

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL
**SPORT AND ACTIVE
RECREATION STRATEGY**
2020-2030



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Council acknowledge the traditional Wadawurrung owners of the land and pay our respects to Wadawurrung Elders both past and present and extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of Golden Plains Shire.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Image: Bunjil Eagle Lookout, Maude

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sport and active recreation is an integral part of our communities in Golden Plains. It is essential to our health, our physical and mental wellbeing, our sense of belonging and connection to each other. Sport and active recreation contributes significantly to the liveability of our communities and is underpinned by a network of local facilities, opportunities to participate and a strong volunteer culture.

Across the diversity of local and community facilities, parks, playgrounds and reserves, residents of Golden Plains Shire play sport or participate in physical or community activity every week of the year. For all these reasons and more, supporting sport and active recreation is a high priority for Golden Plains Shire.

Maintaining and building on existing participation and programming opportunities and our existing network of community sport and active recreation infrastructure requires a strategic, coordinated and responsible development approach. Council, State and Federal Government, sporting associations and local community clubs all play a key role. Through this strategy we provide a framework to work in partnership with these organisations, increase participation and programming opportunities, create quality spaces and places to be active and ensure that every resident has the opportunity to be active and involved.

By 2030, the residents of Golden Plains Shire will have improved access to a diversity of enjoyable and affordable physical activities held in locations and at times that maximise opportunities to be active. Through their participation in physical activities, our residents will improve their health, their fitness, their skills and retain or make new social connections.

Through this strategy, the aim is to encourage those 35.5% of adults¹ who were previously sedentary or insufficiently active and those 81% of children and young people who do not participate in at least an hour of physical activity per day² to commence participation in physical activities on a regular basis. The aim is to also to get those who are already active to continue or increase their levels of participation in sport and active recreation. For those who want to achieve their highest potential in a particular sport or active recreation activity, we will work collaboratively with other partners to ensure that there are pathways to elite participation. For those who are more interested in the social aspect of physical activity participation, we will work collaboratively with other partners to ensure that non-competitive or less competitive options are available.

The strategy aims to ensure that quality facilities and 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. These multi-purpose places and spaces will also be welcoming, safe, connected to active transport opportunities, well maintained, sustainably designed and cost effective to develop and operate.

¹ Victorian Population Health Survey 2017: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/population-health-systems/health-status-of-victorians/survey-data-and-reports/victorian-population-health-survey/victorian-population-health-survey-2017>

² Australian Sports Commission 2018 Ausplay Data Victoria: <https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/research/smi/ausplay/results/state>

The community-based organisations run by volunteers that provide many of the physical activity opportunities in our community will be supported and upskilled. Wherever possible we will make their job easier through improved management models, training, assistance with promotion, technology and resources.

Our decisions around where to invest resources will be strongly guided by demonstrated community needs, our strategic principles, a clear evidence base and an awareness of current issues and trends impacting physical activity at a local, regional, state, national and international level. Our investment will also be guided by the resources that we are able to acquire and leverage, and considered in line with all other Council facility, programming and service priorities.

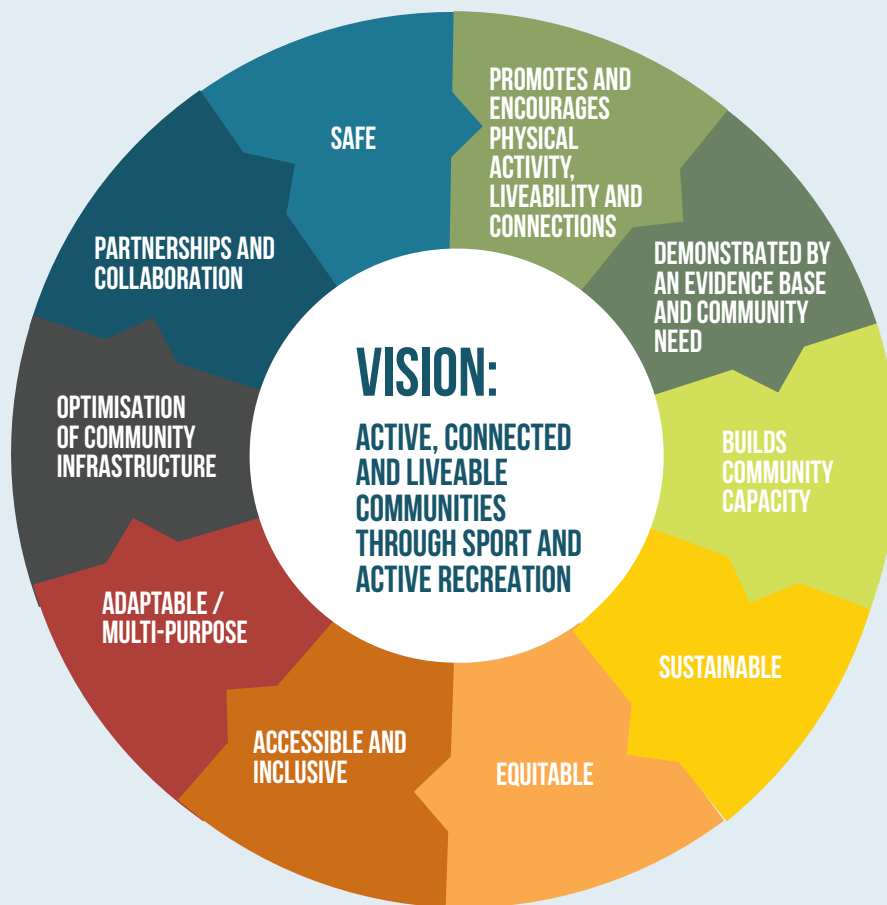
The diversity of sport and active recreational opportunities and the benefits that physical activity participation achieves for residents and the broader community will ensure that Golden Plains Shire is recognised throughout the region for its high level of liveability and inclusiveness. However, Council is aware that we cannot achieve this vision alone. Therefore we will identify and work with a range of partners such as sport and recreation clubs, regional sports assembly, State Sporting Associations, community-based organisations, health organisations, the private sector, schools, State Government, Federal Government and others to help us achieve this vision.

This strategy provides a blueprint for just how we will achieve the vision of active, connected and liveable communities. The vision and principles provide the framework to support Council's involvement and investment in programs, services and facilities.



OUR VISION AND 10 PLANNING PRINCIPLES

We have developed a vision for our strategy to ensure that our focus remains on three core areas: activity, connectedness and liveability which are unpinned by planning and policy. Ten (10) planning principles have been developed to support the vision and these principles will form the framework for the entire strategy over the next 10 years. Everything that Golden Plains Shire does in relation to sport and active recreation will be assessed against these principles, as depicted in the following figure.



PILLARS

Three pillars have been developed to help us achieve our vision. They are:

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY

LIVEABILITY

CONNECTEDNESS

These pillars reflect the distinct areas that Council wishes to focus on in order to deliver the strategy and they also reflect regional and statewide priorities in the sport and active recreation sector. Each of the recommendations in this strategy is categorized under one of the three pillars.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this strategy is to positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community and promote livability and 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) to encourage local residents and visitors to the area to be physically active.

Driving the need for this new strategy are several factors including the recognition that:

- Golden Plains Shire is mandated to report on the achievements of its health and wellbeing priorities which are outlined in Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. These priorities include active living, healthy and sustainable environments, connected communities and gender equity – all of which can be directly influenced by Council's investment in sport and active recreation.

- The previous Recreation Strategy has reached the end of its lifespan and a new strategy is required to develop a framework to guide Council's resource allocation towards programming, service delivery and infrastructure over the next 10 years so that Council can continue to positively influence the health and wellbeing of the community and contribute to improving the livability of the Shire for residents and future residents.

Golden Plains Shire is located in south-west Victoria between Geelong and Ballarat. It comprises of 56 communities and 16 townships across an area of 2,705 square kilometres.³ The largest towns in the Shire are Bannockburn, Teesdale, Inverleigh, Smythesdale, Lethbridge and the Smythes Creek / Ross Creek area.

³ Golden Plains Shire Council: https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/GPS%20Population%20Fact%20Sheet_2017%20Aug.pdf



Golden Plains Shire Council shares many similarities with its neighbouring Councils in the Barwon and Central Highlands region, but also many differences. Some of the larger Local Government Authorities such as Greater Geelong City Council and the City of Ballarat have a more diverse array of physical activity opportunities and facilities available; access to regional level facilities including large indoor stadiums and aquatic centres; sport and recreation opportunities provided by numerous private operators (e.g. gyms, yoga studios, dance schools and martial arts schools); greater access to performance coaches and State Sporting Associations. Golden Plains Shire relies much more heavily on

volunteers and local community-based organisations as the prime providers of sport and active recreation opportunities at local level sport and recreation facilities.

Golden Plains Shire and its partners in sport and active recreation therefore need to be innovative and resourceful in order to ensure that local residents are able to access quality, affordable and enjoyable sport and recreational opportunities locally. At the same time, it needs to be recognised that not everyone’s needs can be met locally (e.g. an elite level athlete) so there will be a proportion of people who travel to neighbouring towns, municipalities and Melbourne for some or all of their participation needs.

In order to gather the evidence base to determine priorities for the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy, we undertook the following:



NB: note that several people who attended a listening post also completed a survey.

WE ALSO:

- undertook an assessment of demographics as well as sport, recreation and physical activity trends at a national level to help us understand potential changes to participation and facility requirements
- reviewed participation data for both formal and informal sport and recreation activities across Victoria to be able to make a comparison with Golden Plains statistics
- mapped the majority of sport and recreation facilities across the Shire to view the general condition and location of facilities and to correlate this information with other information received from clubs and the community.

OUR PROCESS

This Sport and Active Recreation Strategy provides 14 recommendations, along with some specific actions to help achieve these recommendations, provided at the end of this document. Details of community needs in terms of programming, services and infrastructure to support physical activity participation are identified in the accompanying Community Engagement Report and in sport and recreation reserve master plans.

Any sport and active recreation infrastructure suggestions need to be assessed against the strategic planning principles identified in this strategy. Once assessed, a prioritised list of capital works projects will be developed. These will be assessed against all other capital works priorities of Council.

Our process going forward is as follows:



VISION AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES



A vision has been developed to guide Golden Plains Shire in terms of its planning, advocacy, decision making, service delivery and investment in sport and active recreation programs, services and facilities over the next ten years. It clearly reflects the Council Plan's focus on active living, healthy and sustainable environments and connected communities.

The vision is as follows.

**'ACTIVE, CONNECTED
AND LIVEABLE
COMMUNITIES
THROUGH SPORT AND
ACTIVE RECREATION'**

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

To help achieve the vision, a series of planning principles have been developed that will guide Golden Plains Shire and the community when considering implementing new programs or services or when developing new facilities or renewing / upgrading facilities.

As part of Council's process of integrated planning, these principles will be shared with Council's Community and Service Infrastructure Plan and will be used as the basis to assess capital works priorities and investment in programs and services.

Any sport and active recreation programs, services or facilities instigated by Golden Plains Shire will be assessed against the following strategic planning principles:

PRINCIPLE	WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections	<p>The program, service or facility is likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • get more people more active, particularly those who are currently inactive • provide physical activity opportunities for all for life • provide a diversity of physical activity opportunities • provide pathways for participation from grass roots or social participation through to high performance opportunities • create more attractive, functional and liveable communities • create opportunities for people to connect to one another, make new friends and networks and develop a sense of belonging within their community
Demonstrated by an evidence base and community need	<p>The need for the program service or facility has been demonstrated through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion in relevant strategic reports and documents (including structure plans, community and service infrastructure plan, master plans, walking / cycling plans, play strategies, etc) • Expressed community needs (e.g. community engagement feedback, surveys), assessed against what may be available within close proximity, or what may be provided as part of a network of facilities in an area • Expressed needs from sport and active recreation clubs and organisations • Consideration of sport and active recreation offerings within acceptable proximity • The need to comply with various regulations and standards (e.g. playground safety standards and female change facility standards) • Building condition reports or fitness for purpose assessments • Broader sport and active recreation trends (e.g. move towards more individual sport and active recreation participation).
Builds community capacity	<p>Local communities will be encouraged and supported to develop solutions to local issues or scenarios and to shape the programs, services or facilities that are most suited to their local area or community. They will potentially influence the way in which these programs, services or facilities are designed, managed or delivered. Communities are likely to further develop their knowledge, skills and resilience through this type of approach. Some examples include serving on a committee of management for a recreation reserve, undertaking training to deliver physical or community development activities within their community or contributing to a master plan. Communities will be supported by Council to further build their capacity.</p>

PRINCIPLE	WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
Sustainable	<p>The program, service or facility is likely to be sustainable from the following perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial – facilities are financially viable to construct, operate and maintain, and are considered against all other Council priorities. Whole of life costs are clearly understood and appropriate budgets set aside for maintenance and renewal. Community subsidy levels and cost sharing arrangements will also be taken into consideration. Programs and services are financially viable to operate, although there may be a level of subsidisation if warranted to enable increased participation by traditionally disadvantaged groups. • Participation – there are likely to be sufficient people to utilise the program, service or facility on a regular basis, i.e. enough for a team, enough to make a program worthwhile, enough volunteers to manage the program, service or facility. • Population - as a population or age cohort changes, the demand for a particular asset may also change. • Environmental – any facility is designed according to Environmentally Sustainable Design features such as solar panels, passive heating and cooling and use of recycled materials. Any programs or services minimise their impact on the environment and enhance understanding of the environment where possible.
Equitable	<p>Across the municipality, within a reasonable walk or drive from people’s homes, there will be a network of quality physical activity environments. Within these locations, there will be range of different opportunities available to meet the diverse sport and recreation needs of the community.</p>
Accessible and inclusive	<p>Wherever possible, the program, service or facility will be accessible to people of all ages, abilities, genders, multicultural backgrounds, socio-economic status and lifestyle stage by embedding Universal Design principles and considering things such as physical access, appropriate supporting infrastructure, cost, time, transport, travel accessibility, childcare, promotional tools and attitudes. All members of the community will be made to feel welcomed and included in sport and active recreation programs, services and facilities.</p>
Optimisation of community infrastructure	<p>Prior to the investment in new community infrastructure, the maintenance, renewal and upgrade of existing community infrastructure will be explored as an alternative. Note for sport and active recreation projects the aim is to maintain or increase physical activity and participation, while improving liveability and community connectedness.</p>
Partnerships and collaboration	<p>Program, service or facilities may be delivered in partnership with other relevant organisations, groups, clubs, businesses and stakeholders as appropriate. These partnerships may include community, cross-sector and inter-governmental partnerships in order to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • integrated planning • implementation of shared priorities • equitable outcomes.
Safe	<p>The program, service or facility will increase existing safety levels of participants (as per regulations or standards, such as a netball court run-off area) or will be developed to ensure that safety of participants is maximised. Note that varying levels of managed risk is still important to provide, e.g. a flying fox in a playground or a ramp in a skate park, to enable people to explore their boundaries and enjoy extending their skill level in a managed environment. Facilities will also be designed incorporating crime prevention through environmental design principles.</p>

PILLARS

We have developed three focus areas, or pillars, to guide our work in the sport and active recreation area.

OUR THREE KEY PILLARS ARE:

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY	Focus on participation and programs Diversity, activation
LIVEABILITY	Focus on places and spaces Quality environment
CONNECTEDNESS	Community cohesion through sport and recreation Volunteers, gender equity, inclusion

PLANNING. POLICY AND PRINCIPLES.



COUNCIL'S ROLE



The role of the Council in delivering the vision and actions contained within the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy is:

- strategic planning and alignment with other organisational priorities
- collaborations with other key stakeholders
- advocacy to other organisations and government agencies for improved services / facilities
- capacity building of communities, clubs and volunteers
- project management of sport and recreation capital works
- advocate and apply for State and Federal Government and other external grants for facility and program / service delivery.

There will be less emphasis placed on direct service provision, e.g. directly running programs or supporting non-recreational groups such as heritage societies.

It will also be important to determine the role of other organisations (e.g. Regional Sports Assemblies, State Sporting Association, YMCA, the private sector and Crown Land Committees of Management) or units within Council in delivering some of the expected or previously delivered services, such as grant writing, program delivery and support for other types of community groups. Some of these expectations may need to be clearly documented in agreements.

PARTICIPATION IN SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION

Data contained within the Victorian Population Health Survey (2017)⁴ 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 our community (33.7%), however, does not undertake sufficient physical activity levels to achieve health benefits (compared with 44.1% of Victorians). We need to continue to encourage people to become more physically active so that they improve their overall health and wellbeing.

VICTORIAN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION RATES FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN

According to Ausplay data⁵, the top 10 participation activities for adults and the top 10 participation activities for children in Victoria in between July 2018 and June 2019 were as follows:

ADULTS AGED 15+		CHILDREN 0-14 YEARS OF AGE	
Activity	%	Organised out of school activities	%
Walking (recreational)	45.0%	Swimming	42.0%
Fitness/Gym	37.5%	Australian Rules Football	16.0%
Athletics, track and field (includes jogging and running)	16.4%	Gymnastics	11.9%
Swimming	14.5%	Basketball	11.8%
Cycling	13.2%	Dancing (recreational)	11.3%
Basketball	5.9%	Football/Soccer	11.2%
Yoga	5.4%	Tennis	8.1%
Golf	5.2%	Cricket	6.5%
Bushwalking	5.1%	Netball	5.9%
Australian Football	4.7%	Karate	4.2%

The emphasis for adults is far more on individual non-structured activities. 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.

⁴ Victorian Population Health Survey 2017: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/population-health-systems/health-status-of-victorians/survey-data-and-reports/victorian-population-health-survey/victorian-population-health-survey-2017>

⁵ Sport Australia. Ausplay Survey 2018-2019: https://www.sportaus.gov.au/media-centre/news/australias_top_20_sports_and_physical_activities_revealed

ADULT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION RATES IN GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

Through the community survey undertaken as part of the strategy, Golden Plains Shire adults identified the following 10 most popular activities (note that the survey respondents may not be a representative sample of the community as their participation in the survey was voluntary):

RANK	ACTIVITY	MAIN LOCATION	NUMBER N = 286	%
1	Gardening	At home	195	68
2	Walking	In the Shire	188	66
3	Bushwalking / hiking	In the Shire	141	49
4	Swimming / diving	Regional centre	132	46
5	Aerobics / exercise class	At home	128	45
6	Gym / personal training	At home	122	43
7	Cycling – on-road / rail trails / shared paths	In the Shire	118	41
8	Running / jogging	In the Shire	104	36
9	Fishing	In a town outside the Shire	78	27
10	Yoga / pilates	At home	77	27

Golden Plains Shire survey respondents show a similar pattern to Victorian trend data in that they have an increased likelihood of engaging in informal, individual physical activities as opposed to organised sporting activities. This trend highlights the need to consider both active recreation activities alongside structured sporting opportunities.

CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION RATES IN GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

The top ten activities for young children in the Shire currently (based on a survey of 65 young people in primary schools) are:

ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE %
Australian Rules Football (AFL)	19	29
Swimming	16	25
Cricket	8	12
Netball	8	12
Athletics	7	11
Dance	7	11
Basketball	6	9
Tennis	6	9
Boxing	4	6
Soccer	4	6

Children's survey responses were opposite to those received from adult survey respondents. Whilst adults focussed primarily on non-structured activities, children tended to be more interested in playing organised sports and taking part in other active recreation activities such as dance. Note that unstructured and informal activities did not make the top ten list for children. This needs to be considered when planning for future capital works.

THE BENEFITS OF SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION

Whilst individuals benefit from sport and recreation from a health and wellbeing perspective and greater connections within their community, the whole community benefits from a greater sense of community cohesion, economic opportunities, improvement to the environment, reduction in crime and a more liveable and vibrant community.

Some of the benefits that can occur through participation in sport and recreation are:

SOCIAL BENEFITS

- Greater sense of community
- Stronger, more self-reliant communities
- Greater social and friendship networks
- Improved liveability of an area
- Reduction in anti-social behavior and vandalism
- Helps to develop shared attitudes, values and codes of behavior in the community (cohesion)
- Breaks down barriers between different sectors of

HEALTH BENEFITS

- “Protects against cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, musculoskeletal impairments, obesity, some cancers and poor mental health.”⁶
- Improved balance and coordination, resulting in fewer falls
- Stronger muscles, joints and bones
- Improved confidence and self-esteem
- Improved body image
- Improved motor skills
- Less likely to suffer from depression and anxiety
- Greater sense of achievement
- Reduced stress levels
- Higher energy and concentration levels
- Reduction in incidence and severity of illness and disability
- Increased life expectancy.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- Encourages a greater appreciation and awareness of the natural environment (i.e. develops environmental stewardship)
- Encourages the protection of areas of conservation or cultural heritage value
- Reduces carbon emissions, air pollution and noise pollution (through activities such as active transport, e.g. walking and cycling in place of vehicular transportation)

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- Attracts visitors and generates tourism
- Attracts businesses and creates employment
- Creates higher market value of properties near public open space
- Improvements to local business viability through sale of sport and recreation equipment, services and programs
- Physical inactivity costs the Australian economy \$805 million annually - \$640m in direct costs (healthcare expenditure) and \$165m in indirect costs (loss in productivity) (2013 figures)
- Physical inactivity causes an estimated 16,000 premature deaths a year.⁸
- Productivity loss due to physical inactivity is estimated at 1.8 working days per worker per year.⁹

⁶ VicHealth (2015) Promoting equity in physical activity: An evidence summary

⁷ Eoin Blackwell (2017) Physical Inactivity is Costing Australia Nearly \$1 Billion a Year: HuffPost 29 July 2017
https://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/2016/07/28/physical-inactivity-is-costing-australia-nearly-1-billion-a-yea_a_21441164/

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION TRENDS

The sport and recreation landscape is constantly changing. The table below describes some of the trends currently occurring in the industry and within Golden Plains Shire communities which we need to be aware of when planning facilities, programs and services in the future:

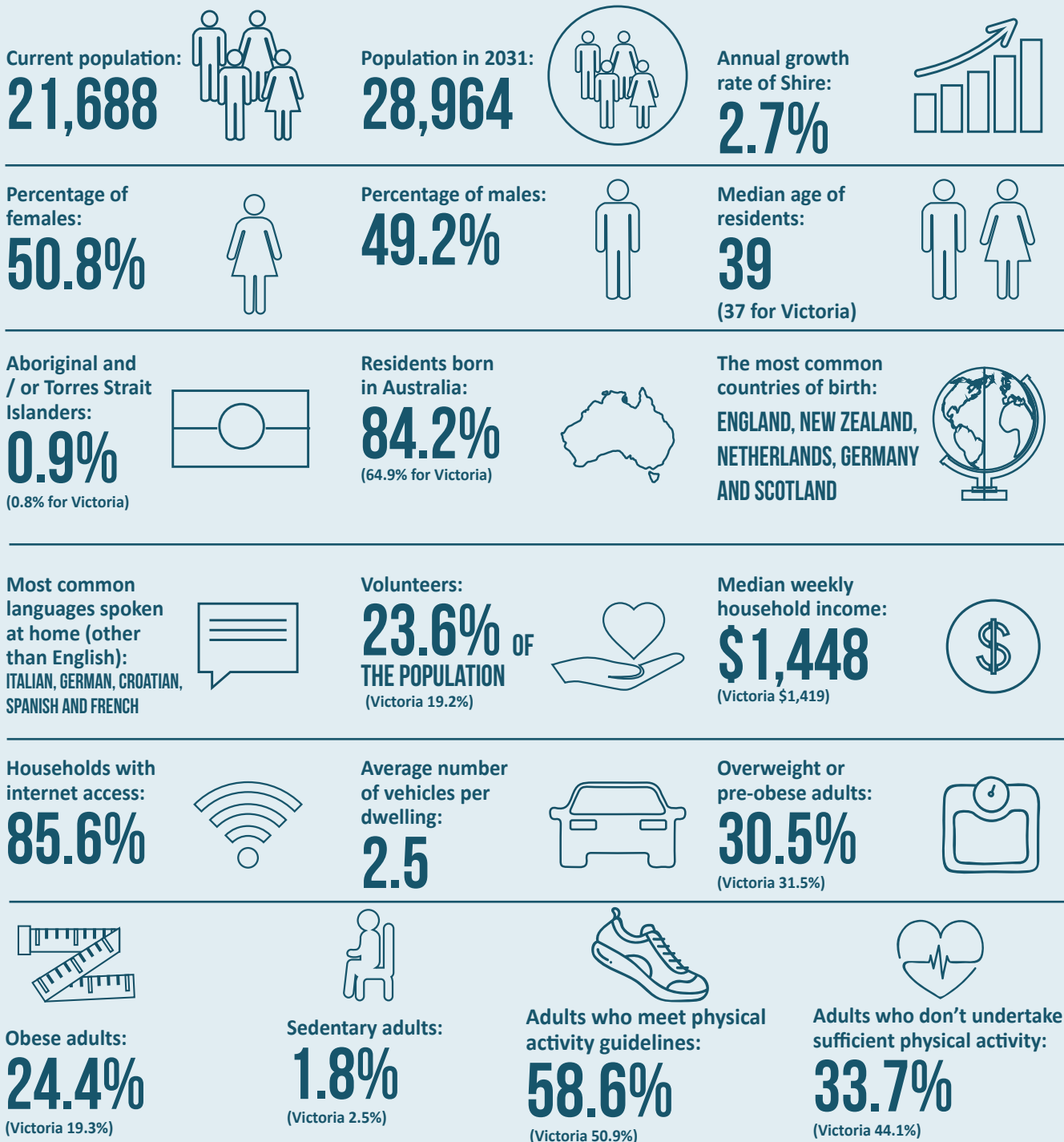
TREND	DETAILS
Liveability	Quality sport, recreation and open spaces are seen as one of the key tools used by LGAs and property developers to attract new residents to come and live in a town and to improve the liveability of towns.
Individual lifestyle activities	There has been a movement away from many traditional organised sports such as football, cricket, netball and tennis to more individual or small group non-organised activities, e.g. walking, gym workouts, fitness classes, cycling, swimming, running, petanque, street table tennis, spin classes in parks, stand up paddle boarding and personal training.
Growth of female participation in specific sports	There has been significant growth across sports by females in Victoria in AFL, soccer and cricket. This growth is accompanied by the need to find suitable sports grounds and change facilities for training and games.
Events and tourism	There has been greater demand on sporting facilities and public open spaces such as parks for special events, e.g. sports tournaments, markets, festivals, weddings, fun runs and cycling events. These can create a positive economic impact for the municipality.
Programming	There is a growing focus by Local Government on providing or facilitating programs in open spaces to attract greater levels of participation in physical activities, e.g. summer activities and ParkRun.
Dog parks	There has been an emergence of off leash dog parks in response to the desire to connect with other dog walkers and the desire for dogs to socialise with one another.
Playgrounds	There has been greater investment in developing destination play spaces in open space areas, designed to attract people from both within and outside municipalities. Within these play spaces there may be a greater focus on providing quality landscaping and more natural spaces which utilise loose materials, rocks and logs.
Aquatic centres	In many areas, the 25 or 50m outdoor municipal swimming pool is being replaced with an indoor pool, program pools and often a gymnasium and program rooms. In some areas, swimming pools are being replaced by splash parks or water play areas.
Outdoor fitness equipment	There has been a growth in the installation of outdoor fitness equipment in public open spaces in recent years, either clustered together in one location or spread along a linear pathway.
Active transport and linkages	There is a greater focus on ensuring that sport, recreation and open space areas are connected to existing walking / cycling networks.
Accessibility and inclusion	There is greater awareness of the need to ensure that people of all ages and all abilities can safely and easily utilise areas of open space. Universal Design Principles and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements provide guidance in this area. Infrastructure to encourage participation by people of all abilities includes ramps, unisex toilets with change tables, single story buildings to allow for wheelchair access and Braille signs.

TREND	DETAILS
Planning	Master planning of recreation reserves and open spaces has occurred to ensure that needs of all existing and casual users are considered in the long term – including the linking of cycling / walking paths, development of play spaces, landscaping and BBQ / picnic facilities and formalised parking.
Multi-purpose design and diversity	Parks and open spaces are being used for a variety of different purposes including sport, markets and festivals; hence spaces need to be as multi-purpose as possible to cater for community needs.
Safety	There is a greater awareness of safe design when it comes to sport and recreation facilities, parks and open spaces to ensure safety and perceived safety issues do not act as a barrier to usage. Clear sight lines, lighting, vegetation that can be seen through, passive surveillance and shade are all tools that can be used to improve safety.
Sustainability	There has been a greater focus on the development of environmentally responsible practices such as solar hot water, recycled water systems, double glazed windows, wetlands, community gardens, synthetic surfaces, use of recycled materials and use of locally sourced materials to reduce the impact of facilities / spaces and their users on the environment and to potentially reduce operating costs of facilities.
Climate change	There is a greater focus on climate-proofing areas of open space as much as possible to reduce water usage, provide shade and to retain some green space during periods of low rainfall.
Community gardens	There has been an increase in the number of community gardens in towns in areas of public open space where people come together to garden together and increase their access to affordable fruit and vegetables.
Food and coffee	There has been a growing trend for Local Government Authorities to develop a café or restaurant in some open spaces or encourage food trucks to visit these sites.
Community hubs	There has been a trend to co-locate several sporting facilities to form recreation precincts to maximise limited resources and to cross- market activities.
Management and maintenance	Local Government Authorities and clubs are focusing on more effective planning, management and maintenance, including understanding whole of life costs of infrastructure, i.e. construction, management, activation, maintenance and replacement. Asset renewal gaps are increasing across the State and sport and active recreation projects must be considered against all other service area priorities.
Modified versions of existing sports	A variety of traditional sports have developed a modified version (or several modified versions) of their game to keep older players playing longer, to involve children at an earlier age or to attract new participants, e.g. pickleball (a form of tennis played on a smaller court), cardio tennis, walking soccer, walking netball, AFL 9's, T20 cricket.

OUR COMMUNITY

DEMOGRAPHICS

The following infographic provides an overview of the Golden Plains Shire community. Data has been sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016 Census), Victorian Population Health Survey and Council's website. Note that profile. id. data (future population projection data) is currently being updated. This infographic will be updated accordingly for population forecasts.



At the time of the 2016 Census, the percentage of children and young people under 19 years of age (particularly 10-14 year olds) living in Golden Plains Shire is much higher than for Victorian residents (29.7% compared with 24.3%). There are significantly less people aged 20-34 years of age; a greater percentage aged 40-69 years of age; almost similar proportions of 35-39 year olds and 70-74 year olds; and less people 75 years of age or older.

THE IMPLICATIONS FOR GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE:

- The high percentage of young people under 19 years of age is likely to create strong demand for junior sports and activities such as those most popular for under 15's: swimming, Australian Football, basketball, gymnastics, dancing, soccer, tennis, netball, cricket and athletics.
- Areas likely to experience highest demand for facility development are Bannockburn and the North West area abutting Ballarat.
- A lower percentage of people in their 20's and 30's may provide challenges in attracting players for several team sports and recreation activities (e.g. senior football, netball and cricket).
- Although the median age of Golden Plains residents is relatively young (39 years of age), consideration needs to be given to providing opportunities for people to be involved in sport and active recreation throughout the lifespan and regardless of their level of ability (e.g. walking tracks, comfortable playing surfaces and various programs.)
- The costs of participating in recreational activities need to be kept affordable in order to continue to attract participants.
- Transport may be an issue in terms of accessing sport and recreational activities, particularly for children and young people if parents / carers are unable to take them to training or games due to work or other commitments.
- Although internet access is high, there are still almost 14% of households who do not have access to the internet, hence different communication tools must continue to be utilised.
- It is unlikely that information about programs or facilities will need to be translated into community languages in the near future, although this situation needs to be monitored.
- If the cultural make-up of the community changes in the future, there may be greater demand for other types of sport and recreation activities such as soccer.
- Initiatives need to be developed to encourage those 1.8% of the population who are sedentary and those 33.7% of the population who do not partake in sufficient physical activity to be more active.

OUR EXISTING SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Towns and townships within the municipality provides a range of different facilities including:

• Archery facilities	• Half basketball court	• Rectangular playing fields
• BMX facilities	• Hard and grass courts for tennis and netball	• Running tracks and trails
• Bushland reserves	• Lake / river	• Shared trails
• Cricket nets	• Lawn bowls clubs	• Shooting facilities
• Equestrian facilities	• Motorcycle track	• Skate parks
• Go kart track	• Outdoor fitness equipment	• Sports ovals
• Golf courses	• Parks / open space	• Stadiums / halls / community centres / pavilions
• Gym	• Play spaces	

Some of the sport and active recreation facilities that may be found in other similar sized municipalities in regional Victoria, which are not found in Golden Plains Shire include:

• Swimming pools	• Synthetic hockey pitches	• Fenced off-leash dog areas
• Pump parks / mountain bike parks	• Croquet greens	• Petanque pistes

Given that a number of people in our community rely on larger regional cities such as Geelong and Ballarat for things such as transport hubs and retail shopping (along with some education and employment), it is not uncommon or unexpected that these larger regional cities meet the need for more specialised sport and active recreation opportunities such as gymnastics centres, baseball / softball facilities and parkour facilities.

The following table provides an overview of the types of publicly available activities currently available in the Shire at the various facilities (note that this list is not exhaustive and it changes frequently and it doesn't include casual activities such as riding a dirt bike through bushland or doing a yoga class online at home):

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Town	Basketball	BMX	Cricket	Cycling (off road trail)	Fitness classes	Football	Golf	Horse riding	Karate	Lawn bowls	Netball	Play	Running	Skateboarding	Tennis	Walking	Yoga	Other facilities / activities
Bannockburn	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Badminton, boxing, gym, indoor soccer, soccer, fishing, golf, tai chi
Haddon	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Archery, badminton, go kating, shooting
Inverleigh			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Lethbridge			✓			✓					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		Fishing
Linton	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		
Meredith			✓		✓		✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	Motorcycling, tai chi
Rokewood		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		Fishing
Ross Creek			✓			✓					✓	✓			✓	✓		Cardio drumming
Smythesdale	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		Petanque
Teesdale		✓	✓			✓		✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		

Smaller towns and townships such as Barunah Park, Batesford, Berringa, Cape Clear, Corindhap, Dereel, Enfield, Garibaldi, Gheringhap, Grenville, Mannibadar, Maude, Murgheboluc, Napoleans, Scarsdale, Shelford and Sutherlands Creek typically offer activities such as play and tennis. Note that there are no public swimming pools within the Shire.

WHAT OUR PLANS AND STRATEGIES TOLD US

To provide context to the strategy and to understand existing policy and strategic directions, a review of 60 local, regional, state, national and international plans and strategies was undertaken. The information obtained from the literature review has underpinned the development of the planning principles and strategic actions. A full report on this review is included as a separate document.

Overall, the literature review indicated the high degree of inter-relationships between sport and active recreation within other areas of Council including health and wellbeing, the environment and strategic land use planning. There were some recurring themes within local, regional and state level plans and strategies around:

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES	LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES	CONNECTED COMMUNITIES	PLANNING / MANAGEMENT / OPERATIONS
Increased participation	Accessible places	Collaborations and partnerships	Financial sustainability
Diversity of sport and active recreation opportunities	Multi-use facilities that are able to adapt to changing needs and uses	Capacity building of sport and active recreation clubs and communities	Asset management
Accessible sport and active recreation opportunities	Environmental sustainability and protection	Identify and address community needs	Investments based on needs and evidence
Activation of spaces	Delivering fit for purpose spaces for sport and active recreation	Equity	Facility optimisation



The Council Plan (2017-21) sets the scene by stating how it intends to achieve a healthy, safe, vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community. Four relevant priorities identified in this plan are:

- Healthy eating and active living - increase participation in physical activity
- Healthy and sustainable environments - improve access to safe and universally designed built environments including community facilities and spaces, open spaces and places for active recreation
- Connected communities - increase support for our community groups to provide opportunities for social connection
- Family violence and gender equity - proactively address gender equity issues in our organisation and our community.

The previous Recreation Strategy (2015-2019) successfully achieved 81% of its recommendations. This has resulted in a good spread of sport and active recreation facilities, programs and services throughout the municipality. Some key achievements of the strategy include:

- the development of Bannockburn Heart
- the establishment of the Shire's first soccer club facilities
- the development of the Active Golden Plains physical activity program
- the encouragement and establishment of greater female participation in sport and active recreation
- lighting upgrades at numerous sport and active recreation facilities
- skate park upgrades across the Shire
- many other projects that have benefitted sport and recreation across the Shire.

The new strategy intends to build on the successes of the previous strategy, although it has a much greater focus on:

- establishing a framework of principles to guide Council's investment in sport and active recreation programs, services and facilities
- the development of tools and policies to support the new framework
- facilitating sport and active recreation programs within communities
- activation of existing places and spaces.

WHAT OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US

In order to identify key community priorities, we undertook an extensive round of community engagement. For full details of the community’s suggestions, please refer to the Community Engagement Report. These suggestions will be further assessed against the strategic planning principles and a Capital Works Assessment Tool once developed.

THE GENERAL COMMUNITY

Through 178 face to face engagements across 6 towns; 5 written submissions; and 286 community surveys, the community told us that:

in general they were relatively happy with the amount of sport and active recreation infrastructure available in the municipality (with a few exceptions), but they were very keen for these spaces, i.e. recreation reserves, parks and halls to be better activated through additional infrastructure (e.g. seats, lighting, shade) or through programming. They are also keen to access more low-cost place-based activities (e.g. yoga, pilates and dance) which enable them to make better connections in the community.

There were numerous comments made about enhancing the existing trail network and utilising it as a way to connect towns and to better share facilities, e.g. constructing a trail from Ross Creek to Smythesdale to enable local residents from Ross Creek to access the skate park in Smythesdale.

WHEN ASKED WHAT ACTIVITIES THEY WOULD LIKE TO DO, BUT DON'T CURRENTLY DO, THOSE WHO FILLED OUT A SURVEY STATED:

- | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|---|-----|-----------------------|---|
| 1. | SWIMMING |  | 2. | WALKING |  |
| 3. | EXERCISE / FITNESS CLASSES |  | 4. | CYCLING |  |
| 5. | DOG WALKING IN A DOG PARK |  | 6. | PILATES / YOGA |  |
| 7. | GYM |  | 8. | DANCE |  |
| 9. | TENNIS |  | 10. | HORSE RIDING. |  |

The main reason people currently do not do these activities (such as swimming) is because it’s not available or not offered locally.

Survey respondents were asked to identify ways to encourage the community (particularly those who are currently inactive) to be more physically active. The key tools are:

1. Development of more walking / cycling tracks
2. Development of place-based activities in towns using existing halls, ovals and parks
3. Better promotion of physical activity opportunities available in the Shire
4. Development of an aquatic centre featuring a swimming pool and gym
5. Providing free or affordable activities
6. Providing activities at different times of the day / night, especially for people who work outside the Shire
7. Conduct come and try days to introduce people to new activities
8. Promote the benefits of being physically active
9. Provide a greater variety of physical activity opportunities
10. Ensure that clubs and activities are inclusive, fun and inviting.

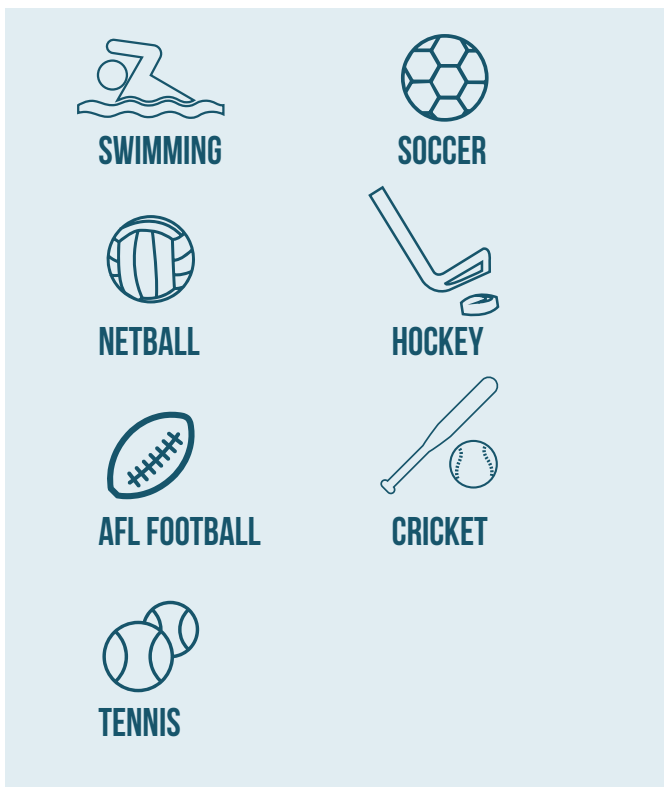
From an infrastructure perspective, very strong demand was noted through all forms of community engagement for an indoor aquatic centre, as well as improvements to the shared trail network, e.g. upgrade of Inverleigh River Environmental Heritage Walk. People who attended face to face engagement sessions also wanted to see more supporting infrastructure in parks, and playgrounds, e.g. shade, seats, barriers and bike racks at Bannockburn Heart.

286 members of the community who completed a survey identified the top 10 sport and recreation improvements needed to meet current and future community demand, as an open-ended question response (in priority order) as:

1. Develop an aquatic centre (21%)
2. Continue to develop, maintain and improve walking / cycling / running tracks, e.g. develop a trail from Teesdale to Bannockburn (13%)
3. Provide more or a greater variety of sport and active recreation opportunities, e.g. fitness and hip-hop classes for girls in Meredith (8%)
4. Develop an off-leash dog park in Bannockburn (5%)
5. Maintain and upgrade existing facilities, e.g. new social and change facilities at Rokewood Recreation Reserve (5%)
6. Develop a gym / fitness centre in various towns (5%)
7. Develop more sport and active recreation facilities / community centres (3%)
8. Provide more support to clubs, e.g. cheaper access to public liability insurance (3%)
9. Develop an indoor stadium / leisure centre (2%)
10. Develop a synthetic / full sized hockey pitch (2%).

CHILDREN

The 65 primary school aged children consulted with told us that the two key ways to get more people physically active is to provide more clubs to join in the local area and to build a swimming pool. The key activities children would like to do (but don't currently do) include:



Clearly there is demand for organised sport with this age group.

The key barriers to participation in physical activity by young people are: time, cost and distance.

SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION CLUBS

Whilst feedback from the general community indicates a shift towards unstructured activities such as walking, cycling and gym workouts, sport and active recreation clubs (the providers of physical activity opportunities in the Shire) continue to be focussed on providing quality playing facilities and competitions.

Most commonly, the 33 clubs that completed a club survey are looking to:

1. Develop or upgrade their change and social facilities, including the development of female friendly facilities and public toilet upgrades (19) 
2. Develop or upgrade their playing surfaces, e.g. a new oval, a new bowling green, resurface tennis courts, establish a turf wicket, a new sports floor, upgrade cricket nets (8) 
3. Install lights on ovals and other outdoor playing surfaces (7) 
4. Develop more female teams / competitions (6) 
5. Improve social spaces with landscaping, seating areas, signage, picnic and BBQ areas (6). 

The sports clubs identified the following key challenges to their operations:

1. **Volunteers** - attracting and retaining volunteers for Committee of Management, working bees and running events / activities (73%)
2. **Facilities** - ageing facilities, facilities not meeting needs, regulations, standards or expectations (52%)
3. **Equipment** - need more appropriate / modern equipment to help cut down the volunteer workload and improve the overall experience for participants (45%)
4. **Finances** - cost of utilities, maintenance, insurance, affiliation, transport (42%)
5. **Participants** - accessing enough players / participants to make up a team or to make a club or activity viable (39%)
6. **Events** - running events / competitions / tournaments due to the time commitment required and costs to do so (39%)
7. **Growth** - being able to cater for the growth in our sport (39%).

The type of support required by clubs from Golden Plains Shire, State Sporting Associations, Leisure Networks, Sports Central or other organisations (from a designated list) includes:

1. Information about grants that are available (94%)
2. Small grants for equipment or events (76%)
3. Assistance in preparing grants (73%)
4. Easy to read documents / manuals that clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of Council and clubs in relation to facilities, financial contributions and use of facilities (61%)
5. Assistance with maintenance of facilities (for a fee) (55%)
6. Information about what has worked well with similar clubs in other locations, e.g. new technology, a new competition, an event and a fundraiser (52%)
7. Assistance with promotions through Shire publications and website (45%)

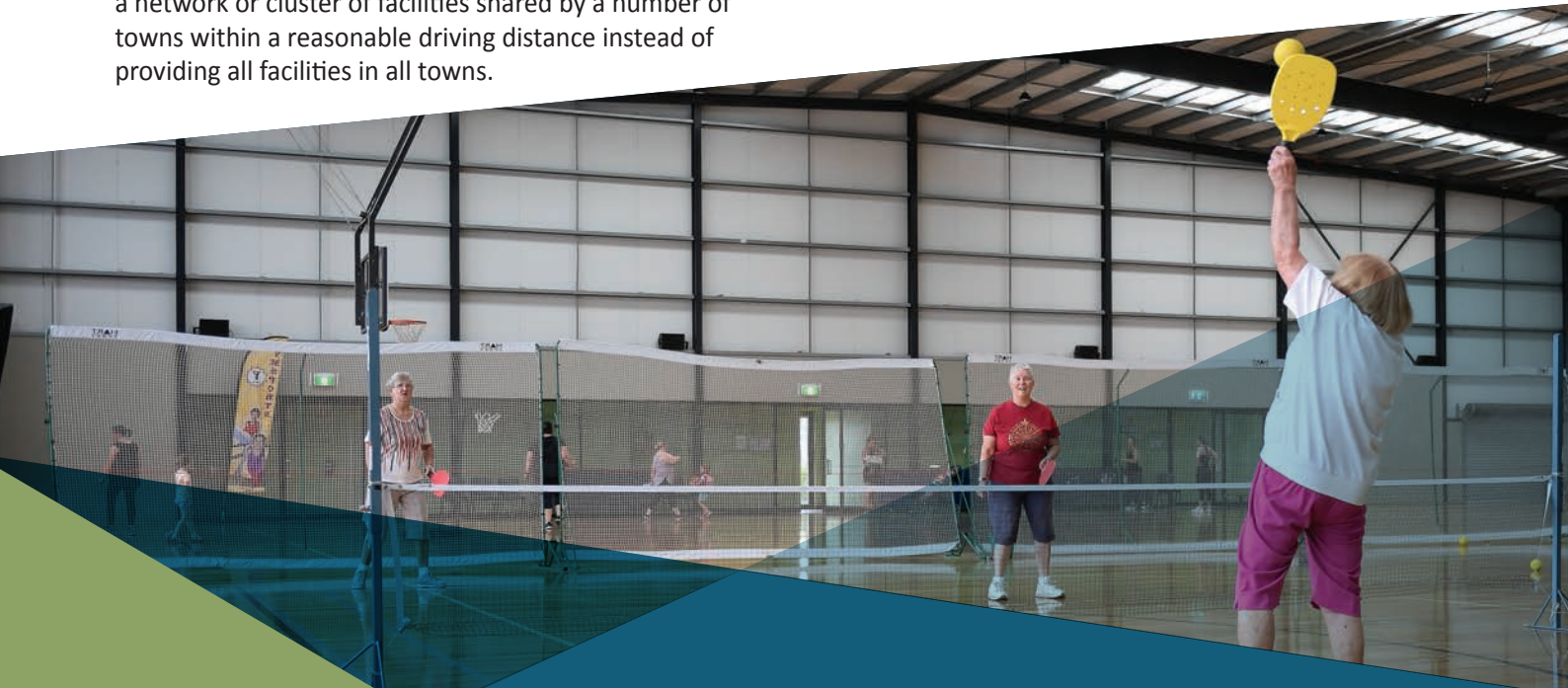
Clubs suggested the following three actions to improve sport and recreation opportunities or to increase club sustainability:

1. Assist with the development of facilities and playing surfaces
2. Promote the activities that are available in the community (including less-mainstream sports) via Council website (sport and recreation directory) and a local newspaper
3. Hold an interactive club forum or individual meetings with clubs.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Various key stakeholders were interviewed by telephone or attended workshops to identify key priorities for the strategy. Their responses included:

- **Alignment with organisational directions** – alignment with relevant plans and strategies such as Council Plan, Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, Community Vision 2040 and Active Victoria
- **Policy development** – identification of specific policies that need to be developed to guide future decision making
- **Planning** – ensuring that community infrastructure is planned, developed and funded for in growth areas and considered with all other Council priorities.
- **Evidence base** – data to help make more informed decisions
- **Expenditure** – resolving the issue that some members of the community want Council to be fiscally responsible by limiting its spending on community assets, yet others want more facilities to be developed in small towns
- **Network of facilities** – focusing on the development of a network or cluster of facilities shared by a number of towns within a reasonable driving distance instead of providing all facilities in all towns.
- **Roles and responsibilities** – clarity around Council’s role in infrastructure and participation and the resource investment in both areas
- **Capacity building** – initiatives to support and develop volunteers and local sport and recreation clubs
- **Increasing participation** – exploring ways to increase people’s participation in physical activity
- **Activation** – activation of sport and recreation spaces for use by all of the community and also encourage visitors to Golden Plains Shire
- **Local opportunities** – opportunities for people to participate in physical activity opportunities locally at low cost
- **Traditionally disadvantaged groups** – ensuring that the needs of traditionally disadvantaged groups are addressed
- **Education / awareness raising** – informing the community about the benefits of physical activity
- **Promotion** – better promoting the sport and active recreation opportunities that are available within the Shire.



KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Through the consultation and research undertaken, a variety of sport and active recreation issues and opportunities have been identified. These issues and opportunities fall under the three pillars: active and healthy, liveability and connectedness, and are outlined below.

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY

Focus on participation and programs
Diversity, activation

DELIVERY OF SPORT AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

One of the key changes that has been identified in the delivery of sport and recreation is that many people now prefer to turn up, pay to play and then go home. This change has partly come about due to more families working, weekend work and other priorities. One of the challenges of the pay and play model is that it can be difficult to know how many people will turn up each week and therefore some activities may become unviable. On the other hand, it enables people who undertake shift work, work away or who have other commitments, the opportunity to be physically active with a group of people on a semi-regular basis. Without this option, many of these people may have missed out on group physical activity experiences.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

There is a strong demand from the community for more place-based, low cost activities and programs where residents / participants can improve their health and wellbeing and at the same time make social connections with those living in their community. This was rated as the second highest priority by survey respondents (26) when asked to identify what would encourage more people to be physically active. Council does not have the resources for direct service provision of this nature. Instead, we need to explore ways that other organisations and community members can increase the amount and diversity of locally provided activities and programs.

COST OF SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION

The cost of sport and active recreation can be a major barrier for some people in Golden Plains Shire, particularly children (it was their second highest identified barrier), older adults and families who experience mortgage stress and are living week to week. As a Council we need to ensure that cost does not prevent our residents from being physically active.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF DIFFERENT POPULATION GROUPS:

YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN

Whilst young people who enjoy organised team sports are relatively well catered for in Golden Plains Shire, those who are more interested in unstructured activities are not so well catered for in terms of physical activity options. In addition, some young people who may wish to participate in more physical activity are limited by a variety of barriers including cost, time, lack of transport, inappropriate age divisions in sports and poor body image.

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY

Focus on participation and programs
Diversity, activation

GIRLS AND WOMEN

There has been substantial growth in participation in sports such as AFL football and cricket by women and girls in recent years in Golden Plains Shire and across Victoria. Within the Shire itself, 19% of sports clubs surveyed stated that they plan to increase the number of female teams and activities. At a state level, 26% of all Victorians who play AFL football are female and there has been an 33% growth in club-based teams. Similarly, female participation in cricket grew by 5% in 2018-19, 27% of all cricket participants in Victoria are female and there was a 12% increase in the number of new girls' teams taking to the field¹⁰.

However, participation rates by girls (47%) in sport is still considerably less than the participation rate of boys (68%)¹¹. At a Victorian State Government level there is a priority to increase physical activity participation and to create a safer and more equitable place for women and girls. It has introduced various programs such as This Girl Can, provided funding for female change facilities and instigated a range of other initiatives.

¹⁰ Cricket Victoria (2019) Victoria retains top cricket participation status <https://www.cricketvictoria.com.au/victoria-retains-top-cricket-participation-status/>

¹¹ Mission Australia Youth Survey 2019: <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-impact-policy-advocacy/youth-survey>

¹² Golden Plains Shire Access and Inclusion Plan (2016-19)

¹⁰ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018) Older Australia at a Glance. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/older-people/older-australia-at-a-glance/contents/demographics-of-older-australians>

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR CARERS

There are currently 3,800 people living in the Shire with permanent disabilities and another 1,300 with temporary disabilities.¹² For people with disabilities aged 30-60 years there are currently limited physical activity opportunities available in the Shire. Carer responsibilities also restrict some residents from participating in physical activities. 13.6% of residents provide unpaid assistance to a person with a disability There is the potential to greatly enhance the lives of local residents by better understanding the roles of the various disability and respite services across the Shire and across the region by better coordinating service delivery and providing additional opportunities.

OLDER ADULTS

Over one in seven Australians is over 65 years of age, and the life expectancy of women is 87 and for men is 85¹³. The percentage of older adults in our community is forecast to continue to grow. From a sport and recreation perspective, an ageing community is likely to need safe walking paths and pedestrian crossings; sport and active recreation facilities and programs that may provide low impact opportunities, locally based and low-cost programs and activities that support social connectedness and gentle exercise; information in suitable formats; accessible transport; volunteer options; suitable parking options; and accessible public toilets. It will also be important to ensure that facilities are designed according to Universal Design principles and that the needs of grandparents who look after their grandchildren are provided for in locations such as play spaces.

LIVEABILITY

Focus on places and spaces
Quality environment

ASSET MANAGEMENT

By providing sport and active recreation assets, there is a requirement to maintain these assets and to set aside funding for asset renewal. The maintenance of existing assets comes at considerable cost to Council, but also provides considerable benefits to the health and wellbeing of communities. Many Local Government Authorities are keen to limit the number of assets that they have financial responsibility for. Therefore, in the challenging fiscal times in which Golden Plains Shire Council is operating, due to greater competition to access funding from State and Federal Government and State Government rate capping for Victorian Local Government Authorities, Council needs to assess how it invests available resources to ensure the best outcomes for the community are achieved.

CAPITAL WORKS AND UPGRADES

Each of Council's master plans for recreation reserves should be reviewed to identify which actions have been achieved, which actions are in progress, which actions are no longer relevant and which actions are yet to be achieved (and the reason why). Once this list has been compiled, each project should be assessed against the agreed planning principles and other Council priorities. To ensure that best possible chance of securing external funding for prioritised capital works projects, projects should be shelf-ready and have considered feasibility and financial sustainability/viability prior to development.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES SUBSIDY (FEES AND CHARGES) POLICY

A community facilities subsidy (fees and charges) policy enables clubs to be treated in a fair and equitable manner. A community facilities subsidy policy promotes a shared investment between Council and direct beneficiaries of assets. Clubs have the opportunity to gain a higher level of subsidy if they meet certain criteria, e.g. provide junior sports activities, social sports, female sports, sports for older adults, or undertake some of the ground's maintenance themselves. In order to develop a fees and charges policy, Council must first understand what its maintenance costs for sports grounds and facilities are.

FACILITY STANDARDS AND SERVICE LEVELS

An agreed level of facility development and provision at sites, based on their specific category, e.g. neighbourhood, local, municipal and regional (or other such classification) will enable Council to clearly communicate to the community and sports clubs the standard of facility that they can expect. Facility standards have to comply with state sporting association facility design guidelines in order to attract external funding. Should clubs wish a higher standard of facility, they may be able to do so at their own expense, subject to approval and a risk management assessment from Council. Service levels for each hierarchy of facility should also be developed, taking into consideration the condition of facilities. Accurate cost information to service and maintain the assets at sites is a key step and will vary according to the condition of the facilities. Costing details will clearly articulate how Council intends to maintain the facility and frequency levels. The role of each club also needs to be clearly spelt out.

LIVEABILITY

Focus on places and spaces
Quality environment

FACILITIES:

REGIONAL LEVEL FACILITIES

Most regional level facilities are provided in neighbouring Ballarat and Geelong where there is the population to support regional level activities. There is however a real opportunity to further enhance equestrian facilities in the Shire. No other Council in the G21 area has such facilities (Werribee is the closest facility), the further development of such facilities could enable the attraction of state and national level events. Given the high level of horse ownership in the Shire, the suitable landscapes, the existing facilities and the desire by more young women to ride horses – an investment in this area could be very beneficial.

AQUATIC FACILITIES

The desire for an aquatic facility in the Shire (featuring opportunities to swim laps, learn to swim and take part in other water related activities) was strongly supported by survey participants. It was identified as the number one sport and active recreation improvement by local residents. Swimming was also identified as the number one activity that both adults (17%) and children (18%) would like to do (that they don't currently do). The main reason people don't currently participate in swimming to the level that they desire is that there are no public swimming pools in the Shire.

The cost to develop an indoor heated pool for a place the size of Bannockburn is estimated to be in the 10's of millions of dollars to build and this is expected to cost approximately one million dollars to operate annually. Industry figures suggest that in order for an aquatic centre to be viable, it needs a catchment of approximately 10,000 people and also needs to be able to access sufficient resources to both construct and operate the facility. Any aquatics feasibility study

needs to take into consideration the provision of pools by private providers or by schools such as St Mary MacKillop Primary School for a 25 metre pool / swim centre.

FENCED OFF LEASH DOG AREAS

The community has expressed strong demand for a fenced purpose-built off leash area suitable for dogs to exercise, play and socialise. Dog walking in a dog park was the 5th highest most desired activity by survey participants. The demand is likely to increase as more people move to the Shire and backyards become smaller. Such a facility has great opportunities for exercise and social connection by local residents. If no such facility is developed, there will be increasing demand to walk dogs on ovals, potentially creating conflicts of use during training times and potentially leaving dog faeces on ovals and soccer pitches. The majority of Golden Plains Shire is currently designated as a dog off-leash area, except for designated areas as per Local Law No.2. Many Victorian Councils provide the opposite scenario in that all areas are on-leash unless specifically designated. As part of future capital works planning, identification of sites for off leash dog areas in towns with large populations should be considered.

GYMS

In Victoria, undertaking a gym / fitness workout is the 2nd most popular physical activity for people over 15 years of age. In Golden Plains Shire 43% of residents surveyed stated that they have undertaken at least one gym workout in the last 12 months and undertaking a gym workout is the 6th most popular physical activity, despite the fact that there is only one commercial gym in the Shire at present. Even though many residents have own gyms, or have several items of gym equipment at home, there is still some demand for more gyms in the Shire.

LIVEABILITY

Focus on places and spaces
Quality environment

OUTDOOR FITNESS EQUIPMENT

Outdoor fitness equipment provides opportunities for people to take part in gym workouts for free, usually in an attractive outdoor setting. The installation of outdoor fitness equipment was the 11th highest priority by survey respondents when identifying the sport and recreation improvements needed to meet current and future community demand. Many Local Government Authorities in Victoria have installed such equipment (often as a trial in one area), but limited data is available on usage levels and types of users. There are currently two outdoor fitness equipment installations in the Shire: Bannockburn Heart and Bruce's Creek. There was demand by the community for additional outdoor fitness equipment stations.

PLAYGROUNDS

Golden Plains Shire Council recently adopted the Golden Plains Play Space Strategy (2019-2029). It outlines a variety of actions which are designed to improve play value across the municipality and to manage Council's investment in play spaces. The principles contained within the Play Strategy are aligned with the principles contained within the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.

SHARED PATHS

Trail related activities such as walking (66% participation rate by survey respondents), bushwalking (49%), cycling (41%) and running / jogging (36%) are listed in the top eight activities participated in by Golden Plains Shire residents who completed a community survey. The further development of shared paths / trails was a major priority by residents and the number one response on the community survey under the question which asked people to identify ways we could

encourage the community, particularly those who are currently inactive, to be more physically active. Key stakeholders acknowledged the link between the recreational aspect of trails (health and wellbeing) with the potential economic benefits (tourism businesses / businesses supporting trail users). They also noted the need to ensure that trails link to one another and that footpaths are developed in rural areas. The high level of participation and desired participation provides a strong evidence base for the allocation of additional resources for the further development and enhancement of the trail network

SYNTHETIC HOCKEY PITCH

In the G21 region, 63% of all players are under 18 years of age¹⁴. Hockey is the 4th most popular sport by young people engaged with as part of the strategy development and the development of a synthetic hockey field was identified as the 10th highest priority by survey respondents. There are currently no synthetic hockey fields in Golden Plains Shire. Although synthetic stand-alone hockey fields are generally only provided when there is a catchment of 100,000, the development of a multipurpose shared synthetic sports field that can be used by a variety of sports for competitions and training has a greater chance of experiencing optimum utilisation and attracting external funding. Further, the growth that is likely to occur in Bannockburn over the next decade warrants the need for a study to identify if such a facility is feasible or whether or not this need can be met by City of Greater Geelong or by City of Ballarat.

¹⁴ G21 Regional Hockey Strategy (2019)

LIVEABILITY

Focus on places and spaces
Quality environment

SHARED USE OF FACILITIES

Shared use of community and school facilities helps to maximise usage of specific facilities and also reduces the need to duplicate facilities. Some schools use Council facilities and some community members use school facilities. To ensure an effective and successful sharing arrangement, it is important that agreements transcend a change in school leadership and governance; that shared school facilities enable access to traditionally disadvantaged groups during the day; and that facilities operate on a user pays principle.

ACTIVATION OF SPACES

Through consultation activities undertaken the community told us that the facilities provided in the Shire are generally sufficient in number, size and quality (with a few exceptions). The key message is that people want public spaces, ovals and halls to be better utilised. A key way of activating spaces is to provide additional complementary infrastructure that encourages people to visit and stay for a period of time, e.g. seating, shade and lighting. Programs such as Summer in the Parks, movie nights and other community events can also help activate outdoor spaces. Programs such as gentle exercise, dance and martial arts in local halls / pavilions can help to better utilise these spaces. Council should continue to plan for and seek external funding to develop Stage 2 of the Bannockburn Heart Precinct to continue to activate this civic centre.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Consideration needs to be given to how sport and active recreation buildings and spaces are designed or modified so that they provide environmentally sustainable design features such as solar power, water harvesting schemes, passive heating and cooling, shade and provision of drinking water taps; reduce operating costs of facilities; and be competitive from a funding perspective. From a programming perspective, Council and clubs / groups also need to plan for an increased number of extreme events such as heat, drought, floods, fires and pandemics, which potentially result in cancellations of sports days / events, financial loss and damage to facilities. This may require some building modifications, policy developments or new communication protocols.

SUPPORT FOR CLUBS ON CROWN LAND

Many communities are unaware of whether the facilities they use are based on Crown Land, Council owned or managed land or trust/private land. There is a clear need to identify and standardise through Council policy various service levels, support for clubs and facilities and management agreements for facilities on Crown Land.

Communities perceive inequities in the type of support provided to neighbouring sports facilities purely because the ground they are located on is owned by a different government entity.

CONNECTEDNESS

Community cohesion through sport and recreation
Volunteers, gender equity, inclusion

POPULATION GROWTH AND PLANNING OF COMMUNITIES

As the population of Golden Plains Shire grows, it will be important to ensure that an adequate amount of quality, diverse and accessible open space (as per the Planning Scheme) is set aside to meet the future needs of the community and to encourage people to be physically active. There is a unique opportunity with large scale greenfield sites (e.g. Bannockburn South) to have open space infrastructure, informal recreation and sports facilities developed upfront as part of developer contributions.

SUPPORT FOR SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION CLUBS

Sport and active recreation clubs are major providers of physical activity within the Shire. The majority of these clubs and organisations are managed by unpaid community members. Some clubs struggle to undertake all of the tasks that they are required to do. With over 80 clubs in the Shire, it is difficult for Council to support each club individually. To maximise its impact, it may be best for Council to focus on actions that have a strong likelihood of increasing participation in physical activity. Some examples may include the capacity building of clubs so that they are better positioned to provide suitable opportunities that attract higher numbers of participants and assistance in developing new clubs (such as Woody Yaloak Football Club) as opposed to writing funding applications on behalf of clubs or direct service provision such as running a walking group. Collaborations with partners such as regional sports assemblies, YMCA, State Sporting Associations and the private sector will also be essential.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the lifeblood of sport and active recreation. Without them, there would be far less physical activity opportunities available for local residents and many facilities would become the responsibility of Council to maintain. It is estimated that it may cost Council approximately 5 times as much money to deliver the same service if volunteers were not involved in sport and active recreation as administrators, coaches / instructors, kiosk / bar workers, gate keepers and maintenance people.

Volunteering is also altruistic and provides an opportunity for people to give back to their community or sport, share their skills, feel valued and make new social connections.

73% of sports clubs identified their biggest challenge as attracting and retaining Committee of Management, working bees and running events / activities. Those involved in clubs or organisations and a Councillor said that it is hard to attract new volunteers due to bureaucratic / red tape issues, insurance issues, regulation such as working with children and police checks and the lack of volunteer culture by some new people moving into the area. Local residents told us that volunteering is challenging due to the time commitments and the personal costs involved, and that burn out is an issue.

CONNECTEDNESS

Community cohesion through sport and recreation
Volunteers, gender equity, inclusion

EQUITY

By providing an equitable distribution of sport and active recreation facilities throughout the municipality, there is an assumption that more people will have easier access to these facilities. This is particularly the case for people without ready access to transport. It also enhances liveability of small towns, can help to improve people's health and wellbeing and may help to retain or even build population levels. Conversely, it is costly and not sustainable to provide facilities in each town and sometimes facilities may not have the population to support them, i.e. they may not be feasible or financially viable.

SOCIAL CONNECTION / LIVEABILITY

Although people may be more connected than they have ever been to people through social media, there is also a significant number of people who report that they are lonely. The provision of low-cost, place-based formal and informal sport and recreation activities help to create spaces where people can meet one another and develop a greater sense of connection to their community. Similarly, volunteering opportunities, such as taking part in a sports club working bee, taking a turn at registering runners for Park Run and working in the kiosk at a football / netball game can enable people to meet one another and form lasting social connections. The opportunity to develop social interactions should be a focus of many sport and active recreation activities.

By providing quality sport and active recreation programs, services and facilities, the perceived liveability of an area is enhanced. Improved liveability can add to the community's general pride of their town / area and help them to feel good about the place where they live. It can also attract other potential residents to move to the area, therefore creating a more vibrant and liveable community and flow on financial benefits.

COVID-19

At the time of writing this strategy, the ongoing and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on sport and active recreation participation and community connections is not known. It is a continually evolving situation. Despite closures of many types of businesses during the pandemic, Government agencies have highlighted the value of sport and active recreation as a means of maintaining physical and mental wellbeing by encouraging people to walk and cycle and exercise at home (whilst adhering to social distancing guidelines). Golden Plains Shire needs to be ready to respond to these impacts and to help create environments whereby local residents can be active and connected. It also needs to ensure that during crises such as pandemics, floods and fire that the service system is robust and flexible enough to respond to the changing needs of the community.

COMMUNICATIONS

Strong support was received from local residents for improved communications from Golden Plains Shire, specifically in relation to better promotion of what already exists, e.g. clubs, activities and facilities; and what sport and active recreation facilities Council is working on or has recently upgraded /developed.

TRANSPORT

Transport was identified by a number of local residents as a barrier to participation, particularly for people with disabilities, older adults and young people. If affordable, convenient and safe transport options (private or public) are available, members of the community are more likely to be able to access sport and active recreation activities, and thereby increase the likelihood of attaining the benefits that can be achieved through participation, i.e. improved physical and mental health and community connectedness.

POLICY AND PLANNING

Guidelines and rules for decision making

POLICIES AND PLANNING

Policies are important planning tools that enable all parties to understand Council's position on specific topics. Policies are guided by the planning principles within the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy and enables Council to achieve its vision in relation to sport and active recreation and enables it to work towards greater optimisation of community infrastructure, greater sustainability, greater accessibility and inclusiveness and more equitable outcomes.

Improved data collection around a whole variety of different facets, e.g. participation levels, population projections, facility usage, facility / program demand and maintenance costs for sports grounds and facilities will enable Council to better plan for and meet the existing and future needs of the community. Some of the key policies that need to be developed include:

1. **A COMMUNITY FACILITY SUBSIDY (FEES AND CHARGES) POLICY**
2. **A DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY**
3. **A CLUB FINANCIAL CO-CONTRIBUTION POLICY FOR CAPITAL WORKS DEVELOPMENTS**
4. **A CRICKET WICKET POLICY**
5. **COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR CROWN LAND POLICY.**



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

14 key recommendations have been identified as priorities in the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy. These recommendations have been developed under the three key pillars of this strategy and are unpinned by policy and planning:

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY	1.	Work to address barriers to participation in physical activity by young people, girls and women, people with disabilities and older adults in partnership with clubs, key stakeholders and the community
	2.	Work to explore new and flexible ways of delivering physical activity opportunities to ensure maximum participation in partnership with clubs, key stakeholders and communities
LIVEABILITY	3.	Explore opportunities to create a diversity of non-organised and unstructured physical activity opportunities that enable people to improve their health and wellbeing and to connect with one another
	4.	Better utilise existing sport and active recreation assets by activating these spaces through infrastructure upgrades and programming
	5.	Incorporate Environmentally Sustainable Design principles into the development of all community sport and active recreation infrastructure
CONNECTEDNESS	6.	Continue to provide support to clubs, organisations and communities throughout the Shire to help them to deliver quality sport and active recreation opportunities for local residents
	7.	Invest in sport and active recreation facilities that work with the strengths of the Shire and complement the network of facilities planned at a local and regional level
	8.	Facilitate and provide opportunities to promote social connection and liveability
	9.	Utilise Universal Design Principles in the design of sport and active recreation programming, services and facilities to enable equitable access.
	10.	Promote and provide information about sport and active recreation facilities, programs and services to the community through a variety of different mediums
	11.	Explore and advocate for ways to improve transport options for the local community so that more people can access sport and active recreation opportunities
POLICY AND PLANNING	12.	Develop and implement policies, processes and tools to ensure the sustainable development, management, operation and renewal of quality sport and active recreation participation programming, services and infrastructure across the Shire
	13.	Integrate sport and active recreation needs and developments into Council's planning processes
	14.	Continue to develop an evidence base to support sport and active recreation initiatives

Each of these recommendations is included in the Action Plan, supported by examples or potential actions to be explored over the next 10 years.

ACTION PLAN



**THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS
HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED IN
ORDER TO HELP GOLDEN
PLAINS SHIRE ACHIEVE ITS
VISION OF AN ACTIVE AND
CONNECTED COMMUNITY**

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY

Focus on participation and programs
Diversity, activation

FOCUS AREA

OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

ACTION

Work to address barriers to participation in physical activity by young people, girls and women, people with disabilities and older adults in partnership with sports clubs, key stakeholders and the community including:

Key principles:

- Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections
- Demonstrated by an evidence base and community need
- Sustainable
- Equitable
- Accessible and inclusive

1. working in partnership with clubs to facilitate come and try days and to instigate shorter / hybrid versions of sport and active recreation to attract young people
2. exploring the use of technology in any new programs, services or facilities that may encourage young people to become more physically active
3. involving children and young people in the planning of any new sport and active recreation facilities or activities to ensure that these spaces and opportunities meet their needs
4. continuing to support programs such as This Girl Can to encourage more girls and women to be physically active
5. working in partnership with sports clubs, Regional Sports Assemblies and State Sporting Associations to ensure that facilities and clubs are accessible and welcoming for girls and women
6. undertaking stakeholder mapping to determine what role the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Leisure Networks, Sports Central and other health agencies have in the delivery of programs and services for people with disabilities and carers and work internally with the Active Ageing and Disability Team to identify, develop and promote programs and opportunities to address the gap in provision
7. ensuring that an all ages and universal design lens is placed over facility developments and upgrades, services and communications so that the needs of older adults are addressed
8. exploring options to ensure that any programs facilitated by Council are low cost to enable maximum participation (yet be sustainable and viable)
9. promoting free and low-cost initiatives available in the community such as walking and cycling paths, playgrounds, parks, skate parks, outdoor fitness equipment, the splash park at Bannockburn Heart and various programs such as Active April, Park Run, come and try days
10. seeking opportunities to reduce the cost of children's sport by partnering with sponsors to develop junior programs, equipment donation schemes or other innovative programs/grants
11. advocate and work in partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria, Regional Sports Assemblies and State Sporting Associations to reduce the affiliation and insurance costs of children's sport where possible

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY

Focus on participation and programs
Diversity, activation

FOCUS AREA	ACTION
DELIVERY OF SPORT AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES	Work to explore new and flexible ways of delivering physical activity opportunities to ensure maximum participation, in partnership with clubs, key stakeholders and communities, including:
<p>Key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections • Builds community capacity • Equitable • Accessible and inclusive • Partnerships and collaborations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. encouraging clubs and communities to consider providing a mix of social level participation opportunities in addition to (or potentially instead of) regular competition level participation requiring a higher skill set 13. exploring how the Park Run model could be adapted to increase physical activity in other sports such as walking and cycling 14. considering training local people to become instructors / coaches for free, on the condition that the person trained agrees to commit to running the activity they have been trained for in their local community for a minimum period (e.g. 12 months or more) 15. partnering with existing service providers such as the YMCA, a regional sports assembly, an existing club / organisation or the private sector (e.g. a personal trainer) to offer more activities and programs locally 16. continuing to promote and support sport and recreation participation programs such as This Girl Can, Premier's Active April, RSPCA Million Paws Walk, walk / ride to school and work-days and any other relevant initiatives

LIVEABILITY

Focus on places and spaces
Quality environment

FOCUS AREA	ACTION
DIVERSITY NON-ORGANISED AND UNSTRUCTURED OPPORTUNITIES	Explore opportunities to create a diversity of non-organised and unstructured physical activity opportunities that enable people to improve their health and wellbeing and to connect with one another, including:
<p>Key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections • Demonstrated by an evidence base and community need • Builds community capacity • Sustainable • Equitable • Accessible and inclusive • Optimisation of community infrastructure • Partnerships and collaborations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. investigating the development of a fenced off-leash dog area in the Shire, using the expertise of dog behaviouralists to ensure the best possible outcomes for both dogs and their owners 18. exploring opportunities to provide gym experiences for local residents within the Shire by encouraging sports club and school to provide community access to their gym facilities 19. facilitating the development of community run gyms (potentially in partnership with a neighbourhood house or a health centre) 20. providing some basic equipment at halls, e.g. exercise mats and hand weights, and the training up of a local person to deliver floor and mat based exercises with minimal equipment 21. considering installing an additional outdoor fitness equipment station within the Shire in an area where there is high demand; it is well located with good public passive surveillance; it is located near toilet facilities; it is supported by an exercise program run by an exercise physiologist or the like for a period of time; and there is an adequate maintenance budget set aside annually 22. implementing the recommendations contained within the Golden Plains Play Space Strategy (2019-2029) 23. clarifying responsibilities within Council for the development, activation, planning and construction of trails as opposed to footpaths 24. clarifying the works that are required along existing trails and in various towns, e.g. more trails, improved maintenance, improved connections, safety measures, signage, promotion, supporting infrastructure 25. establishing an annual budget to develop, manage and maintain any active recreation trail developments 26. seeking additional external funding to secure the resources to develop and upgrade paths and trails

LIVEABILITY

Focus on places and spaces
Quality environment

FOCUS AREA	ACTION
ACTIVATION OF SPACES	Better utilise existing sport and active recreation assets by activating these spaces through infrastructure upgrades and programming, including:
Key principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections • Builds community capacity • Sustainable • Equitable • Accessible and inclusive • Optimisation of community infrastructure • Partnerships and collaborations 	27. assessing open spaces, parks and outdoor sports facilities to determine if any additional infrastructure is required to better activate these spaces and develop partnerships with community-based organisations, supported by a dedicated physical activity program budget, to activate spaces such as halls, pavilions and parks to create additional physical activity opportunities or greater usage
ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DESIGN	Incorporate Environmentally Sustainable Design principles into the development of all community sport and active recreation infrastructure including:
Key principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable • Optimisation of community infrastructure 	28. working in partnership with Council’s environment team and project management team to ensure that ESD components are included in all facility upgrades and developments

CONNECTEDNESS

Community cohesion through sport and recreation
Volunteers, gender equity, inclusion

FOCUS AREA	ACTION
<p>SUPPORT FOR SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION CLUBS</p>	<p>Continue to provide support to clubs, organisations and communities throughout the Shire to help them to deliver quality sport and active recreation opportunities for local residents, including:</p>
<p>Key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections • Builds community capacity • Sustainable • Partnerships and collaborations 	<p>29. exploring ways to reduce barriers to volunteering in sport and active recreation and to recognise those who do volunteer</p> <p>30. exploring options with State Sporting Associations and the private sector to offer support to clubs through administrative support, grant writing, funding and training</p> <p>31. reviewing the contracts of Leisure Networks, Sports Central and the YMCA to ensure that these contracts meet the needs of clubs and organisations in Golden Plains Shire and align with the direction of the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy</p> <p>32. supporting clubs/committees to access additional resources (potentially through Council’s community grants program or other external grants) to support communities and organisations to deliver locally based activities and programs</p>
<p>NETWORK OF REGIONAL LEVEL FACILITIES</p>	<p>Invest in sport and active recreation facilities that work with the strengths of the Shire and complement the network of facilities planned at a local and regional level, including:</p>
<p>Key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections • Demonstrated by an evidence base and community need • Sustainable • Optimisation of community infrastructure 	<p>33. focusing on creating better quality facilities within a catchment or cluster of towns, rather than developing a suite of facilities in every small township.</p> <p>34. continuing to plan and seek external funding for development of the Bannockburn Heart Stage 2</p> <p>35. continuing to develop a regional equestrian facility at Smythesdale (as the Shire’s only regional-level facility), taking into consideration any additional supporting infrastructure and programming required to increase participation. Council should continue to implement and review / update the master plan for this precinct</p>

CONNECTEDNESS

Community cohesion through sport and recreation
Volunteers, gender equity, inclusion

FOCUS AREA	ACTION
SOCIAL CONNECTION / LIVEABILITY	Facilitate and provide opportunities to promote social connection and liveability, including:
Key principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections • Demonstrated by an evidence base and community need • Builds community capacity • Sustainable • Equitable • Accessible and inclusive • Safe 	36. implementing low-cost, place-based formal and informal sport and recreation activities for the community to enable them to improve their health and wellbeing; to build their confidence in participating in sport and active recreation opportunities (especially post COVID-19) and to rebuild or develop new community connections
ACCESS	Utilise Universal Design Principles in the design of sport and active recreation programming, services and facilities to enable equitable access to facilities, including:
Key principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections • Equitable • Accessible and inclusive • Adaptable / multi-purpose • Safe 	37. working to ensure that programs, services and facilities exceed Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA) and Building Code of Australian compliance wherever possible 38. working to ensure that programs, services and facilities are accessible to people of all ages, abilities, genders and backgrounds

CONNECTEDNESS

Community cohesion through sport and recreation
Volunteers, gender equity, inclusion

FOCUS AREA	ACTION
COMMUNICATIONS	Promote and provide information about sport and active recreation facilities, programs and services to the community through a variety of different mediums, including:

Key principles:

- Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections
- Demonstrated by an evidence base and community need

- 39.** developing a marketing and communications plan to:
- identify the key stakeholders and the best mediums in which to engage with them and to promote sport and active recreation opportunities e.g. website upgrade, independent portal and other tools that do not rely on internet access.
 - continue to provide positive messaging about facilities that Council has upgraded, is planning to upgrade and the rationale behind the upgrade.

TRANSPORT	Explore and advocate for ways to improve transport options for the local community so that more people can access sport and active recreation opportunities, including:
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Key principles:

- Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections
- Demonstrated by an evidence base and community need
- Equitable
- Accessible and inclusive

- 40.** continuing to advocate to Transport Victoria for increased public transport services at times that meet the needs of local residents
- 41.** undertaking a cost benefit analysis to determine the viability of purchasing and operating a community bus service to transport groups that may not have access to their own transport to sport and active recreation activities
- 42.** exploring other forms of group transport to enable those without transport to better access sport and recreation facilities, programs and services, e.g. shared ride schemes, maxi taxis and use of school buses outside school hours
- 43.** considering the development of shared trails between towns to connect communities to one another and improve access to sport and active recreation facilities
- 44.** exploring innovative active recreation opportunities that don't rely on transport (eSport, virtual gyms, etc)

POLICY AND
PLANNING

Guidelines and rules for decision making

FOCUS AREA	ACTION
POLICIES, PROCESSES AND TOOLS	Develop and implement policies, processes and tools to ensure the sustainable development, management, operation and renewal of quality sport and active recreation participation programming, services and infrastructure across the Shire, including:
<p>Key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections • Demonstrated by an evidence base and community need • Sustainable • Equitable • Accessible and inclusive • Adaptable / multi-purpose • Optimisation of community infrastructure • Partnerships and collaborations 	<p>45. developing the following specific policies, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a community facility subsidy (fees and charges) policy (which incorporates an understanding of maintenance costs for sports grounds and facilities) - a developer contributions policy - a club financial co-contribution policy for capital works developments - a cricket wicket policy <p>46. developing a set of facility hierarchy levels that clearly articulate the type of facility that is provided within each classification and align service levels to each hierarchy. As part of this body of work, determine what impact a potential change to service levels may have on clubs in terms of volunteer time, expertise, access to equipment and standards</p> <p>47. developing a capital works assessment tool, with the strategic planning principles embedded, to provide a rating to determine each potential project's level of priority against every other project</p> <p>48. developing a tool or policy to determine whether or not any assets need to be decommissioned, based on factors such as under-utilisation, condition of facility and ability to meet regulations / legislation</p> <p>49. conducting a feasibility study prior to developing any new major facilities (such as an aquatic centre, regional equestrian centre upgrade or synthetic hockey pitch) to ensure that there is demand and that the facility is likely to be well utilised and viable and ensure whole of life costs are identified</p> <p>50. ensuring that projects are shovel-ready prior to seeking external funding, i.e. already designed and costed and demonstrate that they will increase participation, meet Environmentally Sustainable Design and Universal Design requirements and align with State and Local Government policy directions, demonstrate community need, demonstrate financial sustainability and be able to match the dollar contribution required</p> <p>51. ensuring that new or upgraded facilities are multi-purpose in design to cater for changing needs over time and are designed to optimise the use of facilities, e.g. undertake a review to determine if additional lighting is required along specific walking / cycling tracks and facilities such as tennis courts to enable night-time use</p>

POLICY AND PLANNING

Guidelines and rules for decision making

FOCUS AREA	ACTION
<p>POLICIES, PROCESSES AND TOOLS</p>	<p>Develop and implement policies, processes and tools to ensure the sustainable development, management, operation and renewal of quality sport and active recreation participation programming, services and infrastructure across the Shire, including:</p>
<p>Key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections • Demonstrated by an evidence base and community need • Sustainable • Equitable • Accessible and inclusive • Adaptable / multi-purpose • Optimisation of community infrastructure • Partnerships and collaborations 	<p>52. continuing to advocate to the Department of Education and Training from Council and Sport and Recreation Victoria to pave the way for more favourable joint use agreements to allow shared school and community use</p> <p>53. establishing agreements with schools around the condition of use of Council sport and active recreation facilities</p> <p>54. enhancing existing facilities in preference to necessarily building new facilities in the Shire to maximise their usage where possible</p>
<p>INTEGRATED PLANNING</p>	<p>Integrate sport and active recreation needs and developments into Council’s planning processes, including:</p>
<p>Key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections • Demonstrated by an evidence base and community need • Sustainable • Equitable • Accessible and inclusive • Optimisation of community infrastructure 	<p>55. ensuring that the sport and active recreation team works collaboratively with the planning team and other key stakeholders across Council in the planning of sport and active recreation programs, services and facilities, including future facilities to meet the needs of communities in growth areas</p> <p>56. determining the specific locations for open space sites (including parks, playgrounds, trails, and sport and active recreation facilities) as part of Council’s structure planning process for towns</p> <p>57. ensuring resourcing for the ongoing management and maintenance of open spaces and associated facilities is considered when planning new facilities in residential developments</p>

POLICY AND PLANNING

Guidelines and rules for decision making

FOCUS AREA	ACTION
EVIDENCE BASE	Continue to develop an evidence base to support sport and active recreation initiatives, including:
<p>Key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections • Demonstrated by an evidence base and community need 	<p>58. collecting baseline data on local levels of participation (using tools such as Council's CASIMO program)</p> <p>59. analysing usage data, population data, asset management audit findings and industry trends captured in CASIMO</p> <p>60. assessing participation levels on an annual basis to see if actions designed to increase participation have been successful</p>
CROWN LAND	Identify various options and the preferred direction regarding Council support of clubs and facilities based on the various different types of Crown Land, including:
<p>Key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections • Demonstrated by an evidence base and community need • Optimisation of community infrastructure 	<p>61. developing a Crown Land Management policy</p>

EVALUATION AND REPORTING

The Sport and Active Recreation Strategy needs to be reviewed on an annual basis and a new strategy needs to be prepared prior to 2030. Ideally, an intra-Council working group, made up of staff across a number of different areas will be established to meet twice per year to discuss the key priorities and work collaboratively on supporting or achieving these priorities.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

As one of the key goals of the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy is to increase participation by local residents in physical activity, the key form of measurement to be undertaken as part of this strategy is to monitor and analyse participation data. Data will be obtained from annual Active April participation statistics, along with four-yearly Australian Bureau of Statistics Census participation data and CASIMO data. This information needs to be reported on as part of the annual review of the strategy.

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL

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