

**Golden Plains Shire
Recreation Strategy Plan
2015-2019**

**Summary of Findings
and Recreation Strategy**

December 2014



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SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This document outlines the Golden Plains Shire’s key directions and priorities for recreation provision in the Shire and the actions it will take during the period 2015-2019 to implement these directions and priorities. The information contained in the document is drawn from a review of relevant literature, an analysis of demographic and recreation trends, an assessment of current recreation program, service and facility provision and an extensive consultation process with key stakeholders.

1.2 AIMS OF RECREATION STRATEGY

The key aims of the Recreation Strategy are to:

- Assess the impact of demographic change/urban development on future recreation service and facility provision.
- Review the appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency of Council’s recreation related processes and systems – internal and external.
- Identify the recreation services and facility needs of the Golden Plain’s community.
- Develop a prioritised set of achievable recommendations relating to recreation services and facility provision in Golden Plains Shire.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The development of the Strategy involved 8 interrelated stages. These were:

1. Literature and policy review.
2. Demographic and leisure trend analysis.
3. Recreation services and facility profile.
4. Community consultation.
5. Review of recreation planning processes and systems.
6. Findings/issues paper.
7. Draft report.
8. Final report.

1.4 KEY DRIVERS OF STRATEGY

The key drivers of the Strategy were as follows:

- The Shire prepared a comprehensive Recreation Strategy Plan in 2008. The recommendations made in this Plan have largely been implemented and new directions are now required.
- The G21 Alliance and Golden Plains Shire Council (GPS) have recently undertaken a number of significant planning projects – e.g. G21 Regional Tennis Strategy, GPS Open Space Strategy, GPS Paths and Trails Strategy, Community Plans - and is in the process of implementing the recommendations of these plans. The recreation related recommendations in these plans need to be reviewed and drawn together into a cohesive strategy.
- The rate of population growth in the Shire is high when compared to rural and regional Victoria. Council needs to plan for this growth so that it can deliver recreation services and facilities for its expanding communities in a timely manner.

- Significant population growth is occurring in the cities of Greater Geelong and Ballarat, municipalities which share borders with Golden Plains Shire. Council needs to assess the impact of this population growth on the demand for recreation facilities in Golden Plains and the level of access that Golden Plains residents will have to regional recreation facilities located in Geelong and Ballarat.
- Council is aware that some recreation clubs and committees of management are continuing to experience difficulties in managing and maintaining their facilities. Council wants to identify through the Study how it can best assist these clubs and committees with these responsibilities.
- Golden Plains Shire relies heavily on external funding to undertake recreation facility development projects. In order to maximise its success in accessing external funding, the Shire must identify and have evidence to support its important facility development priorities.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF RECREATION STRATEGY

The Plan is divided into 3 separate documents.

Summary of Findings and Recreation Strategy (this document)

- Outlines the aims of and methodology for the strategy planning process and the key drivers for undertaking the plan.
- Contains a summary of the findings of the literature review, demographic and recreation trend analysis, services/facilities audit and consultation process.
- Discusses the key issues that emerge from the research findings.
- Presents the strategy which includes Council's recreation vision and objectives and a set of guiding principles.

Action Plan

- Presents a detailed action plan and monitoring evaluation process.

Township Analyses and Detailed Research Findings

- Provides a detailed analysis of recreation provision by township.
- Contains an audit of the current status of the recommendations of the 2008 Recreation Strategy Plan.
- Presents the findings of the demographic and recreation trend analysis.
- Details the outcomes of the consultation process undertaken for the Study.
- Contains a list of the recreation assets that Council owns and/or manages.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of providing a scope for this Study, the following definition of recreation has been applied:

'Leisure activities undertaken outside the home with the exception of what could be called high art activities like attending art exhibitions or theatre or concert performances undertaken by professionals. It includes both passive and active pursuits from playing chess in a club to playing football'

The term 'recreation provision' is used frequently in the report. This term describes all recreation activity from facility management to the delivery of recreation programs to specific community groups.

SECTION TWO – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides a summary of the findings from the literature review, demographic and leisure trend analysis, audit of recreation facilities and services, consultation process and township analyses.

2.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2.2.1 Literature Review

The following documents were reviewed:

State Government Plans

- Victorian Health Priorities Framework 2012-2022
- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2011-2015
- Sport and Recreation Victoria – Strategic Framework 2013-2015
- Victorian Cycling into the Future Strategy 2013-2023

Regional Strategies

- G21 Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
- G21 Regional Sport and Infrastructure Plan 2005
- G21 Regional Sports Development Plan 2005
- G21 Regional Soccer Strategy 2012
- Current projects: G21 Regional Sports Development Plan; Review of Sport and Infrastructure Plan 2005, G21 Regional Tennis Strategy, G21 and AFL Barwon Regional Football Strategy, G21 Physical Activity Plan
- DTPLI Central Highlands – Regional response to the Victorian Cycling into the Future Strategy 2013-2023
- DTPLI Regional Growth Plan – Central Highlands 2014

General and specific strategies - Golden Plains

- Council Plan 2013-2017
- Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
- Recreation Strategy Plan 2008-2012
- Open Space Strategy 2013-2017
- Paths and Trails Strategy 2013-2017
- Arts and Culture Strategy 2013-2017
- Access and Inclusion Plan 2013-2016
- Ageing Well in Golden Plains, Strategy and Action Plan 2012-2016
- Youth Development Strategy and Action Plan 2010
- Bannockburn Community Infrastructure Development Plan 2005
- Sustainable Futures for Recreation Facilities 2009
- Various structure plans, urban design frameworks and township level community plans

The documents provide the following information:

- The State Government's key strategic directions for improving the health of the Victorian community.
- The State Government's key strategic directions with respect to recreation provision for the period 2013-2015.
- The State Government's detailed strategy for encouraging greater participation by Victorian residents in Cycling.
- A plan which identifies where population growth is anticipated to occur in the Central Highlands Region.
- A plan for improving the health and well-being of the G21 community.
- Plans for promoting sport and providing regional level recreation infrastructure in the G21 Region (note: the plans make no recommendations about regional facilities in Golden Plains).
- A development plan for soccer activities and facilities in the G21 Region.
- Development plans for Australian Rules football and tennis facilities in the G21 Region (currently being completed).
- The Golden Plains Shire's (GPS) key directions and priorities for the period 2013-2017.
- The actions that the Shire will take to enhance the wellbeing of its community which includes creating healthy environments, constructing paths and trails and improving physical access to recreation buildings.
- The Shire's major recreation priorities for the period 2008-2012.
- The actions Council will take to improve access for people with disabilities.
- Operational and capital development plans for paths and trails and open space broken down into Shire-wide and townships actions for the period 2013 to 2017 and beyond.
- A strategic vision for promoting arts and cultural activity in Golden Plains Shire in the period 2013-2017.
- A long term plan for the provision of community infrastructure in Bannockburn.
- Development/urban design plans for a number of townships in the Shire.
- Redevelopment plans for individual recreation reserves and facilities in the Shire.

The implications of these documents for recreation provision in Golden Plains Shire are as follows:

- The State Government's recreation and health policies and priorities are aimed at getting people more active and improving their health and sense of well-being. The GPS Recreation Strategy Plan should focus on these key aims.
- The GPS Recreation Strategy Plan should contain actions that are consistent with and reinforce the recommendations contained in the G21 Health and Wellbeing Plan about promoting physical activity.
- Council should give consideration to how it can best support the development of regional level recreation infrastructure that is not located in the Shire but will be used by GPS residents.
- The Recreation Strategy Plan 2015-2019 should contain actions which give support to the strategic directions outlined in the G21 Soccer Strategy.
- The priorities, principles and recommendations expressed in the Council Plan, Health and Wellbeing Plan, Open Space Strategy, Paths and Trails Strategy, Access and Inclusion Plan, Ageing Well Strategy, Early Years Plan which relate to recreation provision should be reviewed by this Study and where valid should be included in the 2015-19 Recreation Strategy Plan.
- The 2015-19 Recreation Strategy Plan should be reviewed and revised if necessary when the G21 Tennis and Football Plans are completed.

- The 2008 Recreation Strategy Plan contains a number of findings and conclusions about recreation provision in the Shire and makes a number of policy related recommendations. This study should assess the current status of these recommendations, and if they have not been completed, identify whether they should be considered for inclusion in the 2015-19 Recreation Plan (see following section).
- The recreation related recommendations contained in the Bannockburn Community Infrastructure Study, structure plans and urban design frameworks and community plans should be reviewed by this Study and, if still current, included in the 2015-19 Recreation Strategy Plan.

Special Review – Recreation Strategy Plan 2008 (see Volume 3, Appendix A for full analysis)

- An audit of the recommendations contained in the Recreation Strategy Plan (2008-2012) indicates that most of the recommendations have been acted on but some still remain outstanding.
- The significant Shire-wide recommendations that have been acted on are:
 - Review of paths and trails and open space strategies
 - Review and development of skate and BMX facilities
 - Renewal programs for tennis courts and playgrounds
 - Adoption of policies relating to the provision of dual playing fields, equestrian centres and playground and tennis court maintenance
 - Management and redevelopment plans for major recreation centres and equestrian venues
 - Extra funding for playground, tennis court, recreation centre and sporting reserve maintenance
 - Formal program for recognizing the contribution of volunteers
 - Increased support to COMs.
- The significant Shire-wide recommendations that have not been acted on (and should be considered for inclusion in the 2015-2019 Strategy Plan) are:
 - Review of tennis facilities
 - Water strategy for active reserves
 - Planned maintenance programs for recreation facilities
 - Horse trail strategy
 - Issues relating to public liability (not totally resolved)
 - Recreation programming for the elderly and youth.

2.2.2 Demographic and Leisure Trend Analyses (See Volume 3, Appendix B for full analysis)

The key findings of the demographic and leisure trends analysis and the implications of the analysis for future recreation provision in Golden Plains are outlined below.

Key findings – Demographic analysis

- The Shire's population increased by 4,160 to 18,765 between 2001 and 2011, a 28% increase which is significantly higher than the 10% increase across Regional Victoria.
- The populations of all the Shire's districts increased but most of the growth occurred in Bannockburn District, Teesdale District (which includes Inverleigh) and Haddon-Smythesdale District.
- Of the age cohorts, the highest proportional change happened in the 60-69 years (90%) and 85+ years (97%) cohorts.
- The Shire's population is forecast to increase by 50% or 9,000 people by 2031.

- Most of this growth is anticipated to occur in and around Bannockburn, Batesford, Inverleigh, Teesdale Smythesdale, Ross Creek and Haddon.
- Ballarat City's population is projected to increase by 30,000 to 40,000 by 2031. Most of growth will occur in Ballarat West and South; near the border of Ballarat City and Golden Shire and within 10kms of Napoleons, Haddon, Ross Creek and Smythes Creek.
- The populations of the City of Greater Geelong and the G21 Region are anticipated to increase by 82,000 and 121,000 respectively by 2031.

(Source: Council population statistics (iD consulting), ABS census data and Victoria In Future 2014 Population Forecasts)

Key findings - Recreation Trend Analysis

General

- Participation in 'non-sport activities' in Victoria is increasing significantly.
- The six most popular recreation activities of Victorians aged over 14 years are walking for exercise, fitness/gym, cycling (including BMX), jogging/running, swimming/diving and golf (source: ABS Reports on Sports and Physical Recreation Activity Time Series 2012)
- In terms of the major organised sports that most directly impact on Council's provision of sporting infrastructure, particularly outdoor infrastructure, the most popular sports were golf, tennis, netball, basketball, Australian Rules football, cricket and soccer. Of these major organised sports, netball, basketball, cricket and soccer have experienced an increase in participation rates since 2009.
- Participation in the high profile sports of cricket and football are trending down. Netball and basketball, however, retain strong participation levels.
- Weekend competition tennis is losing popularity but weeknight competition and social and casual tennis remain popular.
- Group fitness programs that are held in recreation reserves are becoming popular.

(Source: ABS Report on Sports and Physical Recreation Activity - Time Series 2012)

In Golden Plains Shire

- Interest in school and community soccer is increasing.
- Interest in the medium to high profile sports of Australian Rules, cricket, basketball, netball, golf and lawn bowls remains strong.
- Interest in skate boarding, BMX riding, mountain bike riding, general recreational cycling and equestrian activities has grown.
- Participation in competition tennis is declining. However, participation in social tennis is increasing. Membership numbers at some tennis clubs remain strong. Some clubs have low numbers and may struggle to remain viable.
- Of the lower profile sports, hockey has generated enough interest to prompt the formation of a club.
- Participation levels in organised but informal recreation activities such as walking and recreational cycling groups have grown.
- A higher proportion of people, particularly women in the 30-50 and men in the 40-60 years age brackets, are participating in structured health and fitness programs.

(Source: Consultation with local associations, clubs, schools and communities)

Implications

- Population growth over the next 20 years will continue to drive up demand for recreation services and facilities. The majority of this increased demand will occur in the south of the municipality around Bannockburn and Inverleigh and the north of the Shire around Smythesdale and Haddon.
- Population growth will place pressure on Council to determine how the demand from sports with lower participation levels (e.g. athletics, gymnastics, etc) can be satisfied.
- Population growth in Ballarat West and South will increase demand for recreation infrastructure in these areas. Ballarat City has made provision for new and redeveloped community infrastructure to serve these growing areas. However, it is likely the infrastructure provision will lag behind demand and Ballarat residents may seek to use services and facilities in the nearby towns in GPS – Haddon, Smythesdale, Ross Creek and Napoleons. This could have a positive or negative impact on these towns. These communities will need to have a plan in place to respond to this eventuality.
- Population growth in Geelong and the G21 Region (293,000 in 2014 rising to 405,000 by 2031) will substantially increase demand for the regional level recreation infrastructure, e.g. hockey fields, athletics tracks, baseball/softball fields, soccer stadiums, indoor aquatic centres, currently provided in Geelong. Golden Plains' residents from the south of the Shire will compete with other G21 residents for access to this higher order recreation infrastructure. Access may become limited for GPS residents and there may be a need for GPS to provide local facilities, even if they are just training facilities, for some of these sports, e.g. softball.
- Changes in the age characteristics of Golden Plains' residents will also have an impact on the demand for different types of recreation activities and facilities. For example, the fast growing empty nester (60-69 years), seniors (70-84 years) and elderly populations (85+) will generate greater demand for passive recreation spaces, gentle recreation/exercise activities and less physically intense sports of golf and bowls. Council should continue to support the clubs and facilities that provide for these activities, e.g. walking groups, cycling groups, seniors exercise programs, the 4 golf clubs in the Shire (Bannockburn, Inverleigh, Rokewood, Meredith) and the 3 bowls clubs (Inverleigh, Linton and Bannockburn).
- Leisure trends will continue to influence future community demand for sporting and recreational facilities and programs. Considering this, the Golden Plains' community should continue to have access to:
 - Spaces for structured recreation opportunities (e.g. team and individual sports, health and fitness programs, etc) and non-competitive, social, cultural and passive leisure opportunities.
 - Indoor recreation facilities which can be used all year and for a range of purposes
 - High standard recreation facilities, quality programming, customer service and management
 - Paths and trails which can be used for a variety of activities including walking, cycling, running, and horse riding.

2.2.3 Recreation Assets – Works since 2008

Council owns, manages and/or maintains a diverse range of recreation assets including sports fields, pavilions/clubhouses, indoor recreation centres, tennis courts, halls, skate and BMX facilities and playgrounds (see Volume 2, Appendix D for a list of the Shire's recreation assets). Council and the community have developed new facilities and made substantial improvements to existing assets since the 2008 Recreation Strategy Plan was adopted by Council. Of note are works that have contributed significantly to enhancing the self-sufficiency and viability of the clubs using the upgraded and updated facilities, e.g. the Bowls Clubs. The works that have been completed, are underway or are planned are listed below.

Works undertaken since 2008

- Extension and redevelopment of clubhouse, Inverleigh Bowls Club, and installation of synthetic greens, Linton and Inverleigh Bowls Clubs.
- Construction of 2 court indoor stadium, Bannockburn Recreation Precinct.
- Upgrade of Haddon, Smythesdale and Linton Stadiums.
- Construction of new tennis pavilion, Bannockburn Recreation Precinct.
- Construction of new changerooms, Victoria Park Bannockburn (Oval 2).
- Redevelopment/extension of changerooms, Victoria Park Bannockburn (Oval 1).
- Extension of main pavilion to include netball changerooms, Victoria Park Bannockburn.
- Upgrade of changerooms, Linton Reserve, Inverleigh Sporting Complex – football/cricket pavilion.
- Upgrade of pavilion, Don Wallace Recreation Reserve, Teesdale.
- Upgrade of the following halls: Barunah Park, Enfield, Garibaldi, Inverleigh, Mannibadar, Meredith, Napoleons, Rokewood, Ross Creek, Scarsdale, Shelford and Teesdale.
- Redevelopment/extension of function rooms/pavilions at Woody Yaloak and Leighdale Equestrian Centres.
- Construction of soccer field, Bannockburn Recreation Precinct.
- Upgrade of playing fields, Haddon, Inverleigh (Oval 1), Shelford and Victoria Park Bannockburn (Oval 2).
- Construction of a 6 court tennis venue, Bannockburn Recreation Precinct.
- Construction of 2 tennis courts, Rokewood Recreation Reserve.
- Resurfacing of tennis courts, Smythesdale, Linton, Sutherland Creek and Ross Creek.
- Installation of skate ramps, Inverleigh, Teesdale, Lethbridge, Rokewood, Enfield, Linton and Haddon.
- Redevelopment/extension of skate park, Victoria Park Bannockburn
- Development of BMX facilities, Linton, Rokewood and Teesdale.
- Renewal of playgrounds across the Shire.

Works that are underway

- Redevelopment of the cricket room attached to the Haddon Stadium.
- Construction of a new netball/tennis pavilion and female change facilities, Smythesdale.
- Erection of lighting, Bannockburn Soccer Pitch.
- Construction of unstructured play space for youth, Lethbridge.
- Upgrade of tennis courts, Lethbridge and Grenville.

Works that are planned (Sport and Recreation Victoria – Community Facility Funding Program, Included in Council's Strategic Resource Plan)

- Construction of a new soccer pavilion, Bannockburn Recreation Precinct.
- Upgrade of BMX facility, Smythesdale.
- Upgrade of skate park, Dereel.

2.2.4 Consultation Outcomes (See Volume 3, Appendix C for full account of consultation findings)

This consultation process involved township forums, surveys interviews and group discussions with community organisations, local recreation clubs, schools, school students, local sports associations, Councillors, Council staff and officers from neighbouring Councils and Government Departments involved in recreation provision.

The views expressed during the consultation process had a number of consistent themes. These were as follows:

- In general, the relationship between Council and committees of management has improved significantly since 2008. This improvement is attributed to better two way communication and Council giving more maintenance support to the committees.
- Council's increased maintenance budget and general maintenance support has reduced the burden on the COMs. Some, however, are still under pressure, in particular, the committees that have little revenue raising capacity and/or manage the more complex facilities.
- Access to affordable water is still a major issue for a number of the committees of active reserves. Some are reluctant to water their playing fields because of the high cost of water and as a result the playing fields are not maintained in optimum condition.
- The development of planned maintenance programs for individual active reserves and recreation centres remains an important objective.
- The recreation assets in the Shire have substantially improved since 2008. However, further improvements are needed such as modernising some pavilions, improving ground surfaces and providing/upgrading training lights over playing fields.
- Three cricket clubs want access to turf wickets. Council should investigate whether to support turf wickets or not.
- Council makes annual allocations of funding for the maintenance of tennis facilities and playgrounds. It is important that the community receives maximum benefit from this funding. A review into the provision of tennis facilities and playgrounds is required.
- There is an oversupply of recreation infrastructure and some consolidation/rationalisation is required. Also, existing infrastructure should be upgraded before new infrastructure is provided.
- There is some concern in the community that Council has a bias to Bannockburn and Smythesdale with respect to facility provision. The criticism is particularly strong from the townships close to Bannockburn and Smythesdale that feel they miss out because of their proximity to these larger towns.
- Some common priorities were expressed at the township forums. These were: trails in, around and between townships, pavilion improvements, oval improvements, access to affordable water at recreation reserves, provision or upgrade of toilet blocks, upgrade of tennis facilities and encouraging physical activity.
- Council should have a special focus on directly providing or facilitating the provision of recreation programs for the elderly and isolated.
- Council needs to continue to appropriately recognise the contributions made by committee members, club officials and other recreation volunteers in Golden Plains.
- Council should work with the regional sports assemblies, regional sports associations and local recreation clubs to help build the capacities of the local clubs and the skills, competence and confidence of the club committees.
- Most committees and clubs are concerned about recruiting new members and remaining viable.

- The major challenges that Council and the community faces with respect to future recreation provision are:
 - Meeting the demand for recreation facilities generated by population growth in the south and north. Balancing the need for additional/redeveloped infrastructure to cater for this demand with the need to upgrade existing facilities in these areas and other parts of the municipality to a higher standard and maintaining them at this standard
 - Delivering on the community expectations with respect to recreation provision (activities, services and facilities) considering limited resources relating to both staff and finances
 - Determining Council’s role in the management of DEPI facilities if DEPI relinquishes the management of these facilities (note: DEPI is currently reviewing its role in the management of facilities on crown land. One of the options in the Victorian Auditor General’s report – ‘Management Committees’ being considered is to ask local government to take control of management of more DEPI facilities)
 - Providing for lower profile sports
 - Achieving an equitable distribution of resources and the provision of facilities across the Shire
 - Balancing the provision of resources for active and passive recreation
 - Making sure that the community receives maximum benefit from Council’s investment in recreation facilities and programs
 - Implementing the most effective management regimes for Council’s recreation facilities
 - Ensuring that the Golden Plains community gets access to its fair share of external grant monies
 - Building the capacity of the recreation clubs in the Shire and ensuring they are aware of and have the ability/confidence to access grant programs
 - Developing planned maintenance programs for Council’s recreation facilities
 - Ensuring that Council’s recreation reserves have access to sustainable water sources
 - Managing insurance and risk management issues
 - Understanding Council’s position on requests from 3 cricket clubs in the Shire for access to turf wickets.

2.2.5 Township Analyses (See Volume 3 for full descriptions of the analyses)

The following lists of actions for the townships in the Shire have been drawn from the review of existing strategies and community plans and the outcomes of the community consultation process. (Note: the rural communities of Barunah Park, Wallinduc, Happy Valley and Murgheboluc have not been separately assessed in this study. These districts include important recreation facilities that service large geographic catchments and are as important to their local communities as those in the larger towns. Some of these facilities are also listed on the Victorian Heritage Data Base thereby giving the Committees of Management added responsibilities beyond recreation. Council should continue to work with the Committees of Management to maintain these facilities in good condition and available to the community. Other shire-wide recommendations in this strategy are equally relevant to these facilities).

Bannockburn

- Implement the recommendations in the Paths and Trails and Open Space Strategies relating to recreational trails in Bannockburn; being:
 - Restore the granitic sand path along Clyde Rd
 - Make provision for the development of a trail around the perimeter of the growth boundary of the township

- Explore the feasibility of developing:
 - A circuit path around or a NE-SW link through Victoria Park
 - A trail along the Bannockburn-Shelford Rd linking the residential areas to the Business Estate.
 - A trail along the railway line or Midland Hwy to Lethbridge.
- Explore the feasibility of extending the path along Clyde Rd to Warrak Drive.
- Construct a new soccer pavilion at the Bannockburn Recreation Precinct.
- Meet with DEECD to discuss the potential for developing recreation facilities at or near the new school campus in Bannockburn – a third court at the stadium and a multi-use synthetic field.
- Improve access to the BBQ facilities at Bruce’s Creek.
- Investigate designation of a reserve in Bannockburn as a dog-off-leash venue.
- Explore facility options for the Bannockburn Anglers Club.
- Adopt and progressively implement the Victoria Park Redevelopment Masterplan (Draft); being:
 - Replace the perimeter fence along Moore St with a 2m high black coated chain wire fence
 - Seal the carpark located to the north-east of the Oval 1 changerooms
 - Renovate/upgrade the public toilet block
 - Rectify drainage problems on the track around Oval 1 (water is ponding in some areas)
 - Repair the pipe fence around Oval 1
 - Lower the grassed edges around the centre wicket on Oval 1
 - Replace the synthetic carpet on the centre wicket on Oval 1
 - Improve the run-ups to the centre wicket on Oval 1
 - Relocate the cricket nets to the east of the netball courts. Erect 3 nets. Cover the wickets with synthetic carpet (full length). Remove the existing nets
 - Redevelop the netball facilities:
 - Extend and resurface 2 courts (acrylic resin surface)
 - Line only for netball
 - Repair the fence (sagging in parts)
 - Erect benches between the courts
 - Erect a new shelter on the western side
 - Remove the surplus court area
 - Lower the grassed edges around the centre wicket on Oval 2
 - Replace the synthetic carpet on the centre wicket on Oval 2
 - Improve the run-ups to the centre wicket on Oval 2
 - Upgrade the playing surface on Oval 2
 - Erect training lights over Oval 2
 - Install a turf wicket table (3 pitches) on Oval 2
 - Provide proper winter covers for the centre cricket wickets
 - Add more pieces to the play area
 - Provide seating around the Park at strategic locations – around the playing fields, near the playground.
- Give consideration to erecting a notice board at the Bannockburn Skate Park.
- Provide assistance to the ‘Friends of the Bannockburn Bush’
- Assist local clubs with the promotion of their activities through Council’s website, newsletters, social media and other communication processes.

Batesford

- Continue to pursue the provision of a walking track along the River.
- Construct a walking track along the Midland Hwy through the township.
- Develop a local park/playground.

Berringa

- Continue the development of the Rainbow Bird Trail including investigating the need for suitable camping sites.
- Repaint the Old Berringa School buildings.
- Investigate the feasibility of linking the Great Dividing Walk to the Rainbow Bird Trail.

Dereel

- Produce a redevelopment masterplan for the Dereel Recreation Reserve. Review the location of the men's shed as part of this masterplanning process for the Reserve.
- Upgrade the skate park.
- Enhance the Dereel Swamp Trail.
- Upgrade the Dereel Hall/Community Centre.
- Improve the quality and safety of the Rainbow Bird Trail including the provision of maps, bike racks and seats.

Enfield

- Undertake the following works at Harrison Reserve:
 - Construct a public toilet block
 - Install water tanks and solar paneling
 - Improve the maintenance of the playground and skate park.
- Construct a trail linking Napoleons and Enfield.
- Construct a path between the two Enfield estates.

Garibaldi/Grenville

- Explore the feasibility of developing a trail between Napoleons and Grenville.
- Continue to implement the masterplan for Garibaldi Reserve.
- Repair the tennis courts at the Grenville Recreation Reserve.
- Upgrade the Grenville Hall.
- Update the playground at Grenville Hall.

Haddon

- Promote fishing in water holes as a passive recreation activity.
- Upgrade the tennis courts at Haddon Recreation Reserve.

- Develop programmed maintenance plans for the recreation reserve and stadium.
- Upgrade the floor of the stadium.
- Erect lights over the playing field (when demand is sufficient to warrant the lights).
- Improve signage on paths and trails in the township.

Illabarook /Rokewood Junction/Cape Clear

- Promote the use of the Cape Clear Hall and Recreation Reserve.
- Assist with the promotion of walking groups.
- Provide a disabled ramp at the Illabarook Hall.

Inverleigh

- Develop a walking trail from the Inverleigh Golf course to Teesdale (this track is already run by horses but would be good to formalise and encourage for walkers).
- Better maintain and further develop the walking tracks along the River. Upgrade the river walk from the railway to river junction and river junction to Winchelsea Bridge.
- Make a determination about the future location of the tennis courts – current position or the Recreation Reserve. Provide suitable facilities at whichever location is chosen.
- Implement the recommendations of the Inverleigh Sporting Complex Redevelopment Plan 2014 (Draft); being,
 - Improve the directional and entrance signage
 - Gravel or seal the access road and carpark (could be done in stages)
 - Relocate the tennis club to the Complex. Construct 4 acrylic resin courts with lights.
 - Upgrade the training lights over Oval 1
 - Rectify the drainage problems around the perimeter of Oval 1
 - Update the changerooms in the main pavilion
 - Erect a toilet block or provide externally accessible toilets
 - Erect a veranda off the main pavilion facing Oval 2
 - Rectify the problems with the septic tank system (may need replacement)
 - Install a turf wicket table (3 pitches) on Oval 2
 - Relocate the cricket nets to the south west corner of Oval 2. Erect 3 nets. Cover the wickets with synthetic carpet (full length). Remove the existing nets.
 - Enhance the playground
 - Option 1 – If tennis relocated to Complex: Relocate the netball facility to an area south west of the main pavilion. Construct 2 acrylic resin or asphalt courts with lights and a small clubhouse
 - Option 2 – If tennis not relocated: Upgrade the surface of the courts, extend the run-offs and improve the lights.
- Meet with Inverleigh Golf Club to discuss its facility needs and the assistance that Council can provide.
- Determine a position on the Victoria Park COM's request for financial support to develop a pavilion at Victoria Park.

Lethbridge

- Restore the sand path/trail in the Lake Reserve and along Brunel St.
- Develop a path network in the recreation reserve which links the community facilities in the reserve.
- Upgrade the toilets at the Lake.
- Repair the tennis courts. Determine the future of the old clubrooms.
- Install a turf wicket at the Recreation Reserve.
- Improve the surface of the oval at the Reserve.
- Expand and upgrade the skate park.

Linton

- Maintain the Ballarat-Skipton Rail Trail at a high standard.
- Explore the potential for developing loop trails around the town which connect to the Ballarat to Skipton Rail trail.
- Explore the potential for developing connecting trails to Happy Valley, Devils Kitchen and Mt Erip.
- Enhance the maintenance regime for the Ballarat and Skipton Rail Trail.
- Produce a redevelopment masterplan for the Linton Recreation Reserve. Consider the upgrade of the toilet block in the masterplanning process for the Reserve.
- Upgrade the lighting at and secure a reliable water supply for the Linton Recreation Reserve.

Mannibadar

- Upgrade the tennis facility at Mannibadar.
- Develop the reservoirs around Linton as recreation assets. Give consideration to stocking the reservoirs with fish for recreational fishing.
- Continue to upgrade the Mannibadar Hall.
- Construct a walking track around Willowvale Dam.

Maude/Steiglitz

- Upgrade the tennis facility in Maude.
- Construct the path along Steiglitz Road between Maude Recreation Reserve and Pedrisat Rd as a matter of priority.
- Develop trails/paths along Steiglitz Rd in the following locations:
 - Maude Recreation Reserve to Milvi Court
 - Plough Corner to Pedrisat Rd
 - Milvi Court to 5 mile corner
 - 5 mile corner to the Steiglitz township.
- Construct a path from Russell's Bridge to Pedrisat Road.
- Redevelop the tennis pavilion as a community hall/develop new community hall.
- Upgrade Boardman Park in Stieglitz.
- Upgrade Maude Recreation Reserve (BBQ area, playground, skate-park, rock climbing wall, gym equipment).

Meredith

- Establish a path network in Pioneer Park and develop the fitness circuit.
- Upgrade the path along Midland Hwy from Lawler St to Russell St.
- Restore the existing Coolebarghurk Creek trail.
- Develop the following paths/s trails:
 - A trail network within the Police Paddocks
 - Continuation of the Coolebarghurk Creek trail to the north
 - Connection of the extended Coolebarghurk Creek trail to Pioneer Park
 - Path along Champ St from the connection between Pioneer Park and Police Paddocks to the Coolebarghurk Creek trail.
- Undertake the following works at the Meredith Recreation Reserve:
 - Erect training lights (when demand is sufficient)
 - Provide benches around the oval
 - Provide a spectator shelter
 - Generally upgrade the pavilion.
- Upgrade the playground at Pioneer Park.

Napoleons

- Explore the feasibility of developing a trail linking Enfield and Napoleons.
- Explore the feasibility of developing a trail along the Yarrowee River to connect to Ballarat and Grenville/Garibaldi.
- Consider the development of a skate park at the Napoleons Recreation Reserve.
- Construct a circuit path around the Napoleons Recreation Reserve.
- Develop a linked path with distance markers around the township.
- Continue to make improvements to the Napoleons Community Hall.
- Develop a masterplan for the Napoleons Recreation Reserve.

Rokewood/Corindhap

- Adopt and progressively implement the works recommended in the Rokewood Recreation Reserve Redevelopment masterplan (Draft):
 - Relocate cricket nets
 - Realign entrance to Recreation Reserve
 - Rectify the defects on the tennis/netball courts
 - Redevelop the pavilion and football/cricket change rooms
 - Upgrade playing field and training lights.
- Investigate the feasibility of developing an indoor recreation space in Rokewood.
- Continue to upgrade the Rokewood Hall.
- Resolve the future use/management of Elder Park.
- Continue to enhance the lagoon.
- Ensure water availability for Rokewood Recreation Reserve and Lagoon.
- Repair the roof and install heating/cooling system at the Corindhap Soldiers Memorial Hall.
- Develop a fitness circuit which links the recreation reserve, lagoon and main street.

Ross Creek/Smythes Creek

- Improve the quality and safety of and provide better promotional literature for the Boden's Water Race Trail.
- Explore the feasibility of developing a horse riding trail in Ross Creek/Smythes Creek area. Develop the trail, if feasible
- Develop walking tracks linking Ross Creek to Smythes Creek.
- Connect the township to the Ballarat-Skipton Rail trail via an off road trail.
- Produce and implement a maintenance plan for the wetlands.
- Produce a masterplan for the Ross Creek Recreation Reserve. Give consideration in the masterplan to the following works:
 - Providing a public toilet.
 - Upgrading the surface of the playing field.
 - Providing a BMX bike track and skate park.
 - Sealing the car park
 - Encouraging more user groups
 - Extending the walking track.

Shelford

- Develop a trail along the Leigh River between North and South Streets.
- Give consideration to developing a walking/cycling trail between Shelford and Teesdale.
- Continue to upgrade the Shelford Hall.
- Install a skate park.

Smythesdale/Scarsdale

- Explore the feasibility of developing trails off the Ballarat Skipton Trail through the nearby forests and plantations and the Devils Kitchen area.
- Give consideration to developing a path which links the equestrian centre to the Smythesdale Township and then to the Roadhouse.
- Make the following improvements to the skate park area at Woody Yaloak Recreation Reserve:
 - Expand the car park to service the skate park
 - Expand the skate park (it is well used)
 - Provide more undercover area
 - Provide access to toilets for skate park users.
- Continue to enhance the Woody Yaloak River Reserve (the land parcels managed by Council near the recreation reserve).
- Provide a path from Scarsdale to Smythesdale for walking, running, bikes etc. Link to Porters Bridge, Tannery Rd and Moody's Dam.
- Promote the reserve near Porters Bridge
- Extend/renew the playground at the Woody Yaloak Recreation Reserve. Make it an 'Access for All Abilities' facility.
- Expand the skate park.
- Better maintain the Ballarat-Skipton Rail Trail.

- Develop a masterplan for the Woody Yaloak Recreation Reserve.
- Upgrade the playing surface and training lights at the Woody Yaloak Recreation Reserve.
- Complete stage 4 of the Woody Yaloak Recreation Reserve Facility Upgrade
- Continue to progressively develop Woody Yaloak Equestrian Centre as a state/regional level equestrian venue, i.e. further develop the dressage area, more seating, cross country course, permanent, show jumping arena.
- Undertake the following works at the Smythesdale Public Gardens:
 - Upgrade the septic tank system
 - Management and care of the trees
 - Upgrade the roads and tracks on the site.
- Ensure that the main community/recreation facilities in the town are linked by trails e.g. equestrian centre to the recreation reserve.
- Extend veranda at Woody Yaloak Recreation Facility.

Teesdale

- Give consideration to developing the following paths/trails:
 - A walking/cycling trail between Bannockburn and Teesdale
 - A trail connecting Teesdale town centre to the Inverleigh Flora and Fauna Reserve
 - A trail linking Turtle Bend Park to the hall and on to Chinaman's Lagoon
 - A trail along Lethbridge Rd from Main Rd to Russell Rd
 - A trail from Sutherland St to native Hut Creek.
- Undertake the following works at Turtle Bend Reserve:
 - Upgrade the public toilets
 - Add small junior equipment to the playground
 - Provide seats along the path for older people to rest
 - Potentially enclose the playground with fencing (following consultation with the community).
 - Install a basketball/netball half-court
 - Improve vehicle access to the back paddock
 - Seal the access road to the carpark
- Undertake the following works at the Don Wallace Recreation Reserve:
 - Upgrade the surface of the playing field
 - Improve water availability
 - Repair the stairs and refurbish the upstairs room of the pavilion, including reinstating the kitchenette, and provide more lockable storage (note: these second storey works may activate the need for DDA compliance which would necessitate the installation of a lift. The estimated cost includes an allocation for a lift)
 - Upgrade the carpark.
- Seal the driveway at the Teesdale Mechanics Institute Hall.
- Continue to make improvements to the Teesdale Hall.
- Upgrade the Leighdale Equestrian Centre.

SECTION THREE – MAJOR ISSUES

3.1 SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The major issues impacting on recreation planning in Golden Plains Shire are as follows:

- Encouraging greater participation by Golden Plains' residents in recreation activity
- Understanding and addressing the implications of population growth in Ballarat, Greater Geelong and the G21 Region for recreation provision in GPS.
- Understanding and addressing the implications of population growth in the northern section of the Shire for recreation provision in the townships in this area.
- Dealing with the perception that Council has a bias towards Bannockburn and Smythesdale in its funding of recreation infrastructure.
- Establishing Council's priorities for recreation facility provision – should Council fix and maintain the old before providing new facilities and/or rationalising/consolidating facilities?
- Developing a set of standards for future recreation facility provision.
- Identifying the criteria that should be used to give priority to individual recreation projects.
- Determining Council's future management arrangements for recreation facilities.
- Determining Council's position on:
 - Taking on the management of more DEPI owned recreation facilities (VAGO Report Recommendation 9 – Management Committees)
 - The types of works it will give consideration to funding at DEPI owned/managed recreation facilities.
- Developing a position on the provision of turf wickets in the Shire.
- Reviewing the provision of playgrounds and tennis facilities in the Shire.
- Developing a Shire-wide facility plan for soccer.
- Providing recreation facilities in Batesford.
- Supporting the provision of facilities for low profile and women's sports
- Identifying the recreation related works that should be undertaken in each township and the priority of these works.

3.2 DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

The following section discusses that major issues that emerge from the research findings. This issues focus on policy positions and facility planning.

3.2.1 Encouraging greater participation by Golden Plains' residents in recreation activity

- Councillors and Council staff indicated that a high priority should be given to encouraging greater participation by Golden Plains' residents in all forms of recreation activity – in particular, participation by women, the elderly, youth and people living in isolated areas.
- Residents at the township forums stressed the importance of having access to safe walking paths. They said that the paths connect communities, assist people to get to destinations and encourage people to exercise.

- Council is intending to develop a physical activity strategy. The purpose of this strategy will be to recommend actions aimed at encouraging Golden Plains' residents to be more active. Council should collaborate with the regional sports assemblies, sports associations and local recreation clubs and providers in developing this strategy. One of the main objectives of the strategy should be to develop a comprehensive database of participation numbers in recreation by activity type and club.

3.2.2 Population growth in Ballarat West, Geelong and the G21 Region.

- Council has, for some time, been planning for population growth in the Shire and has strategies, e.g. Bannockburn Community Infrastructure Plan, in place which indicate the services and facilities that will be needed.
- However, there is population change occurring in the Shire's neighbouring municipalities that could have a significant impact on the demand for facilities in Golden Plains and the level of access that Golden Plains' residents can get to regional recreation facilities.
- The population of Ballarat West/South is projected to grow by around 40,000 over the next 20 years. This development area is very close to the northern townships of Golden Plains – Ross Creek, Haddon and Napoleons are all within a 7km radius.
- In new residential development areas, the provision of infrastructure typically lags behind demand. If there is no local capacity to provide for this demand, the community will look elsewhere. This may occur in Ballarat West and could have an impact on demand for recreation infrastructure in the Shire's northern townships. This may have a negative implications, e.g. overuse, but may also present opportunities for these townships, e.g. enhance the viability of facilities.
- The population of G21 Region is expected to grow by 120,000 to 420,000 people over the next 30 years. Most of the regional recreation infrastructure serving the G21 Region (including the southern area of Golden Plains) is and will be located in Geelong. Golden Plains' residents will have to compete against other G21 residents to access this infrastructure. Their level of access may diminish.
- The G21 Sport and Recreation Pillar is conducting a number of studies that look at the implications for recreation provision of population growth. Golden Plains should participate actively in these studies.
- It does not appear that a similar comprehensive regional planning process is occurring in the north (note: The G21/AFL Barwon Strategy includes the north of the Shire (at the request of Golden Plains Shire). It is recommended that Golden Plains initiate this process for the north, where feasible.

3.2.3 Population growth in North of Shire

- The population of the north of the Shire is anticipated to grow strongly over the next 3 decades. Most of this growth will occur in Smythesdale which at full development could grow to around 3,500-4,000 people – the current size of Bannockburn.
- Council has developed a strategic plan to guide the development of community and recreation facilities in Bannockburn as the township grows, the Bannockburn Community Infrastructure Plan 2005-2035. A similar plan is needed for Smythesdale. This plan could be expanded to cover all the townships in the northern area of the Shire.

3.2.4 Bannockburn and Smythesdale 'Centric'

- In nearly all of the township forums conducted for the 2008 Recreation Strategy Plan, Council was accused of being too 'Bannockburn centric'. In many of the forums for the 2015-19 Strategy, Council was criticised for being too 'Bannockburn and Smythesdale centric'.
- Essentially, the critics of Council contend that Council has a bias to Bannockburn and Smythesdale. The criticism is particularly strong from the townships close to Bannockburn and Smythesdale that feel they miss out on recreation funding because of their proximity to these larger towns.
- There is no question that Council has invested strongly in Bannockburn over the past decade – family services centre, substantial improvements at Victoria Park (lights, changerooms etc), new tennis venue, new stadium and new cultural centre/library. It has also invested in Smythesdale – The Well and Woody Yaloak Equestrian Centre.
- There is no doubt that these works have merit and can be justified. Bannockburn is the Shire's largest town and the service centre for a rapidly growing sub-region. Smythesdale is smaller but is also growing and becoming a service centre for the surrounding rural region.
- There is potential for this criticism to grow even stronger over the next 5-10 years. Council is building a new soccer venue in Bannockburn. The Victoria Park Committee is agitating for some major works at the park. A 3rd oval could possibly be required in Bannockburn during the next decade. The Woody Yaloak Equestrian Centre is being upgraded and the playing field at the Woody Yaloak Recreation Reserve is being enhanced. Again these works are needed and can be justified but they could add to the perception that Council favours these townships.
- Council needs to be mindful of the community perceptions, transparent and fair in its decision-making and ready to justify its decisions.

3.2.5 Facility provision: fix and maintain the old before providing the new, rationalise facilities etc

- There were strong views put during the consultation process about recreation facility provision in Golden Plains. These were:
 1. Some felt that existing facilities should be upgraded to/maintained at a high standard before new facilities are built. Others said that there was a need to build new facilities and upgrade existing facilities in order to satisfy community demand and comply with building and access codes and the technical specifications for certain recreation infrastructure types, e.g. run off distances for netball courts
 2. There are too many recreation facilities across the Shire and in some townships. Rationalisation should be contemplated
 3. There is a view that some facility provision has not been based on demonstrated demand or need but on an equity principle that townships should have like facilities
 4. There are so many facilities to look after, Council and the community have to spread their resources thinly.
- QUESTION: Are these legitimate criticisms and what are the alternatives?
- The soccer venue in Bannockburn would not have built if view no 1 was Council policy. Soccer would have remained at Victoria Park – an unsuitable venue which restricted the club's growth. However, many thousands of dollars would have been available for other projects.

- There may some merit in rationalisation of facilities. However, there is likely to be strong opposition to rationalisation from the communities that are adversely affected.
- The equity principle has merit in a municipality like Golden Plains where there are many small townships. However, criticism that this has resulted in an oversupply of facilities may be reasonable.
- The suggestions that new facility provision has not been based on demonstrated need does not have merit. The most recent facilities developed in the Shire – the indoor stadium, tennis centre and soccer facilities in Bannockburn – were all identified as being required through comprehensive strategic planning studies.
- There may be some validity in the criticism that Council and the community spread their resources too thinly. It might be better if Council fully upgraded one site before moving on to the next location, - e.g. fix the courts, lights and fencing at one tennis venue, rather than the courts at one venue, lights at another and fencing at another. However, if it adopted this approach, it could take many years for some sites to be improved. The current approach provides for many sites to be incrementally improved.
- It is recommended that Council identify opportunities for rationalisation and examine the merits of these options. If they have merit, Council then should discuss the options with the affected communities. Council has rationalised/consolidated facilities in the past with community support. This support might be provided again.

3.2.6 Standard of facility provision

- A set of standards for Council's recreation infrastructure should be developed. The standards would make it easier to identify and cost upgrade works and inform committees and user clubs about the level to which their facilities can be developed.

3.2.7 Giving priority to recreation works

- Council has to make decisions constantly about its capital funding priorities.
- A formal set of criteria should be developed. It will help to determine Council recreation related capital works priorities and help to negate any criticism about Council's choice of projects.

3.2.8 Future management of Council's recreation facilities

- Management of Council and DEPI recreation facilities was a major issue in the 2008 Recreation Strategy Plan. At the time, many of the committees were struggling with their roles and were critical of the level of support they were getting from Council.
- The mood of the committees appears to have improved significantly since that time – most of the committees (even the DEPI committees) now seem to be happy with the support they get from Council. An area where these seems to have been a big improvement is in Council's communication with the committees.
- However, there are still problems. The management and maintenance burden on some committees is still onerous, in particular, the committees that have little revenue raising capacity and/or manage the more complex facilities, such as the stadiums in the north of the Shire. Council has not delivered on the production of planned maintenance schedules for each recreation facility. The issue of water availability and cost remains contentious. Recruiting committee members is a problem.

- Council is aware of these issues. It is undertaking a review into management processes and is planning to undertake a water management strategy. The problems with planned maintenance schedules need to be resolved.

3.2.9 Future management of DEPI recreation facilities/Council contributions to DEPI facilities

- DEPI is currently reviewing the management arrangement for its recreation facilities as recommended in the VAGO report on management committees. Currently, these facilities are directly managed by DEPI or by community committees appointed by DEPI.
- One of the options being considered is for local government to take control of many of the DEPI facilities.
- This option could have significant resource implications for local government – maintenance of playing fields, buildings, halls, passive spaces etc. Councils would also have to determine what management model should be introduced for the management of these facilities.
- Council has contributed to the development of facilities on DEPI land. This contribution has mainly been restricted to halls, playgrounds and tennis courts. It has, on occasions, contributed to the upgrade or development of pavilions.
- Council should develop a consistent position on DEPI facilities; firstly, on whether it is prepared to take on the management of more facilities and its conditions for doing so and secondly, on the types of works it will fund. In a period of restraint, which local, state and federal governments are now in, it is not recommended that Council extend its funding of DEPI facilities to pavilions.

3.2.10 Turf wickets

- The Lethbridge, Inverleigh and Bannockburn Cricket Clubs play in the Geelong and District Cricket Association. Their highest teams currently compete in the 3rd Division. They all aspire to have their top teams playing in the 1st Division.
- The Association has a rule that all teams in the 1st and 2nd Division must play on turf wickets. Lethbridge, Inverleigh and Bannockburn only have access to synthetic wickets and, therefore, have to remain in the 3rd Division.
- The clubs have asked that Council give consideration to installing turf wickets on their playing fields. Typically, a turf wicket table used for local cricket will be 3-5 pitches wide. Installation by a professional turf company would cost about \$20,000 per pitch.
- Once installed, the wicket table has to be prepared for initial use. This could take 2-3 months of regular rolling, watering, mowing and filling any depressions that may form. During the cricket season, the wicket table has to be prepared for weekly use. This involves rolling, watering, mowing, removing, patching worn areas, filling depressions, removing/laying covers and a lot of weather watching.
- In winter, the table is left idle. At the end of winter, the wicket table is prepared again for the ensuing summer.
- Some considerations:
 - A 3 wicket table would cost about \$60,000-70,000 to install. This figure could be reduced if the club managed/completed the project
 - The wicket will need considerable preparation to make it ready for initial and then regular use. This work requires expertise and many man hours. The clubs could do it but they would need to be fully committed

- Special and costly equipment will be required – rollers, mowers, line markers, covers, sprinklers and hoses
- There is a turf wicket at Napoleons. The COM/club is able to manage this wicket.
- The wicket tables will need regular and sometimes heavy watering
- The wicket tables can get boggy in winter particularly if football is played on the ovals (note: Inverleigh and Bannockburn are proposing that the wicket tables be installed on their 2nd ovals)
- If not resolved, cricketers from Golden Plains will have to travel outside of Golden Plains to access the highest standards of local cricket
- Bannockburn is anticipated to grow to 10,000 people. Townships of this size across Victoria usually have a turf wicket.
- Council could adopt the following position:
 - Council will be prepared to consider requests from clubs to install turf wickets on a case by case basis. The following conditions will apply:
 - The clubs will fully fund the installation and maintenance of the wickets and the purchase of equipment needed to maintain the wickets
 - The clubs can demonstrate to Council's satisfaction that they have the capacity to maintain the wickets
 - The COMs for the reserves and the other users of the playing fields on which the turf wickets will be installed support the provision of the turf wickets
 - The clubs will fund the reinstatement of the wickets to synthetic or plain grass if required by Council in the future.
- Council should also give consideration to meeting with the GDCA to discuss the structure of its competitions and the notion of establishing a synthetic wicket competition that has equal status to the turf competition.

3.2.11 Tennis facilities

- The 2008 Recreation Strategy Plan made 2 recommendations about tennis; 1) Council undertake a review into tennis facilities to identify the profile of facilities required to cater for the Golden Plains community; and 2) Council take responsibility for the maintenance of tennis courts.
- Council has implemented the latter recommendation but not the former. Council has been active in upgrading tennis facilities, however, there has been criticism that money has been spent on facilities that get little use.
- In retrospect, it would have been better for the recommendations to be linked, with the review of tennis facilities conducted before any maintenance works were carried out. This would have ensured that the maintenance works were well targeted.
- It is not too late to undertake the review. There are still some clubs wanting their facilities upgraded and there are some significant tennis facility issues to resolve, e.g. location of Inverleigh Tennis Club.
- The review could investigate the following:
 - Current and future demand for competition, casual and social tennis in Golden Plains
 - Trends in tennis facility provision across Victoria and Golden Plains
 - Current and future competition structures for tennis in Golden Plains
 - Tennis facility provision in neighbouring municipalities
 - The role of tennis clubs in community life

- The current location and condition of tennis facilities in Golden Plains
- The mix and quality of tennis facilities required in the future
- The works required to provide these facilities and potential funding sources.

3.2.12 Playgrounds

- The 2008 Recreation Strategy Plan recommended that Council take responsibility for the maintenance of playgrounds. It also made recommendations about the upgrade of specific playground sites.
- As a result, Council has been systematically upgrading the playgrounds around the Shire. However, again with value of hindsight, the 2008 plan should have included a recommendation that a play space facilities review be completed prior to any maintenance/maintenance works being undertaken. This would have ensured that the works were well targeted.
- Again, it is not too late to undertake the review. The Open Space Strategy recommends that the review be conducted. The Recreation Strategy should strongly endorse the review (note: play spaces include traditional playgrounds plus skate parks, BMX facilities, basketball pads, rebounds walls etc).

Action	Costs	Priority	Organisations
Develop a playground facilities plan which contains the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An inventory of the publicly accessible play facilities in the Shire – location, owner/manager, pieces, age, condition, age group provided for, scope for redevelopment/expansion etc – An assessment of trends in play facility design and use and future demand for play facilities – Council’s vision and objectives for play facilities – Principles and standards for play facility provision (including design standards) – An assessment of existing provision based on the principles and standards. Identification of gaps, deficiencies and oversupply – Strategies for addressing gaps, deficiencies and oversupply – Opportunities for rationalisation and partnerships e.g. with schools. 	20000	1	GPS Local schools

3.2.13 Soccer

- The 2008 Recreation Strategy Plan recommends that Council undertake a soccer development plan and monitor developments with respect to synthetic fields.

Action	Priority	Year
That Council undertake a soccer development plan. This plan should investigate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The future need for soccer facilities (outdoor and indoor) in Golden Plains Shire - The role that Council should play in the development of soccer in Golden Plains - The best location, configuration of and timing for development of these facilities - The cost of developing these facilities - The plans of neighbouring Councils to provide soccer facilities 	2	3-4
That Council monitor developments with respect to the installation and design of synthetic playing fields and explore the feasibility (in the long term) of installing a synthetic field/s in the Shire	2	3-5

- Council took part in the development of a regional soccer development plan but has not formally considered the merits of developing a synthetic field/s.
- There could be some value in undertaking a Golden Plains specific soccer plan and formally investigating the notion of a synthetic field. The soccer field in Bannockburn is a good start but if soccer becomes more popular (which it will), the field could quite quickly reach capacity. Also, the field in Bannockburn does not

cater for the northern part of the Shire. Synthetic fields are expensive to construct but they have much greater capacity and more flexibility than grass fields – theoretically, they can be used 24 hours a day and for a number of different sports. The construction of a new P-9 or K-12 school in Bannockburn may provide an opportunity for Council to jointly develop recreation facilities with the school, e.g. a synthetic field.

3.2.14 Recreation facility in Batesford

- At the Batesford township forum, some members of the Batesford community were critical of Council; saying ‘what do we get for our rates – we have no trails, parks or playgrounds and get no services other than the garbage collection. Even the paths we have are overgrown’.
- This criticism has been around for some time. Council received funding to build a small playground but the positioning of the playground proved too difficult. The Path and Trails and Open Space Strategies propose a number of works for Batesford. These projects should be used as the starting point for discussions with the Batesford community. The playground concept could also be revived.

Path and Trails Actions	Where	Est Cost	Priority	Organisation
Develop a trail along the Moorabool River in the Riverstone Estate which links to the COGG trail.	Along river in estate	120000	As development occurs	GPS Developers
Explore the feasibility of developing a trail through the town along the Midland Hwy.	River to Daruma Way	125000	6	GPS VicRoads
Open Space Action		Est Cost	Priority	Organisation
Enhance Red Gum Reserve.		50000	1	GPS

3.2.15 Facilities for low profile sports

- The provision of an athletics facility track was raised during the consultation for the 2008 Recreation Strategy Plan. It was mentioned again along with a hockey field during the consultation for the 2015-19 Plan.
- As the population of the Shire grows, particularly in the south, it is likely the calls for a hockey field and athletics track will grow stronger. It is also likely that facilities for other low profile sports – softball, baseball, rugby – will be mentioned.
- Bannockburn is projected to grow to 10,000 people. Some towns of this size around Victoria have athletics, baseball fields, hockey fields etc. However, not all are as close to major regional centres like Ballarat and Geelong that have facilities for these sports.
- The problem is that Ballarat and Geelong are also growing rapidly and their facilities have difficulty coping with the demand from their own populations, let alone from Golden Plains’ residents.
- Council should adopt a position on the provision of facilities for low profile sports. This position could be that:
 - The facility needs of each sport will be considered on a case by case basis
 - The default policy will be that GPS will only consider the provision of training facilities and competition facilities will be provided in Geelong and Ballarat.

3.2.16 Provision of facilities for women's sports

- Participation by women in equestrian activities and netball in GPS is strong and growing.
- Participation by women in male dominated sports such as soccer, football and cricket is increasing significantly in Victoria, particularly in metropolitan/urban areas. In time, this trend will reach the rural areas (it already has in Golden Plains with soccer – Golden Plains has the highest participation rate of girls of all the G21 councils). The number of women participating as umpires is also growing. In practice, what this may mean is clubs like Inverleigh Football/Netball club may field a senior women's football team and some junior girls' teams or the Bannockburn Cricket may, in time, field a women's cricket team.
- These trends have facility implications. For example, the new soccer pavilion at the Bannockburn Recreation Precinct will need to be suitable for male and female players. Other facilities in the Shire, including the equestrian centres, may have to be reconfigured to make them suitable for female participants and officials.
- The facility standards proposed in Section 2.2.5 of this report will address this issue.

SECTION FOUR – RECREATION STRATEGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This Section contains the Recreation Strategy. It outlines Council’s vision and objectives for recreation, the principles that will guide Council’s involvement and investment in recreation. The detailed action plan is provided in a separate document.

4.2 THE STRATEGY

4.2.1 Recreation Vision

Council’s vision for recreation is as follows (note: this is the vision from the 2008 Recreation Strategy but is still considered to be suitable):

‘Council values the role that recreation can play in developing a sense of community and improving the physical, mental and social health and well-being of those who participate. In Golden Plains Shire, there will be access to diverse recreation experiences that will enhance the quality of people’s lives and help build cohesive communities. There will be a range of opportunities for people from informal recreational activity to playing organised, competitive sport.

Recreation opportunities will be provided through services and quality infrastructure and will meet the needs of a diverse and growing community. The range of recreation opportunities in the Shire will be the result of strong partnerships between Council, local communities, community organisations and other levels of Government.’

4.2.2 Objectives

- To improve the overall health and wellbeing of residents in the Golden Plains Shire by encouraging and supporting their participation in recreation.
- To encourage participation in recreation by people experiencing disadvantage due to their age, ability, isolation, income or gender.
- To build and strengthen communities through participation in recreation.
- To provide a range of suitably designed and accessible recreation facilities that are well maintained, optimally used and adequately satisfy the various and diverse recreation needs of the community.
- To provide a profile of recreation facilities that Council and the community have the capacity to deliver, properly maintain and effectively manage.
- To ensure that there is an equitable distribution of recreation facilities and activities across the municipality.
- To work cooperatively and, where relevant and appropriate, in partnership with the Golden Plains community, local clubs and organisations, government departments and agencies, regional sports assemblies, regional recreation associations, peak recreation bodies and neighbouring Councils in delivering recreation opportunities for Golden Plains residents.
- To provide effective support and build strong relationships with the recreation providers, recreation clubs and community committees that manage recreation facilities in the Golden Plains Shire.

4.2.3 Guiding Principles

- Council will consult with the community and communicate openly about recreation provision. Decisions will be transparent and involve relevant sections of the community.
- Council will work in partnership with the community, private and non-Council providers and other levels of Government.
- Council will strive to achieve equity in the targeting of its recreation resources and place a particular emphasis on programs for elderly and isolated residents.
- Council will take a proactive and planned approach to recreation provision. Council will monitor trends in the broader community, understand needs and demands and plan its recreation services accordingly.
- Council will plan for and deliver recreation opportunities and resources in a way that can be sustained over time.
- Council will ensure that all communities have reasonable access to a defined minimum range of services and facilities.
- Council will advocate for the community and make decisions on the distribution of resources in the best interests of the community and Council.
- Council will plan and deliver recreation programs and facilities in townships in a manner which will not adversely impact on facilities and services in neighbouring townships.