Fire Brigade Cricket Club (40 players across 5 sides), Woody Yaloak Primary School (161 students on weekdays), Ross Creek Landcare Group and various community groups.

The facilities are used for many community functions, meetings and events and is regularly booked for weekly programs such as Cardio Drumming, Cardio Tennis, Box'a'Size class, yoga / pilates, in addition to other school-led activities and the occasional car boot sale.

The Reserve is managed by a Committee of Management (COM) appointed by Council and are delegated to directly manage the facility on behalf of Council. The COM has approximately 10-12 members represented by the various user clubs and groups with the exception of the school which is treated through a separate Joint Use Agreement (JUA). The role, powers and functions of the COM are outlined in an Instrument of Delegation (IOD).

The COM and Council share maintenance responsibilities for the Reserve. At present, the COM manages all aspects of the development and operation of the Reserve, except for some maintenance and capital development functions. The COM is responsible for managing the bookings and the day-to-day use of the Reserve, setting and collecting fees, and liaising with the user clubs, groups and Council.

Council's responsibilities include major structural building maintenance; fire prevention mowing; fire services; carpark and access road maintenance, playground maintenance; mowing of the oval; seasonal oval renovations; stormwater drain maintenance and waste management collection.

At present the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve COM are an organised and well functioning committee with general alignment between representatives. However, it is important to note that the composition of the Committee of Management and the roles and responsibilities of the committee and Council can vary from time to time and Council is planning a review into the management of, and maintenance arrangements for its recreation facilities in the future. This review may have recommendations relating to the way the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve is managed into the future.

Where appropriate, Council should continue to collaborate on options for shared access of under-utilised venues including Ross Creek Recreation Reserve, that could support increased oval and tennis court demands (this includes across municipal boundaries).

CRICKET

While Golden Plains Shire is recognised as part of the G21 and Cricket Victoria Barwon Region for its infrastructure and other related planning, the Ballarat Fire Brigade Cricket Club (BFBCC) predominantly participate Ballarat Cricket Association, a competition outside of this technical geographic region, in the Central Highlands Cricket Region.

Due to its geographical location, the reserve is not recognised as part of the Central Highlands Region in its infrastructure planning or represented in the strategic planning completed for the Barwon Cricket Region, however the facility audits and some of the strategic priorities identified did include, and are relevant to, the reserve.

The G21 and Cricket Victoria Barwon Regional Cricket Strategy (2019) will guide the development of cricket across the Barwon Region to 2028.

The Strategy focuses on both the built 'on-field' elements of the game (facilities and infrastructure) as well as the equally important 'off-field' factors including sport development, increasing participation levels, policy and planning, partnerships and the overarching governance and management of cricket across the Region.

The strategy also encourages collaboration and joint opportunities for cricket and winter sports and activity to improve inclusive off-field player, umpire and spectator amenities, and working collectively to increase provision levels of unisex change room areas, supporting amenities and more inclusive social spaces.

The following five strategic objectives have been identified in the strategy by regional partners and stakeholders.

1. Governance and Cricket activity Management - Develop an aligned and collaborative structure to manage cricket
2. Participation Growth - Grow cricket, its range of activities, club capacity and profile across the Barwon region
3. Facility Provision, Capacity and Renewal - Maximise the capacity and activation of existing sites and align new facilities with future need and demand
4. Regional Cricket and Community Centre - Deliver and activate a Regional Cricket and Community Centre at Kardinia Park
5. Resourcing and Partnerships - Secure stakeholder support for strategy implementation

The strategy classifies the Ross Recreation Reserve as a local club level facility and the master plan update should be guided by Cricket Australia's Facility Guidelines (2016).

The Strategy identified some critical priorities including; supporting cricket clubs to develop individual facility renewal and improvement programs and prioritising facility upgrades at those venues not currently meeting recommended provision levels, or at sites with identified and potential female participation growth, and those that deliver diversity and inclusion outcomes.

Replacing existing synthetic wickets in accordance with new guidelines (now 25m+ x 2.4m+), is considered a high priority.

The Victorian Cricket Infrastructure Strategy (2018) outlines a number of key facility challenges that have been identified as having the greatest impact on cricket infrastructure over the next 10 years, notably;

- Female friendly and inclusive facility design,
- Training net design, renewal and condition,
- On and off-field facility and Supporting infrastructure quality and condition (e.g. change rooms and playing surface),
- Synthetic centre pitch dimensions,
- Travel accessibility,
- Population and participation challenges,
- Seasonal creep, and
- Matching facilities with club needs.

The master plan update should consider these challenges for the Reserve.

With minimal population growth forecast for most of the Central Highlands Region's Council areas (in some instances population decline), demand for additional facilities across the Region will likely be heightened in and around the township of Ballarat and to a lesser extent the Shires of Moorabool and Macedon Ranges.

In areas of forecast population decline (or minimal growth), it will be important for local clubs, associations and government to work collectively and in partnership with Cricket Victoria to prioritise facility renewal and upgrade projects (as opposed to the development of new infrastructure) that provide maximum community benefit (not just for cricket).

CRICKET Cont.

Six strategic infrastructure priorities were identified to address these issues across the region.

1. Deliver and activate a regional level Cricket and Community Centre to extend cricket service provision across the Region
2. Increase the provision of unisex change room areas, supporting amenities and more inclusive social spaces.
3. Utilise facility and participation data to prioritise development of synthetic practice facilities.
4. Assess the suitability and current balance of synthetic and turf cricket pitches in-line with future demand, competition structure and financial capacity of tenant club/facility owners and in consultation with key stakeholders.
5. In areas of forecast population decline, prioritise facility renewal and upgrade projects to ensure future club and facility sustainability.

Of the big '6' Infrastructure priorities identified for the region the following three are relevant to the Ross Creek Reserve:

- Increase provision of inclusive facilities with a focus on female friendly design
- Improve condition of synthetic training net practice facilities, and
- Prioritise infrastructure development and renewal in alignment with population change.

FOOTBALL

Australian Rules Football is not currently played at Ross Creek Recreation Reserve, however the field size, location and proximity to the school lends itself to the development of football as a sports offering and should be considered in the provision of any future development of any facilities or infrastructure.

At present the 'on-field' and 'off-field' facilities are suitable for Auskick but not fit-for-purpose for higher levels of training and competition.

The G21 and AFL Barwon Towards 2030 Strategy (2021) aims to provide a roadmap to the continued enhancement of facility provision and participation, as well as an updated strategic framework that guides all project partners in collaboration.

The following six strategic objectives have been identified in the strategy by regional partners and stakeholders.

1. Continue to enhance the relationship between football and netball, government and community partners in the planning and investment of facilities.
2. Increase the quality, functionality, capacity and sustainability of existing facilities.
3. Ensure facilities cater for the diversity of participants playing across the G21 Region.
4. Support the capacity building and education of clubs and people.
5. Plan and develop facilities in growth and priority areas across the G21 Region.
6. Identify the location, role and function of regional level facilities and a secure a long-term plan for the Regional Administration Centre.

The regional strategy classifies the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve as a local facility.

Continuing to provide gender neutral amenities and increasing the capacity of existing facilities to cater for potential participation growth and future demand is critical. At present the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve does not provide female friendly or gender-neutral facilities and the current change facilities may be impacting the venues' ability to function as a location for Australian Rules Football.

The master plan update should consider the Victorian Government Female Friendly Sports Infrastructure Guidelines (2017), as it provides guidance on making sports facilities female friendly and suitable for use by all.

The AFL Preferred Facility Guidelines (2019) were developed after the completion of the initial G21 Strategy and revisited in 2019, the AFL Preferred Facility Guidelines outline the preferred facility requirements for venues which are utilised for AFL training and competition.

The guidelines are to be used as a key tool during the planning phase of a project to identify the spatial requirements for facilities to support male and female teams, umpires, officials and the broader AFL community. The guidelines also provide recommendations for the specification of supporting infrastructure such as floodlights and spectator amenities. The master plan update should consider the AFL's Preferred Facility Guidelines (2019) commensurate with a local level facility.

TENNIS

A commitment to an ongoing capital renewal program will be essential to support the sustainability and growth of tennis in Ross Creek and all infrastructure improvements should be in line with the Tennis Australia – Tennis Infrastructure Planning, Design and Delivery Resource (2018) and other relevant tennis facility technical standards and guidelines.

The G21 Regional Tennis Strategy (2015) was developed to provide guidance on the development of tennis across the G21 region. The strategy focuses on supporting clubs, increasing opportunities for participation and improving facilities.

The following five strategic objectives have been adopted by regional partners and stakeholders:

1. Develop an aligned and collaborative structure to deliver tennis.
2. Grow tennis, its range of activities and its year-round appeal.
3. Reposition the tennis facility mix to align with future need and demand.
4. Support clubs and venues to grow their capacity and improvement management and operations, and
5. Promote tennis and provide resources (human and financial) to support change.

The regional strategy recognises the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve as a Local Level tennis facility now and into the future. A standard local level facility generally serves an individual township (5km or up to 15 minutes travel) and has an estimated capacity of 100 - 200 active participants.

The desired number of tennis courts for a local facility is 4 (preferred surface type is acrylic hard court or synthetic grass), supported by a clubhouse with toilets, kiosk and a minimum of 50% of courts floodlit.

The strategy's audit identified the need for some infrastructure renewal works including some repairs of the court surfaces, nets and posts, and a focus on ongoing maintenance. It recognised that these courts should be retained for club use and public access.

The master plan update should consider the Tennis Australia – Tennis Infrastructure Planning, Design and Delivery Resource (2018) and standards commensurate with a local level facility.

ROSS CREEK NATURE RESERVE

The Ross Creek Nature Reserve to the north of the primary master plan area has significant values within the community and the landscape provides a refuge for native plants and animals although, it is not subject to a Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO).

The Nature Reserve and creek area is supported by a small dedicated group of Landcare people who consistently maintain and improve the nature reserve. The Ross Creek Nature Reserve does not formally have a Reserve Management Plan that generally guides Council's management of reserves with natural environment, heritage or passive recreation values.

The Nature Reserve is the ultimate the responsibility of Council. The master plan update should ensure the protection of the Nature Reserve in its recommendations.

It is the largest nature reserve in Ross Creek and is located just behind the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve and it is both a minor woodland and a grassland with its native grasslands, widely spaced tall trees, small trees and shrubs creating an open park-like setting.

Apart from its visual amenity, it contains formal recreational facilities for active sports as well as passive recreation opportunities including walking and nature study. It also provides a refuge for native plants and animals.

The addition of the boardwalk in the nature reserve and creek area adds an extra perspective to a very pleasant walk and the walking tracks offer the chance for the community to experience nature.

OTHER ACTIVITIES AND USES

Although this area is predominantly used for local level community sport, it is also used by local residents and students for informal play, community and social events and passive activities like walking for pleasure.

The Hall is used for Cardio Drumming and box'a size class once a week, regular community meetings and car-boot sales are also held at the site.

With 161 students in 2021, the Woody Yaloak Primary School is a regular user of the site for school activities and by the local community.

ZONING AND PERMITTED USES

Ross Creek Recreation Reserve and associated nature reserve are subject to the requirements of the Golden Plains Shire Planning Scheme.

The purpose of the Planning Scheme is to implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework. The Planning Scheme also outlines the zones and associated controls for each parcel of land.

The Ross Creek Recreation Reserve is zoned TZ – Township Zone. This means that the land is designated as a township area with the purpose of; implementing the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework, provide for residential development and a range of commercial, industrial and other uses related to small towns, encourage development that respects the neighbourhood character of the area and allow for educational, recreational, religious, community and a limited range of other non-residential uses to serve local community needs in appropriate locations.

A schedule to this zone may contain neighbourhood character objectives to be achieved for the area.

Clause 32.05 Section 1 of the Planning Scheme outlines the Table of Uses for the Reserve that do not require a permit including, but not limited to, bed and breakfast, community care accommodation, Dependent person's unit, dwelling, home based business, informal outdoor recreation, medical centre, place of worship, domestic animal or racing dog husbandry, railway, residential aged care facility, rooming house, or tramway.

Clause 32.05 Section 3 outlines the uses that require a permit, including but not limited to, leisure and recreation (other than Informal outdoor recreation and motor racing track), accommodation (other than community care accommodation, dependent person's unit, dwelling, residential aged care facility and Rooming house), agriculture (other than Animal production, apiculture, domestic animal husbandry and racing dog husbandry), office (other than Medical centre), place of assembly (other than carnival, circus and place of worship), dependent person's unit - if the Section 1 condition is not met, grazing animal production, industry (other than transfer station and refuse disposal), retail premises (other than Adult sex product shop), transfer station, utility installation (other than minor utility installation and telecommunications facility) and warehouse.

Clause 32.05 Section 3 outlines the prohibited uses including, but not limited to, an adult sex product shop, animal production (other than Grazing animal production), brothel, dwelling – if the Section 1 condition is not met, extractive industry, motor racing track, refuse disposal or saleyard. All other uses require a permit.

The master plan update should assume that a permit will be required in relation to any proposed works or improvements in association with formal sport, leisure or recreation.

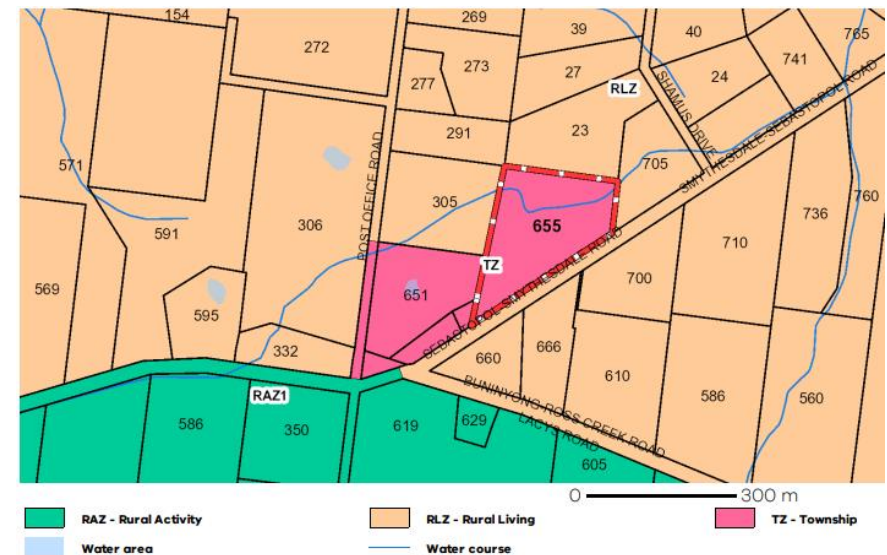


FIGURE 03: Golden Plains Shire Planning Scheme – Ross Creek Recreation Reserve (TZ - Township Zone)

PLANNING OVERLAYS

The Ross Creek Recreation Reserve (the Reserve) is partially subject to a Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) (refer Figure 04) and is in a designated bushfire prone area. Special bushfire construction requirements and protection standards apply through the Building Code of Australia, and planning provisions will likely be required to obtain a planning permit to complete the desired improvements at the Reserve.

The purpose of the Bush Fire Management Overlay is to ensure that the development of land prioritises the protection of human life and strengthens community resilience to bushfire, to identify areas where the bushfire hazard warrants bushfire protection measures to be implemented, and to ensure development is only permitted where the risk to life and property from bushfire can be reduced to an acceptable level.

A permit is required to subdivide the land and for building works related to the building or construction or carry out of works associated with a range of uses including, those relevant to the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve being for sport, leisure and recreation, an office and/or a place of assembly.

The site is also subject to a Salinity Management Overlay (SMO) and the purpose of the overlay is to; identify areas subject to saline ground water discharge or high ground water recharge, facilitate the stabilisation of areas affected by salinity, encourage revegetation of areas which contribute to salinity, encourage development to be undertaken in a manner which brings about a reduction in salinity recharge,

- ensure development is compatible with site capability and the retention of vegetation and complies with the objectives of any salinity management plan for the area and prevent damage to buildings and infrastructure from saline discharge and high water table.

A permit is required to construct a building or construct or carry out works. This does not apply:

- If a schedule to this overlay specifically states that a permit is not required.
- To salinity management works carried out in accordance with any Regional Catchment Strategy and associated plan applying to the land.
- To an alteration to an existing building where there is no increase in floor area and no increase in waste water disposal. This exemption does not apply to alterations required as part of remedial works for salt or high water table damage.
- To a building used for agriculture with a floor area of less than 100 square metres where there is no increase in waste water disposal.

Some exclusions apply in relation to emergency management, safety, fire protection, some exploration activities and other requirements outlined the planning scheme.

Other overlays that may directly affect this land are:

- Design and Development Overlay (DDO), and
- Native plants that are indigenous to the region and important for biodiversity might be present on this property and may need to obtain a planning permit under Clause 52.17 of the local planning scheme.

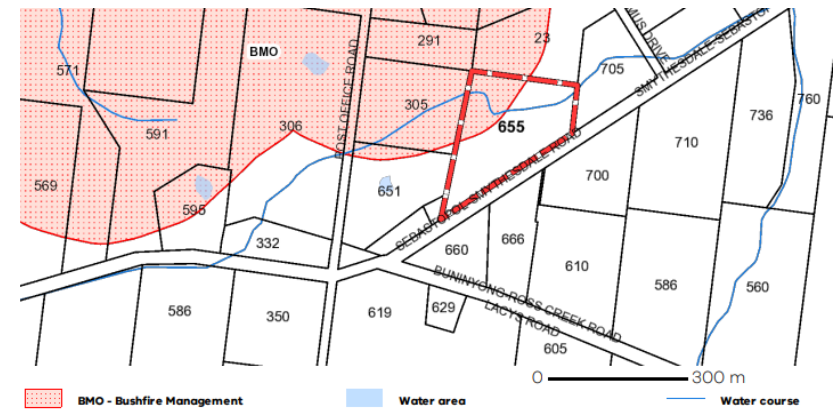


FIGURE 04: Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO)

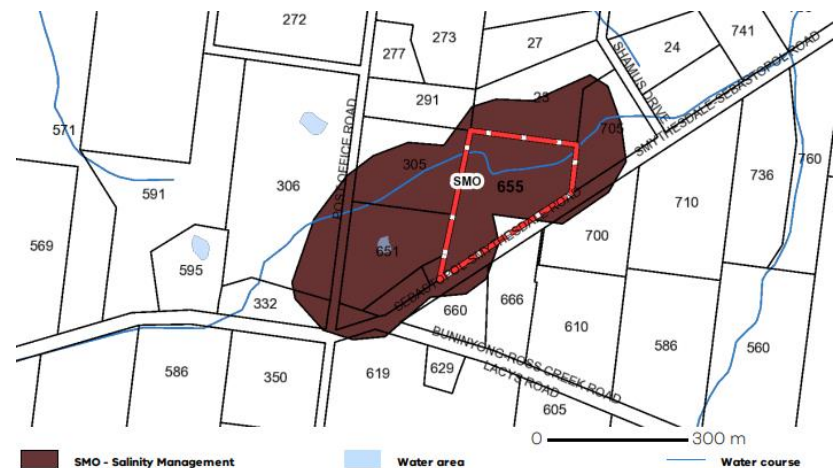


FIGURE 05: Salinity Management Overlay (SMO)

3

Participation + Demand Context

Leisure and Recreation Trends

PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVE SPORT AND RECREATION

Participation in sport and recreation is changing and the way in which people are choosing activities, the time they spend being active and the various life stages also play a part in local participation trends. In addition, the impact and recovery from the Covid-19 global pandemic, has changed the way we look at sport and recreation and has emphasised the importance of outdoor sport and physical activity to the community.

Data contained within the Victorian Population Health Survey (2017) states that Golden Plains Shire Council is currently the 4th most active municipality in the state, with 58.6% of adults meeting the Australian Physical Activity Guidelines (compared with only 50.9% of Victorians).

One third of the community (33.7%) did not undertake sufficient physical activity levels to achieve health benefits (compared with 44.1% of Victorians).

The following summarises the key findings and insights from the 5th year of the VicHealth and Sport and Recreation Victoria's joint research project into organised community sport participation in Victoria in 2019.

The report covers 10 popular sports and provides comparison in participation across age, sex and region in 2019 compared to 2015.

In 2019, the research found that:

- There is considerable variation in overall participation rates in these sports across local government areas.

- Within the regional LGAs, there was generally a higher participation in the north-west and south-west compared to the eastern regions of Victoria.
- Over half of all sport participants are aged between 4–14 years. Sport participation is highest among children and adolescents aged 10–14 years (64%) and drops significantly during late adolescence, 10–19 years (32%).
- Sport participation is higher for males (17%) than females (10%).
- Sport participation rates are higher in regional Victoria (17%) compared to metropolitan Melbourne (12%). Regional-growth areas (16%) have slightly lower sport participation compared to other regional areas (18%). Golden Plains Shire recorded (17%) by comparison.
- Between 2015 and 2019 participation in sport increased by more than 119,000 participants in Victoria (0.8% increase in the participation rate). The participation increase was over twice as high for females (1.1% increase) than males (0.5% increase).
- The largest growth in participation rates 2015–2019 were within the 4-year-old age group (4%) followed by the 15–19-year age group (3%). The growth in participation was largely due to an increase in female participation rates.
- Female participation rates grew across all age groups, however male participation rates declined for those aged 5–14 years. For females, the largest growth was for 4-year-olds (7%), followed by 5–9-year-olds (5%), and 10–14-year-olds (4%).

- For males, the largest growth was for 15–19-year-olds (3%), followed by 35–39-year-olds (2%), and 25–29-year-olds (1%). Male participation declined for 5–9-year-olds (-4%) and 10–14-year-olds (-1%).

In a community survey undertaken as part of the Active Sport and Recreation Strategy in 2019, Golden Plains Shire respondents showed a similar pattern to Victorian trend data in relation to having an increased likelihood of engaging in informal and individual physical activities as opposed to organised sporting activities. This trend highlights the need to consider both active recreation activities alongside structured sporting opportunities in the master plan update.

Children's (5 – 14 years) survey responses were opposite to those received from adult (15+ years) survey respondents. Whilst the emphasis for adults is predominantly on individual non-structured activities, children tended to be more interested in playing organised sports and taking part in other active recreation activities such as dance (noting that the children's survey specifically focussed on organised sport outside of school hours, so it is not possible to ascertain the popularity of unstructured activities for this age group).

Refer to Table 02 and Table 03 on the following page for the Top 10 Sport and Recreation Activities for Adults (15+ years) and Children (0-14 years), related to Golden Plains Shire compared with Victorian participation rates and rankings (2019).

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND RECREATION PARTICIPATION RATES

Golden Plains Shire identified the following 10 most popular activities for adults and children through the community survey undertaken as part of the Active Sport and Recreation Strategy (2019), (note that the survey respondents may not be a representative sample of the community as their participation in the survey was voluntary with 286 adult respondents and 65 young people in primary schools).

For context the data and relative ranking has been compared to Victorian physical activity participation rates for adults and children using Ausplay data, the top 10 participation activities for adults and the top 10 participation activities for children in Victoria in between July 2018 and June 2019.

GPS RANKED HIGHER THAN VIC —
GPS RANKED LOWER THAN VIC —

TABLE 02 | ADULT PARTICIPATION (15+ YEARS) – TOP 10 ACTIVITIES

Golden Plains Shire <i>Council Survey (2019) n=286</i>		Rate (%)	Victoria <i>Ausplay (2019)</i>		Rate (%)
①	Gardening	68%	①	Walking (Recreational)	45.0%
②	Walking	66%	②	Fitness / Gym	37.5%
③	Bushwalking / hiking	49%	③	Athletics, track and field (includes jogging and running)	16.4%
④	Swimming / diving	46%	④	Swimming	14.5%
⑤	Aerobics / exercise class	45%	⑤	Cycling	13.2%
⑥	Cycling - on-road / rail trails / shared paths	41%	⑥	Basketball	5.9%
⑦	Gym / personal trainer	43%	⑦	Yoga	5.4%
⑧	Running / jogging	36%	⑧	Golf	5.2%
⑨	Fishing	27%	⑨	Bushwalking	5.1%
⑩	Yoga / Pilates	27%	⑩	Australian Rules Football	4.7%

TABLE 03 | CHILDREN PARTICIPATION (0 - 14 YEARS) – TOP 10 ACTIVITIES

Golden Plains Shire <i>Council Survey (2019) n=65</i>		Rate (%)	Victoria <i>Ausplay (2019)</i>		Rate (%)
①	Australian Rules Football	29%	①	Swimming	42.0%
②	Swimming	25%	②	Australian Rules Football	16.0%
③	Cricket	12%	③	Gymnastics	11.9%
④	Netball	12%	④	Basketball	11.8%
⑤	Athletics	11%	⑤	Dancing (Recreational)	11.3%
⑥	Dance	11%	⑥	Football / Soccer	11.2%
⑦	Basketball	9%	⑦	Tennis	8.10%
⑧	Tennis	9%	⑧	Cricket	6.5%
⑨	Boxing	6%	⑨	Netball	5.9%
⑩	Football / Soccer	6%	⑩	Karate	4.2%

LOCAL TRENDS AND CONSIDERATIONS

The master plan update should consider the following leisure and recreation trends and considerations as they relate to the future development and use of the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve.

- More people are choosing to recreate in informal and unstructured ways. As a consequence, activities such as recreational walking, hiking, cycling and jogging in parks for exercise and pleasure are becoming more prevalent.
- The popularity of activities that families can participate in together such as bushwalking, trail walking, picnicking and similar outdoor activities continues to grow and an intergenerational approach to facility design and development will be required.
- Generally, adults are remaining healthier and more physically active until later in life. This is leading to increased participation in adult and veteran’s sports and more frequent use of open space areas by older adults and ‘active agers’, for walking, relaxation and other social activities.
- The continued focus on increasing female participation in sport and recreation has seen and significant growth in numbers of women and girls, however accommodating the growth in female participation has challenged some local governments and clubs in relation to capacity of infrastructure and volunteers.
- The impact of the global pandemic in 2020 through to 2021 and beyond, has emphasised the importance of outdoor sport and recreation opportunities and the criticality of public parks and active sporting reserves.
- While the impact of the Covid-19 global pandemic on organised sport is yet to be fully understood, anecdotally, the competitions, clubs and their members are beginning to return in healthy numbers.
- Cricket participation is diversifying and the market for participants is changing. The Barwon Cricket Region and the Central Highlands Cricket Region are not currently keeping pace with this change and greater focus is required on maintaining, growing and implementing new junior formats to slow recent declines and providing an increased focus on female cricket overall. While some clubs have shown recent growth, an equal amount have experienced a decline in participants. Coordinated efforts in growing player, umpire and coaching numbers is also required, as is the sustained and continued focus on growing participation through the school network. This is particularly important in the Region’s new growth areas.
- Like many sports, the majority of AFL and Cricket Victoria’s club and community participant base is aged between 10-24 years. This trend is consistent across the local cricket regions.
- Pre-pandemic, participation in Australian Rules Football across Victoria and the region was increasing, particularly in junior levels. Female teams, Auskick and AFL 9s are the fastest growing forms of the game. In 2019, AFL Barwon reported 824 players in Golden Plains a 43% increase from 2015 (576 players). 14% were female. *Numbers do not include clubs playing in AFL Goldfields competition.
- The BFBCC (Ballarat Fire Brigade Cricket Club) field three sides in the Ballarat Cricket Association in 2021/22. Two sides in 4th 11 and one side in 5th 11 competition with a total of approximately 40 players. No junior participation associated with the club.
- The Ross Creek Tennis Club play in the Buninyong and District Tennis Association. In general, competition tennis has maintained it’s participation and popularity throughout the pandemic with tennis played at the facility every second weekend, training throughout the week and regular casual usage by residents and students. Tennis remains a key participation opportunity across the various life-stages and the club has maintained a healthy participant base throughout the global pandemic.



ROSS CREEK TENNIS CLUB:
50+ PARTICIPANTS



BALLARAT FIRE BRIGADE
CRICKET CLUB: 40 PARTICIPANTS

POPULATION AND PROVISION

ROSS CREEK AND DISTRICT

For the purpose of this assessment, the catchment area served by the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve is the Haddon – Smythesdale and District statistical area.

Haddon - Smythesdale and District is a predominantly rural area that is bounded by the City of Ballarat to the north, Colac-Ballarat Road and the Yarrowee River in the east, the locality of Napoleons, Sobeyes Road, Natrass Road, Stonier Road, Morris Road and the locality of Scarsdale in the south, and Hillcrest Road and Pyrenees Shire in the west. It includes the localities of Cambrian Hill, Haddon, Nintingbool and Ross Creek, and the Golden Plains Shire parts of the localities of Smythes Creek and Smythesdale.

The Census usual resident population of Haddon - Smythesdale and District in 2016 was 4,951, living in 1,809 dwellings with an average household size of 2.9 people (compared with 2.36 in Regional VIC).

There were 571 (11.5%) people over the age of 65 living in Haddon - Smythesdale and District in 2016, with the largest age group being children 0 – 19-year-olds (30.6%) and 45 – 64-year-olds (30.1%), followed by 20 – 44-year-olds (27.8%).

In 2016, only 7.5% of people in Haddon - Smythesdale and District were born overseas, compared with 11.0% in Regional VIC. There was a larger proportion of high-income households earning a high income of \$2500 or more per week (16.8% compared with 12.5% Regional Vic) and a lower proportion of low-income households earning less than \$650 per week (12% compared with 22.9% for Regional VIC).

GROWTH DRIVING DEMAND AND PROVISION

By 2041, the population of Haddon - Smythesdale and District area is expected to reach 6,758 people, an increase of 36%. The age structure forecasts for the district also indicate a 7.4% increase in population under working age, a 47.6% increase in population of retirement age, and a 7.8% increase in population of working age. This trend and the addition of just over 1,800 new residents will likely require an increased level of standard provision of both passive and active recreation opportunities to support the population.

Infrastructure, participant and population provision ratios provide a general guide to the average number of facilities required within a specific geographic area. While ratios can be influenced by a range of factors (including planning policies, facility quality, supporting amenities and user activities) they do provide a general comparative guide to provision and usage levels, and highlight potential areas for more detailed investigation.

There are approximately 11 tennis courts and 3 sports ovals servicing the Haddon - Smythesdale and District area. Using tennis industry benchmark provision ratios of 1 tennis court to 1,500 head-of-population, the Haddon - Smythesdale and District area is well catered for with 1 tennis court for every 450 people. By 2041, the ratio will reach 1 tennis court to 614 people, still higher provision than the standard.

Most courts are reported to be in average condition except for Ross Creek Recreation Reserve where the courts are in good condition.

The master plan update should consider improving the carrying capacity of the 4 courts at Ross Creek through the provision of sports lighting to support training and competition.

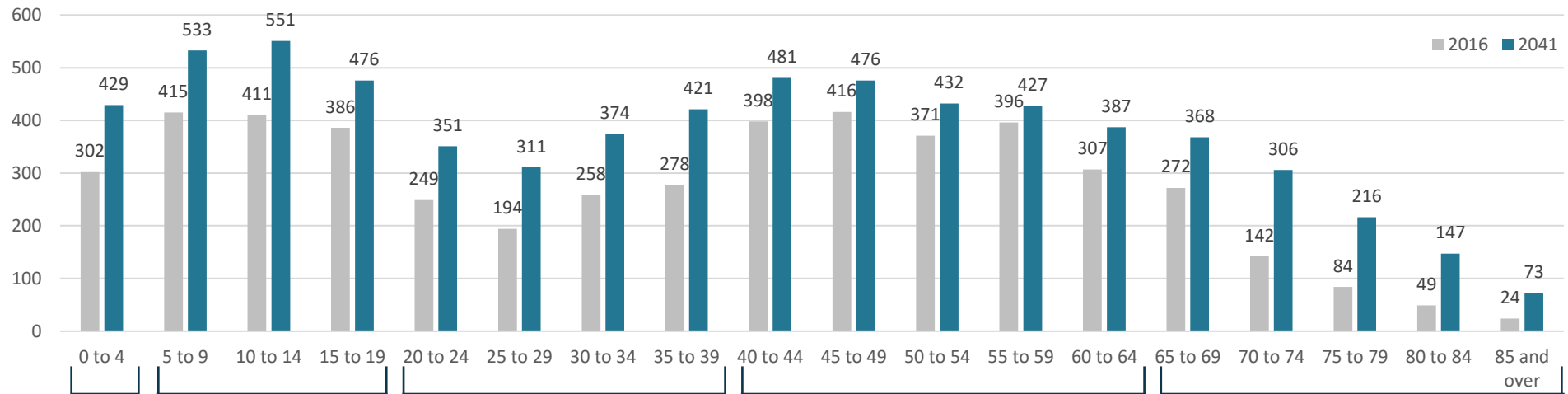
The industry benchmark provision ratios for sports ovals (AFL and Cricket) is 1 sports oval to 3,500 head-of-population, meaning that the population is well catered for in relation to the number of ovals provided with 1 sports oval for every 1,650 people. By 2041, the ratio will reach 1 sports oval to 2,253 people, still well within the standard.

Despite the number of ovals provided for the area their condition and carrying capacity could be significantly improved. The master plan update should consider improving ground cover, providing irrigation and drainage and installing sports lighting and supporting infrastructure where possible.

The lack of provision for other outdoor sports and activities such as football, soccer, netball / basketball and/or multiuse sports courts, should also be considered in the master plan update.

**Source: Population and household forecasts, 2016 to 2041, prepared by .id (informed decisions), November 2021.*

TABLE 04 | POPULATION FORECAST (2016 – 2041) – HADDON - SMYTHESDALE AND DISTRICT



The young children (0-4) age cohort will increase by between 42% (+127) 2041. Maintaining access to quality play spaces as children grow will be important.

The population size of the sub-junior sport (5-9) and junior competitive sport (10-19) age cohorts will increase by between 28% (+118) and 29% (+231) respectively by 2041. This is likely to translate into an increase in demand for active sport and recreation facilities and activities, in addition to a variety of age-appropriate play spaces / informal recreation spaces.

The population size of the senior competitive sport (20 - 39) age cohort will increase by between 49% (+477) by 2041. This is the largest area of growth for the district and will likely to translate into an increase in demand for active sport and recreation facilities and activities.

The population size of the middle to late adult (40 - 64) age cohort will increase by 16.7% (+315) by 2041. This is likely to translate into an increase in demand general informal passive and active outdoor recreation activities including trails, walking tracks and some social sports.

The population size of the older adult and active ager cohorts will increase by 94% (+538) by 2041. This is likely to increase demand for passive recreational spaces and activities, including picnic spaces, walking paths and seats in active recreation reserves.

NETWORK PROXIMITY AND EMERGING NEEDS

Ross Creek is approximately 70 kilometres (40-minute drive) from the municipality's primary population centre, Bannockburn in the south but is only 14km (16-minute drive) to Ballarat to the north. Both areas are projected to experience significant population growth.

In townships that grow so quickly, it is typical that some existing local sports clubs increase to a size where they cannot take on new players and/or during periods while key infrastructure is being delivered to cater for the increased participation. This may occur in Bannockburn and key townships to the south of Ballarat and may result in residents seeking to join sporting clubs in nearby towns like Ross Creek, Haddon and Smythesdale.

Increasing the functionality and carrying capacity of strategic overflow facilities such as the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve, along with its close links with the local primary school, will be important to supporting the overall network.

Population growth and the participation trends for the sports played at the Reserve (cricket and tennis and potentially football) suggests that demand for the facilities at the Reserve will remain stable and potentially increase over the next 20 years. The criticality of the Reserve and facilities as the only sport and recreation reserve serving the Ross Creek community and surrounds, means that quality and carrying capacity should be improved as a priority.

The master plan update will need to consider opportunities to encourage people to become more physically active so that the community can improve their overall health and wellbeing. An understanding of how participation rates differ can inform local planning for facilities, programs and an overall approach to increasing physical activity.

Providing diverse opportunities that engage the all people across the various life stages, specifically activities for children, young adults and families will be important to improving participation rates and health outcomes.

Also recognising the needs of the ageing cohort of the local community and the growing popularity of activities such as walking for exercise and strolling could increase demand for the passive recreation facilities in Recreation Reserve.

This will heighten the need for improvements to not only the active areas of the reserve but also the passive areas through the improvement of paths and connections, trails, signage and accessible multi-use facilities.

A continued focus on increasing female participation and providing more opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds to play sport, should also be a key consideration. This includes accommodating growth in participation in terms of club capacity of infrastructure and volunteers.

Providing diverse, quality, fit-for-purpose and accessible infrastructure is a critical success factor in improving the health and wellbeing of the community.

It is critical to develop clear policy to guide standard provisions, levels of service, subsidy models and strategic investments. This will also be important when considering and planning for future capital works.

The master plan update will need to reflect the criticality of the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve as the only recreation precinct servicing the Ross Creek community.

The master plan update will benefit from creating spaces that help to increase participation opportunities in a range of different formats including competition and other recreational or social activities to support the various life-stages.



Stakeholder Needs + Preferences

Stakeholder Needs and Preferences

The reserve is home to a range of community groups and clubs, including Ross Creek Tennis Club, Ballarat Fire Brigade Cricket Club, Woody Yaloak Primary School, Ross Creek Landcare Group and various community groups, all of which collectively represent the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve Committee of Management, except for the school.

The Committee of Management are the custodians of the facility and are responsible for its operation and general upkeep. The representative group work well together and have a good understanding of their shared and collective priorities for the Reserve.

The following section outlines the needs, preferences and aspirations for the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve Committee of Management and the school, as they relate to the needs of user groups and stakeholders:

- Safety and access in, and throughout, the Reserve was a high priority. Consider the inclusion of additional car parking with appropriate lighting and vehicle controls especially during school pick up and drop off times.
- Improve the directional and wayfinding signage to the Reserve and within the Reserve.
- Install a digital community notice board for precinct news and events.
- Formalise and create better connection between the Reserve and the school and explore expansion opportunities for the trail into the school area.
- Seal the carpark and entry roads (to assist with safety).
- Redevelop the pavilion / clubhouse or provide a new building to cater for larger change rooms and more contemporary gender-neutral amenities for players and umpires.
- Improve the look and functionality of the social areas including an improved and modern kitchen, kiosk area and improved interface between indoor-outdoor spaces.
- Improve the hall with ceiling insulation, temperature controls, lighting, acoustics and furniture to support events.
- Improve meeting spaces with the installation of technology and other enabling equipment such as better furniture, screens, sound and lighting.
- Explore the possibility to integrate public toilets into the redevelopment or new pavilion.
- Improve the grass cover on the playing field and install an automatic irrigation system as a priority. It is reported that more than 50% of games of cricket have been moved over the previous two seasons, due to poor drainage and the resulting state of the ground
- Erect lighting over the playing field. Recognising that expansion of the playing field may not be possible, improving the functionality and capacity of the Reserve is the preference.
- Erect a fence around the playing field (for cricket) and explore the opportunity to incorporate a walking track around the outside of the field of play.
- Erect coaches' boxes, player shelters and a scoreboard.
- Provide cricket training nets and supporting cricket shed for equipment.
- Erect competition grade lighting over the tennis courts and maintain fencing to a high standard.
- Replace the existing playground and consider adding fitness elements and improve connections and links to these spaces.
- Provide more seating around the Reserve.
- Improve the connection to and quality of the nature reserve and associated trails / walking paths including ongoing resurfacing and weed spraying, specifically a trail to connect:
 - The Reserve to the wetland, and
 - The Reserve to nearby townships (such as Smythesdale) and surrounding areas.
- Explore the integration of sustainability options such as the use of materials and clean energy, and
- Create a Ross Creek Nature Reserve Management Plan.



Master Plan Update

Ross Creek Recreation Reserve Master Plan Update

The Ross Creek Recreation Reserve Master Plan Update 2021 guides the future development and improvement priorities of the Reserve and ensures that the character, functionality and capacity of the Reserve is enhanced.

The updated plan aims to ensure the Reserve provides quality recreational facilities that are well utilised, designed to adapt to future trends and needs and made accessible to people of all abilities, ages, genders and backgrounds. It also aims to provide multi-purpose places and spaces that are welcoming, safe, connected, functional and sustainably designed, well maintained and cost effective to develop and operate.

The vision for the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve builds on the existing uses of the reserve and recognises the criticality of the facility to the Ross Creek community and its important role as the 'Heart of the Ross Creek Community', beyond sport and recreation.

The driving principles have been developed to holistically respond to the issues, opportunities and considerations identified. The principles underpin this master plan update (Figure 06) and were used to guide the recommendations and identify priorities for future investment.

The updated plan responds to stakeholder needs and preferences for key infrastructure while also addressing functional issues within the existing landscape (such as drainage, connections and safe pedestrian and vehicle movement). It has a strong focus on multi-use, shared and fit-for-purpose facilities with enhanced capacity to encourage greater participation, connection and community use of the reserve.

The following section provides:

- High-level visual concept plan illustrating the proposed recommendations and development works identified.
- Prioritised summary of recommendations with stakeholder responsibility and indicative cost, and
- Important implementation and deliverability considerations.

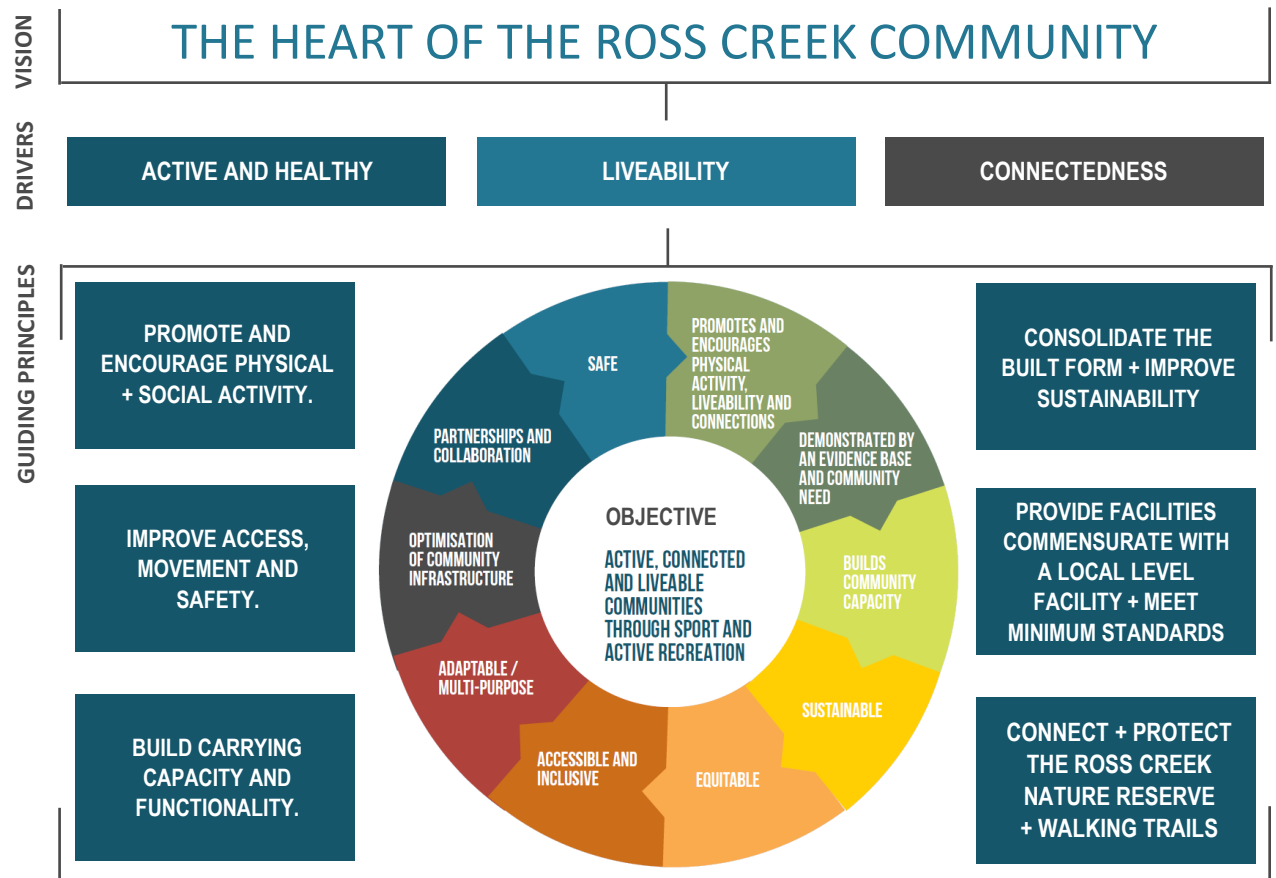
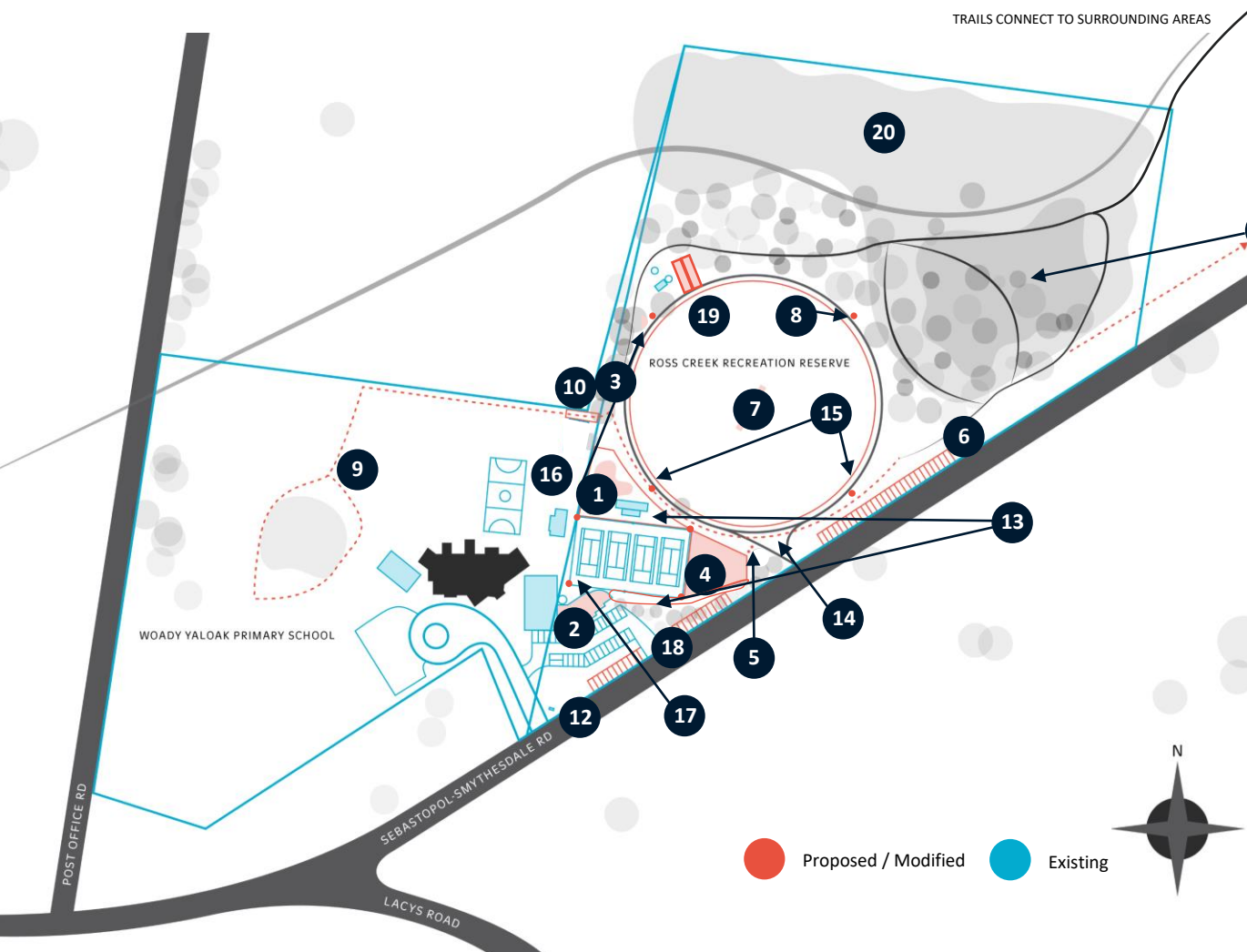


FIGURE 06: Ross Creek Recreation Reserve Master Plan Update – Strategic Framework

ROSS CREEK RECREATION RESERVE MASTER PLAN UPDATE



- 1 Define play space and complete full playground redevelopment. Formalise interface with school at this location and add fitness elements. **COMPLETED**
- 2 Modernise and repurpose existing pavilion (Hall) for community use (incl. new kitchen, beautification works, AV functionality, heating and cooling provision, lighting, acoustics, sustainable energy sources and furniture to support activities and events).
- 3 Consolidate the built form including the removal of the old cricket shelter (replaced see No14).
- 4 Develop fit-for-purpose community sport and recreation pavilion with a priority focus on suitable gender-neutral change facilities integrated with external facing public amenities, kiosk and improved storage.
- 5 Provide collapsible bollards to restrict vehicle access to the pedestrian area (allowing service vehicles and emergency service access when required). **COMPLETED**
- 6 Work with other agencies to establish indented parallel parking bays in the ample road reserve in conjunction with traffic calming measures. Seal car parks and define with line marking and provide appropriate lighting.
- 7 Complete full ground renovation including automatic irrigation system. Allow for a walking path integrated with drainage infrastructure around the oval perimeter to improve pedestrian circulation and allow room for potential future floodlight provision.
- 8 Floodlight field of play (100 lux LED lighting) to support community club competition.
- 9 Extend trail network to create an extended pedestrian loop connecting to existing wetland and trails. Will require collaboration with school.
- 10 Provide access way for service vehicles on external fence line (interface with school / trail loop).
- 11 Improve the connection to, and quality of, the nature reserve and associated trails. Explore future trail connection to surrounding areas, use of public art and solar lighting where appropriate.
- 12 Install traffic calming treatment(s) along Sebastopol-Smythesdale Road to improve safety of vehicles and pedestrians entering and exiting the school and recreation reserve zone.
- 13 Improve the reserve entry and connect the interface areas between the pavilion and playing facilities (e.g. playing field, tennis courts, play space and trails), through improved landscaping and to define / formalise pedestrian only zones. **COMPLETED**
- 14 Improve directional signage to the reserve and wayfinding signage at the reserve for better navigation, compliance and use.
- 15 Provide 2 x player interchange / coaches' boxes with ample shade and a scoreboard.
- 16 Establish a Joint Use Agreement for joint and shared access with the school to the hall, playing field, courts and cricket nets. Will require collaboration with Dept. of Education.
- 17 Floodlight tennis courts (250 lux LED lighting) to support competition.
- 18 Install a digital community notice board for precinct news and events.
- 19 Install synthetic cricket nets (2 lanes).
- 20 Develop Ross Creek Nature Reserve Management Plan.

TABLE 05 | SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

REF	Action	Priority	Responsibility
	<i>All recommendations are subject to further investigation, detailed design, cost planning, relevant allowances, approvals and market conditions.</i>		
1	Define play space and complete full playground redevelopment. Formalise interface with school site at this location. Completed.	HIGH	Council
2	Modernise and repurpose existing pavilion (Hall) for community use (incl. new kitchen, internal and external beautification works, AV functionality, heating and cooling provision, lighting, acoustics and furniture to support activities and events. Consider sustainable energy sources throughout.	HIGH	Council
3	Consolidate the built form including the removal of the old cricket shelter (replaced see No 14).	MED	Council / CoM
4	Develop fit-for-purpose community sport and recreation pavilion with a priority focus on suitable gender-neutral change facilities integrated with external facing public amenities, kiosk and improved storage. *Requires further investigations and design prior to investment.	MED	Council
5	Provide collapsible bollards to restrict vehicle access into the pedestrian only area (allowing service vehicles and emergency service access when required). Completed.	HIGH	Council
6	Work with other agencies to establish indented parallel parking bays in the ample road reserve in conjunction with traffic calming measures. Seal car parks and define with line marking and provide appropriate lighting.	HIGH	Council with other agencies
7	Complete full ground renovation including automatic irrigation system. Provide perimeter fencing and allow for a walking path integrated with drainage infrastructure around the oval perimeter to improve pedestrian circulation and allow room for potential future floodlight provision.	HIGH	Council
8	Floodlight field of play (100 lux LED lighting) to support community club competition.	LOW	Council / CoM
9	Extend trail network to create an extended pedestrian loop connecting to existing wetland & trails. See item 1 & dependent upon agreement with Dept. of Education.	HIGH	Council
10	Provide access way for service vehicles on external fence line (interface with school and future trail loop).	MED	Council
11	Improve the delineation and connection to and quality of the nature reserve and associated trails / walking paths including ongoing resurfacing and weed spraying. Explore potential future trail connection to surrounding areas (e.g. the Reserve to the wetland, to nearby townships (such as Smythesdale) and surrounding areas). Consider the inclusion of public art and solar lighting installations where appropriate.	MED	Council
12	Install traffic calming treatment(s) along Sebastopol- Smythesdale Road to improve safety of vehicles and pedestrians entering and exiting the school and recreation reserve zone.	HIGH	Council with other agencies
13	Improve the reserve entry and connect the interface areas between the pavilion and playing facilities (e.g. playing field, tennis courts, play space and trails), through improved landscaping and to define / formalise pedestrian only zones. Completed.	MED	Council / CoM
14	Improve directional signage to the reserve and wayfinding signage at the reserve for better navigation, compliance and use.	MED	Council
15	Provide 2 x player interchange / coaches' boxes with ample shade and a scoreboard.	LOW	Council / CoM
16	Negotiate a Joint Use Agreement with the Dept. of Education for joint and shared access with the school to the hall, playing field, courts and cricket nets.	HIGH	Council / CoM
17	Floodlight tennis courts (up to 250 lux) to support competition.	HIGH	Council / CoM
18	Install a digital community notice board for precinct news and events.	LOW	CoM
19	Install synthetic cricket nets (min 2 lane).	LOW	Council / CoM
20	Develop Ross Creek Nature Reserve Management Plan.	HIGH	Council



6

Implementation + Next Steps

Master Plan Implementation + Next Steps

UNDERSTANDING THE PLANNING CYCLE

The Master Plan Update represents the beginning phases of the overall planning and delivery cycle. The recommendations identified within this master plan update will need to move into the next delivery phase including detailed design and cost planning.

- ① Needs and Context Assessment
- ② Response, Concept Plan and Prioritisation
- ③ Detailed Design, Costings and Approvals
- ④ Funding Acquisition
- ⑤ Construction and Delivery
- ⑥ Activation, Operation and Maintenance



WE ARE HERE

IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERABILITY

Once the Master Plan Update is finalised, a series of research, strategies and detailed designs should be undertaken to guide its successful implementation.

While priority future planning will evolve over time, it will likely include; integrated implementation strategy in concert with other Council priorities, detailed designs and landscape plans, robust cost planning, statutory planning and approval requirements, and ongoing community and stakeholder engagement.

Table 05 – Summary of Recommendations in the previous section outlines a summary of prioritised recommendations and identifies stakeholder responsibility for consideration.

All recommendations will need to be tested and confirmed through further investigation, detailed design, cost planning, along with consideration of relevant approvals, allowances and market conditions.

The ‘Responsibility’ column indicates the relevant stakeholder(s) expected to contribute to and/or drive many of the proposed items, whether it be the Committee of Management, the Shire or others.

The general ‘Priority’ order of works nominates a basic three tier rating and is based on specific need, criticality and impact.

- **High Priority** – Immediate Need / High Impact – Do First (1-3 years).
- **Medium Priority** – Moderate Need / Moderate Impact – Do Next (3-5 years)
- **Low Priority** – Identified Need / Low Impact – Do if/when funding is available and/or other works are completed.

However, the information provided is designed as a flexible guide and the relative project delivery order may be altered to meet changing demands, opportunistic funding opportunities and other budgetary requirements.

Several projects identified will require external funding to guide the next steps in its successful implementation. Further investigation, planning activities and project management may also require external resourcing.

Soft infrastructure requirements to support the ‘hard infrastructure’ works, long-term sustainability and performance of the reserve and its user groups, include the preparation of an asset management plan detailing the standard provisions, levels of service, level of subsidy and management model associated with the redeveloped Ross Creek Recreation Reserve and the development of a Ross Creek Nature Reserve Management Plan.

The character and amenity of the built form and landscape features introduced within Reserve should reflect the unique Ross Creek area and be sympathetic to the broader community and education setting. Specific planting and landscape amenity should also reflect the local character and use plants indigenous to the area where possible.

General designs should apply and ensure that any improvements comply with, at a minimum, the following:

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles,
- Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles and incorporating the use of energy efficient and environmentally responsible options, and
- Federal Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992

They must also ensure that safety concerns are addressed and prioritised through creating and maintaining pedestrian only and clear zones, vehicle movement controls, sight lines and passive surveillance, and adequate fire breaks and protections.

ALLOWANCES AND ESCALATIONS

Detailed design and robust QS cost planning of projects will need to consider the current market conditions and be supported by adequate contingency funds.

The impact and uncertainty of the global pandemic has resulted in supply and construction delays which has seen a notable increase in the overall cost of development and construction across the sector. Recent examples across Victoria have seen an increasing trend in the cost of construction by approximately 25% - 30%.

A minimum standard contingency rate of 10% of total capital base-cost is nominated by Council officers, however pending the outcomes of detailed scoping and design, this may be increased to reflect any identified risks, allow for any latent site conditions and/or market fluctuations.

Other non-recurrent costs for consideration are:

- Pre-planning, scoping and brief development support
- Funding application and acquisition support
- Project management support
- Potential displacement, relocation and/or transition costs for user groups during works
- Cost escalations
- Additional site investigations and testing (if required),
- Permits, statutory and other approvals, and the
- Cost of engagement and advertising.

NEXT STEPS

DELIVERING THE PLAN

The Ross Creek Recreation Reserve Master Plan Update is a living document that provides a strategic framework and guide for the future development of the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve over the next 10 years.

It is important to note that while implementation of some recommendations will begin immediately, others will take longer to evolve. The individual projects and timeframes will be subject to standard Golden Plains Shire protocols, planning processes and approvals before commencement.

Community and stakeholder consultation will continue to be central to the design and implementation of specific projects as they commence over the life of the plan.