



Hopetoun Recreation Reserve Master Plan

December 2023



Yarriambiack
SHIRE COUNCIL

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Yarriambiack
SHIRE COUNCIL



VICTORIA
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The preparation of this Master Plan was supported by the Victorian Government



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Executive summary

Introduction

With tenant clubs offering AFL, cricket and netball, the Hopetoun Recreation Reserve plays an important role to the Hopetoun and surrounding communities.

The site is used year-round with these and other activities, with the tenant clubs having approximately 310 members in total. It is noted that the clubs also use the Beulah Recreation Reserve.

In addition to the Recreation Reserve, Hopetoun boasts other sport and recreation facilities such as Lake Lascelles, the Hopetoun Tennis and Bowls Clubs, and the Hopetoun Golf Club.

The Recreation Reserve and Golf Club are located in the southern aspect of town while the Lake, tennis and bowls facilities are less than a kilometer by road away in the town's eastern aspect.

The Reserve's sporting facilities are generally in good condition (with possible improvements noted later in this report) while suitable recreation opportunities are somewhat currently limited.

Existing situation

As mentioned, the 6.6ha Council-owned facility is located in the southern aspect of Hopetoun, neighbouring the golf course and Hopetoun P-12 College. The Reserve is zoned Public Park and Recreation.

The Reserve is flat and is well embellished with:

- lit football field (with turf cricket wicket)
- two lit netball courts
- 2-net cricket practice facility (synthetic grass pitches)
- main pavilion (including announcers box)
- netball 'pavilion'/shed
- range of ancillary buildings (grandstand, public toilets, players dugouts, scoreboard,
- various buildings including chicken and wool sheds, sheep pavilion and horse stables
- medium size, shaded playground
- small an basic skate park

- large sealed car park and informal parking areas
- ticket booth at main entry.

Demand for upgrade

Demand for upgrades to the Reserve has been established through consultation with Council, user groups and peak bodies and with consideration of existing opportunities. Key directions include:

- recreation
 - removal of existing skate facility
 - installation of new pump track and landscaped surrounds, including shade and water
 - treatment of gravel track to ease maintenance and increase use as walking track
 - upgrade existing playground
- sport
 - playing field improvements (irrigation)
 - improved spectator facilities (including grandstand refurbishment)
 - improved netball court surrounds
- community facilities
 - increased promotion/use of pavilion as facility for community use.

Over-arching design principles

Preparation of the Master Plan reflects efforts to:

- increase use of the site by the community through improvements to recreation features and opportunities
- increase the multi-use of facilities to allow site to continue to be a community hub
- ensure sporting facilities meet current and future needs and guidelines.


Australian Government
**A Nation Building Project
ECONOMIC STIMULUS PLAN**
Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan
supporting jobs and rebuilding our infrastructure for the future.
www.australia.gov.au/economicstimulus
Authorised by the Australian Government, Canberra 2009. Modelled by Deborah Sporn, 3 Perspectives Studio, Queensland NTSP 2009.



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Introduction

Project overview

ROSS Planning was commissioned by Yarriambiack Shire Council to develop a master plan for Hopetoun Recreation Reserve. The site is the main provider of formal sport for Hopetoun, with tennis, bowls, and swimming provided less than a kilometer away by road in the eastern aspect of town.

The Reserve also functions as a community gathering space for community events and this master plan is intended to increase community use of the site.

This Master Plan represents an opportunity to build upon the existing uses and to provide a clear strategic (and sustainable) vision for the Reserve.

What is a master plan?

A master plan provides a vision for a site, identifying what it should look like and how it should function into the future. It establishes a strong and consistent direction by providing a framework for ongoing improvement. It considers the interrelationship between:

- current character and functionality
- public expectations and needs
- emerging issues and trends
- the realities of the economic, social, environmental and legislative context of the time.

The result is a plan that balances needs across a range of often conflicting interests. The master plan does not necessarily suggest that all elements should proceed immediately, or that Council or the user groups should be responsible for all capital costs, in respect of those items that are progressed.

It is important to note that the intent of a master plan is to provide a framework for future development of the Reserve over an extended period of time so that ad hoc improvements are avoided, and community use and long-term viability are maximised. To ensure this intent is achieved, a master plan should be monitored regularly to ensure the outcomes continue to meet community needs in the best possible way.

Hierarchy of planning and processes

It is important to note that the master plan provides a preferred strategic concept for the site. However, further detailed investigation and design is required prior to construction of the individual elements identified. These investigations may include:

- topographic surveys
- geotechnical investigations
- required planning approvals
- detailed design and construction drawings
- bill of quantities
- tenders and procurement processes.

Engagement of professionals with appropriate qualifications will be essential for these tasks.

Project objectives

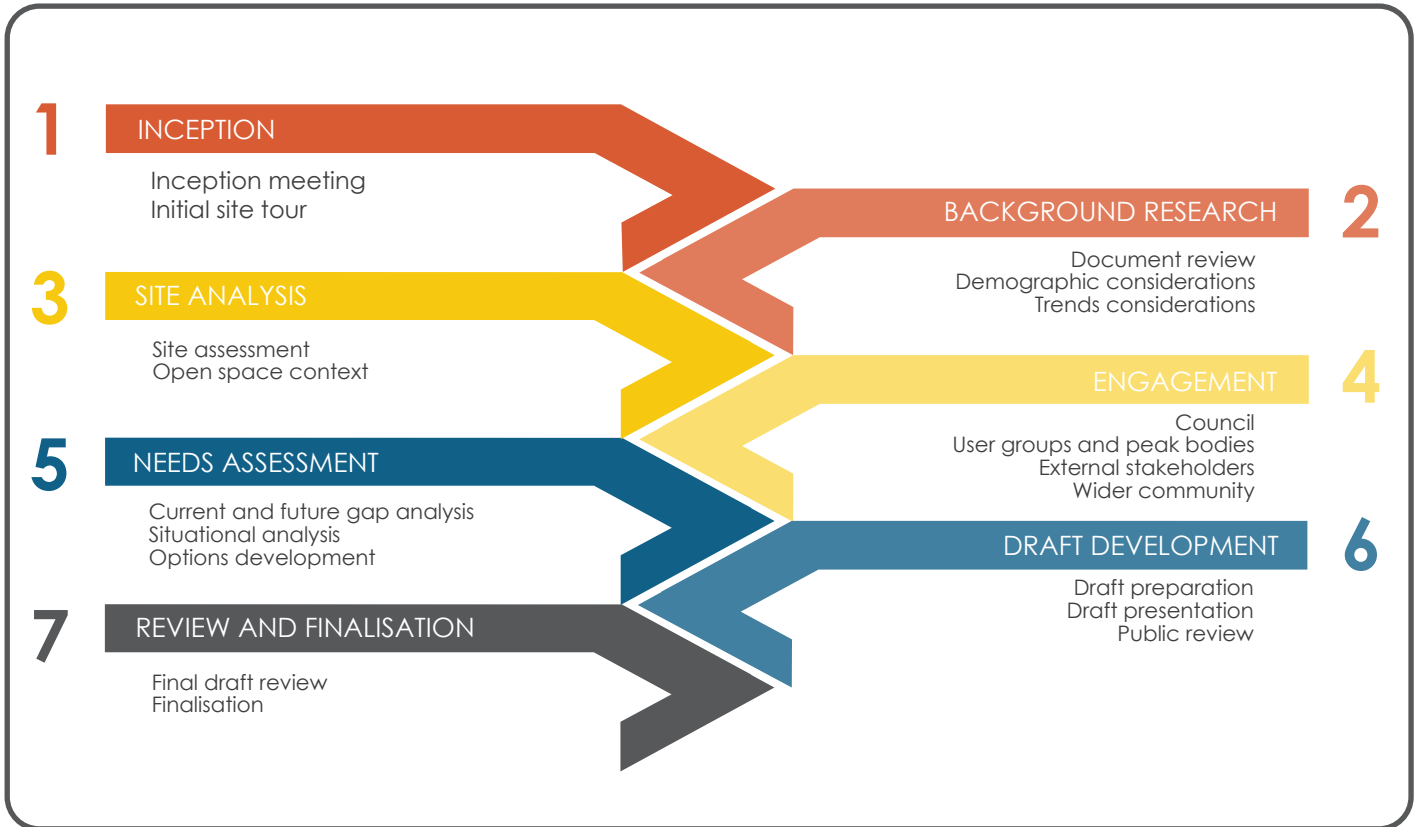
The Master Plan will provide a planning and design framework for the future development and enhancement of the Recreation Reserve. The Master Plan will guide the creation of sport, recreation and community facilities to cater for the needs of the community and user groups over the next 20 years. The Master Plan has the following objectives:

- ❑ to encourage informal recreation activities to be enjoyed by the general community
- ❑ to consider the diversity of recreation and sport opportunities to ensure equitable access
- ❑ to create safe access and integrated movement to, and through, the Reserve
- ❑ to promote sustainable development and practical maintenance regimes
- ❑ to foster partnerships for capital development and ongoing management of the Reserve.



Process

The project program spans across seven stages and has been delivered as follows:





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Strategic context

Literature review

In order to present a clear picture of the background issues and opportunities influencing the potential development of the Recreation Reserve, a literature review has been undertaken. Relevant policies and adopted strategies and plans have been reviewed and considered in preparation of the Master Plan.

Council Plan 2021-2025

This Plan articulates Council's overarching community vision, objectives and actions. With a vision of:

A connected rural community who values its land and wellbeing...

It is clear that parks and reserves can play a key role by providing opportunities for connection, health and wellbeing. Key actions influencing the development of the Master Plan are also contained within Key Objective 2 - A Healthy and Inclusive Community:

- master plan the Hopetoun Recreation Reserve (among other sites)
- seek funding for the design and development of the Hopetoun skate park (among other projects)
- assisting clubs and organisations to attract funding to support sport, active and passive recreation programs, initiatives and infrastructure
- identify priority projects and assist in the development of concept plans and schematic drawings.

The undertaking of this master plan is in clear alignment with the Council Plan 2021-2025.

Asset Management Plan 2022-2032

This Asset Management Strategy was prepared to ensure that Council's critical infrastructure (roads, footpaths, bridges and culverts, buildings and facilities, stormwater drainage, plant and equipment, open spaces and airports) is provided for in a financially responsible manner, while reflecting appropriate levels of services. As the Plan notes "moving forward in the future, the challenge for Council is to continue to deliver the expected quality services to the community from its aging and increasingly costly infrastructure, while making the best use of Council's limited financial capacity" (p. 4).

Buildings and facilities (that include halls, library, kindergartens, sports clubrooms etc) have been shown to be in overall poor condition. Combined, 91% of buildings are considered fair, poor or very poor (fair - 38%, poor - 48%, very poor - 5%). With poor and very poor buildings and facilities requiring major works within 2 years, Council faces a significant asset maintenance and upgrade backlog. Although the main pavilion at Hopetoun is in fairly good condition, the existing grandstand is in poor condition.

While the sporting field is in relatively good condition, it would benefit greatly from an extended/upgraded irrigation system.

Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016-2025

The Strategy outlines a clear desired level of embellishment for each size town and village. Given its population base, Hopetoun is considered a *Medium Town*. The preferred sport and recreation embellishments for medium towns will be closely considered in development of the Master Plan with recommended actions for Hopetoun Recreation Reserve undertaken.

Venue inspection final site report - Hopetoun Recreation Reserve (AFL Victoria)

Although this report rated the Reserve well with an overall rating of 93/111, it did identify some possible facility improvements:

- gender neutral change facilities (although female gootball not being played at the time)
- doctor's room
- additional pan toilet/s and enclosed showers.

Community Action Plan - Hopetoun 2021

This Plan was prepared by the Hopetoun Progress Association) to provide an action plan to ensure future development will meet their vision of "... a township that is welcoming, visually vibrant, economically durable, environmentally sustainable and adequately resourced."

Identified actions that have been considered in development of the Master Plan include:

- skate park shade
- pump track
- cricket pitch replacement.





STRATEGIES AND PLANS - KEY IMPLICATIONS

When considered together, the literature review highlights a number of key considerations:

- Although some previously identified improvements to sporting facilities have been undertaken at the Reserve, improvements to community recreation facilities have been identified
- Council recognises the value of providing quality community infrastructure in order to enhance health and wellbeing.



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Site analysis



Site context

Location

The 6.6ha site is located just south of the town centre and is adjacent to Rural Northwest Health (Hopetoun Campus). With road frontage to Cummings and Strachan Streets, the site is also close to the golf course and the Hopetoun P-12 College.

Land

The site is one whole land parcel and is mainly flat with raised areas in the north-eastern aspect where the public toilets and skate park are located.

Planning considerations

In accordance with the Yarriambiack Planning Scheme (2023), the entire Reserve is zoned Public Park and Recreation (PPRZ).

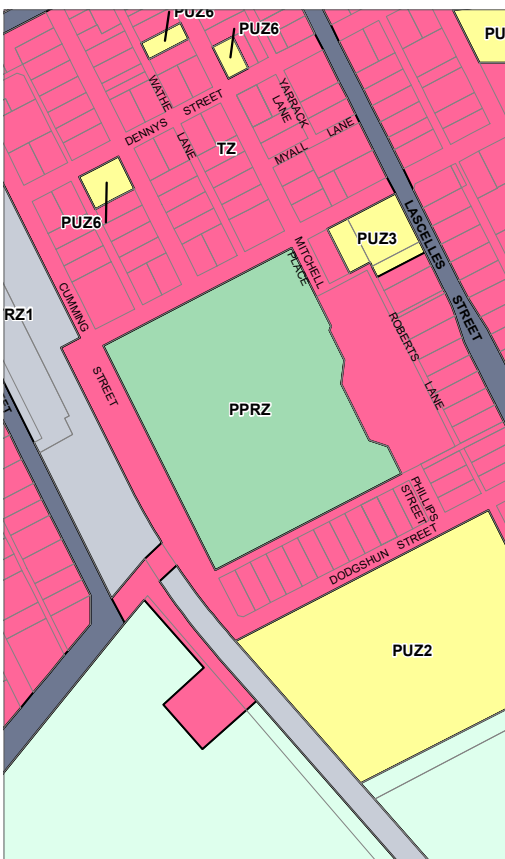
Public Park and Recreation zone

Yarriambiack Planning Scheme 2023

36.02 The purpose of the Public Park and Recreation zone is:

- To implement the Municipal Planning Strategy and the Planning Policy Framework.
- To recognise areas for public recreation and open space.
- To protect and conserve areas of significance where appropriate.
- To provide for commercial uses where appropriate.

The proposed Master Plan will not alter the current uses at the Reserve. Rather, it will extend and enhance formal sport and recreation uses in a manner compatible with the Public Park and Recreation zone code.



Hopetoun Recreation Reserve (Public Park and Recreation Zone) - largely surrounded by land zoned either Township or Public Use Zones.

Existing site elements

Buildings and improvements

Pavilion

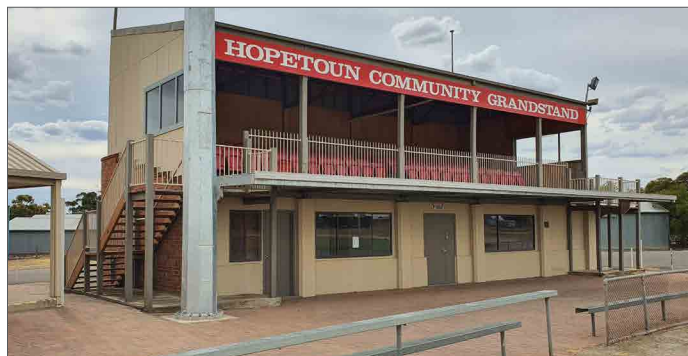
- ❑ large and functional
- ❑ recent extensions including medical room
- ❑ older club rooms and kitchen facilities.

Grandstand (Hopetoun Community Grandstand)

- ❑ currently unused due to safety concerns, including the ceiling of area underneath seating section
- ❑ historically significant and worthy of renovation.

Netball club rooms

- ❑ recently improved, including covered disabled access
- ❑ small metal shed, but functional but with no dedicated toilet/change facilities
- ❑ only one small changeroom for both teams
- ❑ small viewing area over first court.



Sporting facilities

Main playing field

- ❑ large oval with turf cricket block in centre and additional open, grassed area to the south of playing field
- ❑ field lighting in place (4 towers each with five LED fittings) and noted to provide 100-149 lux by AFL inspection report
- ❑ playing surface in good condition but evidence that current irrigation not effective/uniform
- ❑ player dugouts and old 'Joe Poulton Scoreboard'
- ❑ two synthetic grass cricket practice nets to the south of playing field.



Netball

- ❑ two courts with playing surfaces in good condition and lighting
- ❑ small, metal players/scorer's dugouts
- ❑ unattractive surrounds with some bench seating but limited shade.



Recreation facilities

- ❑ old and basic concrete/metal skate park in north-eastern corner of site with no shade or water (one basic picnic table setting) and limited skate features
- ❑ medium sized shaded playground adjacent to second netball court and several old picnic table settings (unshaded).

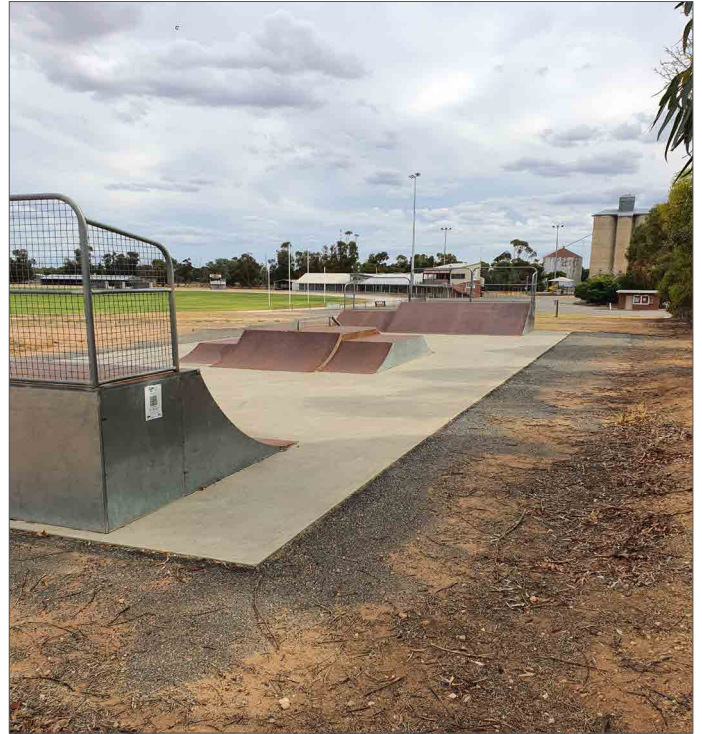
Additional improvements

Other buildings

- ❑ sheds across the site include a wool shed (currently used by TAFE), chicken shed, sheep pavilion (with unused sheep yards within), horse stables, and small, open storage shed
- ❑ ticket booth at main entrance on Strachan Street
- ❑ public toilet block in north-eastern aspect (along Mitchell Place).

Other features

- ❑ small garden feature at Strachan Street entrance with 'Wally and his Dog' sculpture.



Parking

There are ample parking opportunities across the site, albeit mostly informal spaces.

There is a sealed car park at the main entrance off Strachan Street, but it has no formal linemarking.

Informal spaces for car parking across the site are virtually everywhere except for the north-western aspect that is dominated by the main pavilion, netball courts and other infrastructure. These areas include the large gravel track around the playing field which is only fenced near the pavilion and sealed car park area.

In addition, if it were necessary at large events, there are ample on-street parking options.

The site is therefore well catered for in regard to parking, with improvements to the existing sealed car park recommended.



Access, linkages and connectivity

Walk and cycle connections

Although there is a lack of dedicated concrete pathways (with the exception of a pathway between the highway (Lascelles Street) along Strachan Street to the site), it is easily accessible from within the town either by walking or cycling due to the generous road widths and wide footpaths.

Internally, the large gravel (unsealed) track around the perimeter of the playing oval has been identified as an opportunity to act as an internal pedestrian connector around the site, and to provide off-street walking and cycling opportunities for the community.

Vehicle entry and access

The main entry to the site is off Strachan Street, while a secondary, informal entry is located off Cummings Street (opposite Audrey Street).

To avoid unwanted vehicle/pedestrian clashes, it is recommended that this secondary entry be only used when necessary by the club for operational/maintenance purposes and be closed to the public at other times. This will also allow the Strachan Street entrance to be updated with an appropriate entry statement and signage for the site.



Shade and shelter

The site is a large open space, generally lacking significant shaded areas for club operations and community use,

There are ample opportunities to plant large shade trees at appropriate places to remedy this, in addition to the proposed shelters at key activity nodes.

Player dugouts are very basic and offer little protection while the grandstand can not currently be accessed to provide spectators with a shaded viewing area.

The Master Plan has identified these issues and they are addressed accordingly.

Signage

Signage at the entry and within the site is minimal and limited to a regulatory skate park sign, signs acknowledging funding received for past improvements and some club and sponsorship signage. Sponsorship signage is minor with evidence of not being recently installed.

While the proliferation of signage is not being recommended, the Master Plan has identified the need to create a more welcoming entry statement at the Strachan Street entrance through the use of appropriate signage and landscaping. The proposed signage should include information for community members/visitors regarding what the site offers and ensures they are encouraged to use the facilities and any programs that are being offered.

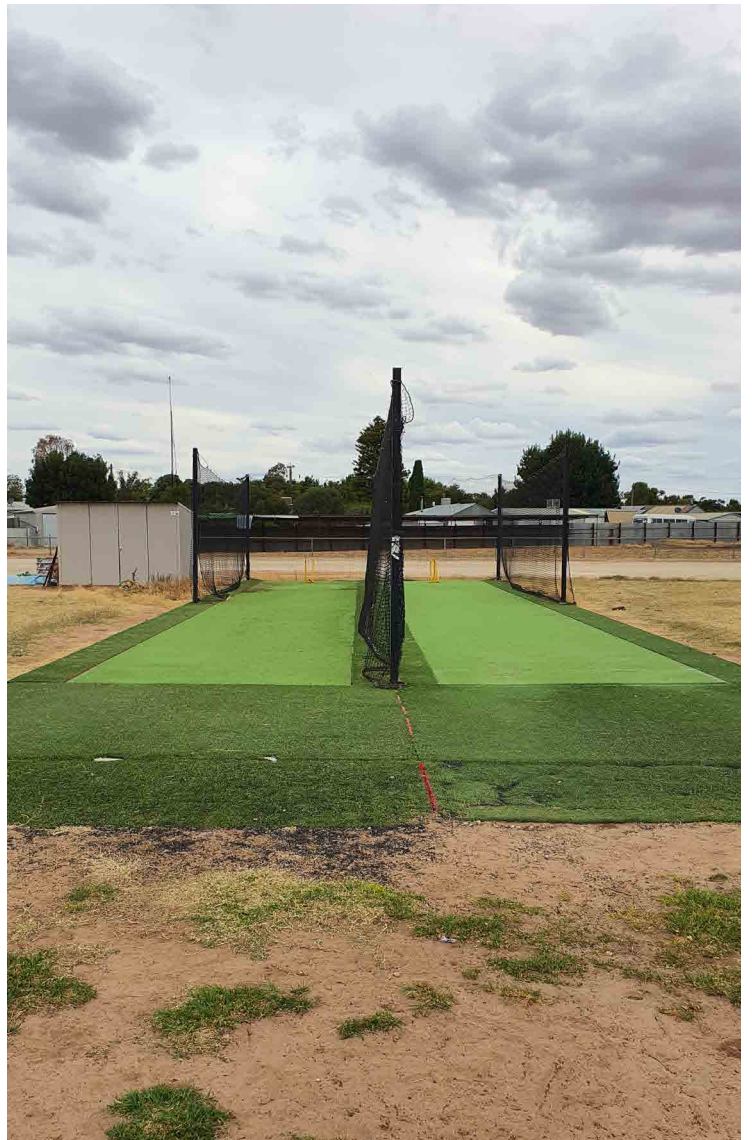


Facility snapshot



Existing key facilities

1. Netball courts
2. 'Chook' shed
3. Wool shed
4. Main entry
5. Skate park
6. Sealed car park
7. Grandstand
8. Main pavilion
9. Netball clubrooms
10. Playing field
11. Player dugouts
12. Cricket practice nets
13. Sheep pavilion
14. Gravel track
15. Informal entry
16. Public toilets.





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Demand analysis

Community profile

The way in which a community participates in sport and recreation activities is influenced by age and demographic considerations. Understanding the spatial and demographic variations in communities, such as concentrations of older residents or youth, is fundamental to responding to, and planning for, the future provision of public open space.

In order to understand the make-up for the Recreation Reserve 'catchment', a snapshot of existing and future population and demographic characteristics has been undertaken.

Located in the heart of the town, the Reserve plays a pivotal role in providing sport and recreation opportunities for the community and surrounds. And while it is acknowledged that many participants will come from outside the township of Hopetoun, core participation in recreation activities will come from the wider Hopetoun area.

Population considerations

Analysis of Hopetoun's population characteristics¹ reveals:

- ❑ an estimated residential population of 509 in 2021. This demonstrates a significant drop since 2006 when the estimated population was 804 residents
- ❑ with a median age of 58 years, the average Hopetoun resident is older than in Warracknabeal (51 years) and much older than Victoria (38 years). This median age has significantly risen since 2006 when the median age was 46 years
- ❑ only 53 children under the age of 15 and only 66 residents aged between 15 and 29 years (the peak age groups for formal sports participation)
- ❑ there are also clear projections for significant population decline² across the Yarriambiack Shire Council area. The LGA population of 6,460 in 2021 is projected to decrease to just over 5,500 by 2036. The reduction is expected to be more marked in the younger age groups with the 0-29 years cohort reducing by almost 20%. Projections are not available at any level smaller than the entire Council area.

COMMUNITY PROFILE - KEY IMPLICATIONS

In terms of impacts for the preparation of the Master Plan these demographic considerations suggest:

- ❑ demand will likely increase for activities aimed at older residents, but opportunities for people of all ages should continue to be offered
- ❑ demand for additional facilities is unlikely to increase moving forward
- ❑ formal sporting clubs will need to continue to look beyond Hopetoun and the wider Council area to retain membership bases.

¹ ABS Census QuickStats, 2021

² Dept of Environment, Land, Water and Planning - Victoria in the Future, 2019

Trends in sport and recreation

Participation patterns in recreation are changing at a community level. Factors such as a move toward non-organised or social sport, increased outdoor nature-based recreation and increased use of technology have all had a significant impact on how people recreate and use public open space. Understanding these trends (and their impacts) is important as Council looks to develop a Master Plan that ensures the sustainability of existing groups whilst also encouraging people to further engage in activity in public open spaces.

Participation trends

Since 2015, Sport Australia has conducted a national sport and physical activity participation survey, *Ausplay*. The most recent results of the survey were released in April 2023. In 2011-12 and 2013-14, a similar survey, the *Participation in Sport and Physical Recreation Survey* was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Between 2001-2010, the *Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey* (ERASS) was conducted by the Committee of Australia Sport and Recreation Officials (CASRO).

Overall, participation in physical activity has increased in the last two decades. More adults participate more frequently compared to 2001. Female participation (at least once a year) has remained on par with male participation throughout. However, more women have constantly participated more often.

Participation in sport-related activities has decreased, while non-sport physical activities have increased significantly (by more than 20 percent since 2001). Participation in recreation activities such as walking and fitness/gym have increased the most.

More children participate in organised (out-of-school) sport, than adults. The top activities children participate in changes as children age, with a focus on the life skill of swimming for infants and toddlers and running, fitness/gym, football and walking being the dominant activities by the time children reach the ages between 15 and 24 years old.

National participation rates in organised sport have been declining for a number of years as participants move toward more social (drop-in drop-out) sport and informal recreation. It will be important for Council to monitor participation trends into the future to ensure resources are allocated appropriately to support a broad range of both recreation and sport activities.

Formal sport trends

Busy lifestyles

Shift work, increases in part-time and casual employment and family commitments influence participation as:

- people do not have the time to commit as a regular participant or volunteer
- people seek facilities and participation opportunities with flexible hours.

If membership stagnation or decline became a concern for the user groups based at the Recreation Reserve, additional delivery models such as social fixtures or 'pay as you play' approaches should be considered.

Diversification of sport

Modified sports such as T20 cricket and 7s rugby are burgeoning. Changes are placing additional pressure on councils with regard to playing field capacity, facility flexibility and need to plan for additional demand.

Masters sport

There are indications that people may continue to engage in sport later into their old age. The Australian Sports Commission highlights that organisations may need to provide a wider range of products tailored to meet the needs of older Australians.

The development of the preferred layout at the site has clearly considered the need for formal and informal activities that are attractive across the ages. The additional field space at the Hopetoun Recreation Reserve and the flexibility it provides will be particularly useful in this regard.

Field and court quality

Facility providers face an increasing trend to develop and re-develop sporting fields and courts to a higher level in order to increase carrying capacity. Upgrades, such as lighting and field irrigation, allow training and competition times to be extended and increases the ability of turf playing fields to cope with the resulting wear and tear. Further, to achieve ongoing field quality, fields need 'rest periods' (of up to four weeks) where necessary maintenance can be undertaken.

The replacement of turf fields with synthetic fields, however, can significantly increase carrying capacity by limiting maintenance-required field down time. A number of facility providers are moving toward the provision of synthetic fields (particularly for football and hockey where internationally certified surfaces are available). As an oval hosting AFL and cricket, synthetic is not considered an appropriate surface for Hopetoun Recreation Reserve. With its current level of use, the playing surface is in good condition, and this is expected to continue to be the case, especially if the irrigation system is upgraded as recommended.

Field and court sharing

With many sports extending the lengths of pre-season and season fixtures, sports are no longer classifying themselves as strictly summer or winter sports, this has led to the sharing of field space becoming more difficult. While providers strive to maximise the use of community resources (and State Government espouses field sharing), the reality is that shared use of ancillary facilities (e.g. clubhouses, car parks) rather than fields will be more likely.

In the case of the Hopetoun Recreation Reserve, the ample field space allows relatively easy spread of use across playing areas.

It is important to note that both Netball Victoria and Tennis Victoria recognise the potential for dual court marking - particularly in more rural and remote areas where club memberships (and facility use) tend to be smaller.

Facility management

Councils across Australia employ various management structures over their sport and recreation facilities. Where resources allow, there is a growing trend towards councils taking on more responsibility for the overall management (and maintenance) of facilities. This involves users (tenant clubs) paying higher user fees, but being able to focus more on their core function of providing the relevant sport/activity, rather than face the burden of maintenance and asset management.

Recreation trends

Park design

Parks play multiple roles in establishing and maintaining a community's quality of life; ensuring the health of residents and visitors and contributing to economic and environmental well-being. The design of a park is critical in ensuring that it is successfully utilised by the community. Public open spaces should include:

- a range of recreation nodes that comprise clustered activities such as picnic and play areas that are attractive and safe open areas with good lighting, seating, shade, shelters and areas for play
- well-lit, level and shaded walk/cycleways that provide links to open space, community, commercial areas, and public transport (where available)
- a range of infrastructure that supports all abilities participation.

The town is well serviced with play and picnic opportunities with such facilities being located at the tennis club, L&J Poulton Park, Lake Lascelles and the Recreation Reserve. Therefore, a major playground is not necessary for the Reserve, rather the longer-term focus should be on upgrading the existing facility with more modern and interesting features.

Creating connections

Numerous studies highlight the need for trails linking residential areas with parks and other types of open spaces. Walking continues to be the preferred physical activity for both men and women. Parkrun has experienced unprecedented growth and is one of the largest running events in the world. There is, therefore, a recognised need for path systems that provide good connectivity between places of activity, are aesthetically appealing, provide safe links for users, and are easy to navigate.

As mentioned previously, the site is easily accessible from within town and the focus of the master plan is providing off-street walking and cycling opportunities on the existing gravel track within the Reserve.

Ageing communities

With the significantly higher median age of 58 years and expectations that the community will continue to be an aged one, the master plan has been developed to reflect and provide (where possible) facilities that will cater for older residents considering requirements such as:

- greater emphasis on low impact physical activity
- ability to compete in age-appropriate formal sport opportunities (e.g. masters)
- access to community infrastructure that requires wider paths, improved wheelchair/disabled access/parking, more lighting, shaded seats for resting along pathways
- places offering a sense of safety and serenity
- increased use of mobility scooters as a convenient method of transportation.

Access to sport fields and the gravel track for unstructured recreation such as walking and exercise activities, and modification of sports to allow participation by older people will become increasingly important in Hopetoun in coming years.

Impacts of technology

In just one generation, there has been a dramatic shift in childhood activity from outdoors to indoors. This has been driven in part by increased use of technology. Technology remains one of the main contributors towards decreased physical activity and increased sedentary behaviour. However, active gaming is becoming a contemporary approach to exercise.

Increasing use of smart phones and apps allows people to obtain information, communicate with each other very quickly, and provide feedback on their recreation experience at any time of the day or night. Many people using parks, playgrounds, paths and trails make the decision on where to recreate based on the information available via the internet, blogs, forums and social media.

A number of mobile phone apps are aiding the community in tracking, recording and mapping their activities including running and cycling. The apps allow participants to compete against themselves, as well as other app users. It can also be a useful tool for managing authorities in determining where the community is currently participating in activities (whether authorised or not).

There are also increasing expectations of technology within recreation areas including WiFi access in key parks, charging hubs, and digital tools for information and marketing on tracks and signage.



A typical 'Map My Ride' output from a mountain bike rider

Increasing 'screen time' during leisure time

Time spent looking at a screen is somewhat unavoidable in many workplaces and schools. More of our leisure time is also being spent looking at screens, at the cost of active leisure activities including socialising, reading, writing, arts and crafts, sports, exercise and recreation³. Excessive screen time has been associated with negative health outcomes as people have less time available to participate in active pursuits such as play and physical activity.

TREND CONSIDERATIONS - KEY IMPLICATIONS

These trends in the provision and use of sport and recreation facilities have been considered in the development of this master plan with the most relevant summarised as follows:

- the increasing need for pathways to support walking, public access for individual and independent physical activity, and unstructured recreation
- clubs and Councils need to recognise that social sport and modified games are becoming increasingly popular, and can increase participation in sport all age groups, and particularly people over the age of 40
- traditional use and management of sport fields may require review and adjustment to meet the needs of users in the future, and to take advantage of technology (e.g. telemetry systems for lighting and irrigation)
- demand for higher standard facilities, including playing surfaces (well-drained), field lighting, and all-weather synthetic fields is increasing.

³ Krause and Sawhill. *How free time became screen time*. 2016

Gap analysis

The supply and demand (gap analysis) has been prepared by considering a range of inputs. Consultation has been undertaken with Council officers, tenant sporting clubs (and their peak bodies), local community and additional stakeholders identified throughout the project (local schools, State Government officers etc). Further, the team has considered the range of open space available in the Shire and wide-ranging trends.

Council engagement

Council staff have been interviewed several times throughout the process of developing the master plan. The key issues and opportunities identified during these discussions are summarised as follows:

Issues

- the development of recreation reserves is not a high Council priority at the moment, especially without co-contributions being received
- there is a significant increase in the community's desire for walking tracks
- the skate park is old and doesn't seem to be heavily used
- need to ensure 'responsible development' rather than creating unrealistic wish-lists.

Opportunities

- there may be the chance to create a link between the golf course and the Recreation Reserve
- increased community use of the Reserve is a desired outcome
- there may be the chance to develop combination netball/courts, an example of the sharing of infrastructure (this is in place in Brim).

Existing user groups engagement



The Hopetoun Recreation Reserve Master Plan provides the opportunity to investigate and plan for the needs of existing user groups, as well as consider opportunities to increase the community's use of the Reserve by individuals and community groups.

Southern Mallee Giants Football Netball Club

The Club is the result of the recent merging of the Hopetoun and Beulah Clubs, and it utilises both the Beulah and Hopetoun Recreation Reserves as its home base.

Membership

A total 2023 membership of 310, broken down as follows:

- adult male - 60
- adult female - 40
- junior male - 50
- junior female - 60
- social - 100.

Other items of note regarding club membership include:

- while the playing numbers has been relatively steady over the past few years, the club expects them to increase slightly in the coming three years, mostly in the adult and junior female areas
- some players come from surrounding towns to play for the club.

Facility use

- with the merger of the Beulah and Hopetoun clubs, the Hopetoun Recreation Reserve now hosts only four home games a year, instead of eight
- training is undertaken 2 afternoons/evenings each week with fixtures played on Saturdays on a home-and-away basis.
- available use of the field has increased due to the installation of the new field lighting.

Development aspirations

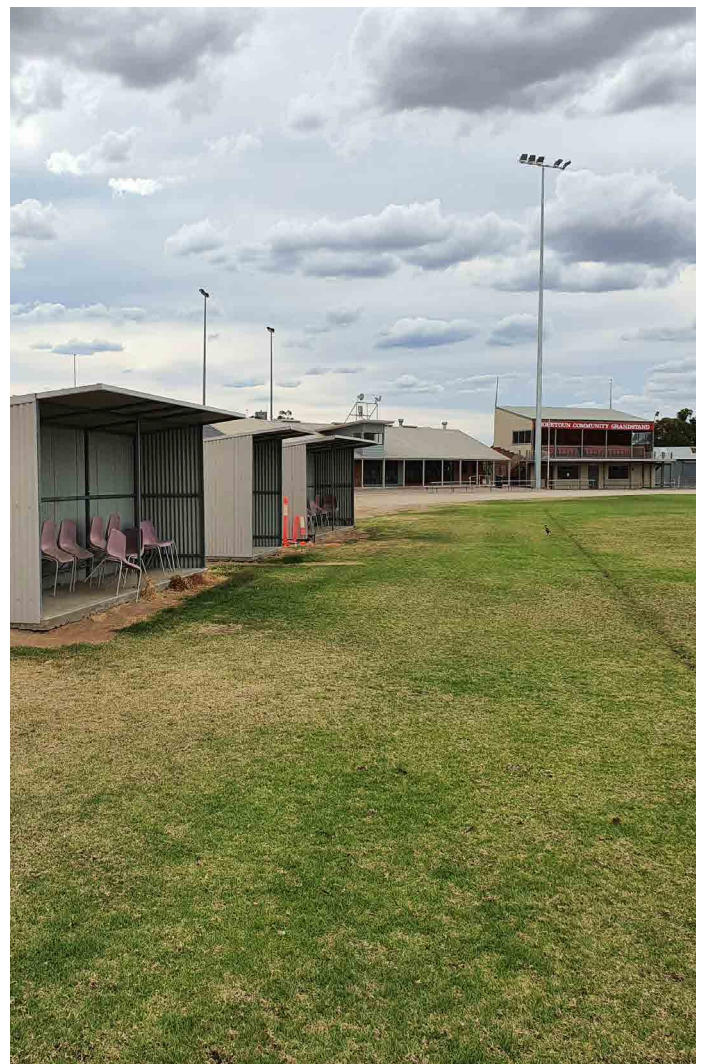
- extension (and any necessary upgrades) to field irrigation system to cover all grassed areas, including the relocation of water tanks (subject to final design)
- development of a walking track within the site
- replacement of skate park updated facility
- renovate/repair the grandstand (including the ceiling underneath)
- netball toilet and change facilities need upgrading
- would be happy to see increased community use of the site.

AFL VICTORIA INSIGHTS

- umpire, change rooms, general facilities within the main pavilion, and playing surface considered as excellent, with spectator facilities considered adequate
- the growth of female participation is building a sustainable female league within the region
- recognition of the impact of the lack of population growth in the region and the need for clubs to attract players from far away areas.

NETBALL VICTORIA INSIGHTS

- courts considered in good condition
- player amenities/change facilities inadequate
- any developments to be undertaken should align with the Netball Victoria Statewide Facilities Strategy and other relevant guidelines.



Southern Mallee Giants Cricket Club

Membership

- 11 senior males
- 17 junior males.

Facility use

- junior fixtures are conducted on Sunday mornings with seniors playing all Saturday throughout the summer sporting season
- senior training is held on Thursday evenings with junior training held on Wednesday evenings.

Development aspirations

- as for the Football Netball Club, the Cricket Club would like to see the irrigation system expanded and upgraded
- with the development of minor infrastructure (such as turf practice nets, levelling of the turf pitch, sight screens, boundary rope), the club believes the site could attract regional and representative cricket matches, and possibly pre-season practice matches for premier cricket
- if lighting was increased to cricket standards, T20 matches could be held and provide options to avoid games in the summer days' heat
- an oval boundary fence would stop balls and provide security for the turf pitch.

CRICKET VICTORIA INSIGHTS

- any developments to be undertaken should align with the (soon to reviewed) 2018 Victorian Cricket Infrastructure Strategy and its relevant guidelines
- there is a need for gender neutral and compliant facilities across the region
- there are possible funding opportunities for the region, including the Australian Cricket Infrastructure Fund
- there is a focus on Junior programs in the region to increase attraction and retention of junior players.

Additional stakeholder engagement

Hopetoun community

The local community were given opportunities to provide input into the development of the Master Plan through a community workshop and a community survey. Key considerations include:

- use of the site for walking
- skate park only seems to be used on a Saturday and is rarely busy
- attend social functions at the club
- improve the large track for informal walking
- the skate park needs to be improved.

School sport

- although the P-12 College has it's own sports field, school sports day is held at the site.

DEMAND ANALYSIS - SUMMARY

While the Reserve's tenant clubs have a relatively steady membership and cater for both Hopetoun's and Beulah's formal sporting activities, consideration also has to be given to the falling and ageing population of the towns and surrounding areas. This is expected to have some impact on participation numbers.

Further, the role the Reserve plays in providing the communities with not only formal sport, but valuable recreation opportunities can not be underestimated.

Subsequently, proposed improvements should not involve major sporting infrastructure, but focus more on improving facilities that enable the site to better provide community recreation needs while still catering for the needs of the tenant clubs now and into the future.

This approach also considers Council's limited resources and provides a responsible and realistic guide to the site's future maintenance and development. It also considers that Hopetoun is relatively well catered for in regard to other sport and recreation opportunities through the tennis, golf and bowls club facilities, the swimming pool, and the recreation activities available at Lake Lascelles.

Other Hopetoun sport and recreation facilities

As mentioned previously, in addition to the Recreation Reserve there are other key facilities in the town that were investigated in the development of the master plan to ensure that duplication of facilities didn't occur.

The facilities investigated relevant to the master plan were:

- Hopetoun Tennis Club
- Hopetoun Bowling Club
- Hopetoun Golf Club.

Due to the specific nature of the swimming pool, further investigations were not undertaken, however, Council's Sport and Recreation Strategy (currently being undertaken) covers the supply of aquatic facilities across the Shire.

It should be noted that a suggestion was made early in the project that it may be worth investigating the relocation of the bowls and tennis facilities to the Recreation Reserve.

Investigations showed that this would not be of significant benefit, given the facilities' proximity to the Reserve and the fact that they were already part of the precinct formed along with the swimming pool and Lake Lascelles. Representatives of both clubs agreed with this direction and that the focus should be made on improving their existing facilities.

Investigations and discussions with club representatives identified the needs of these clubs summarised at right.

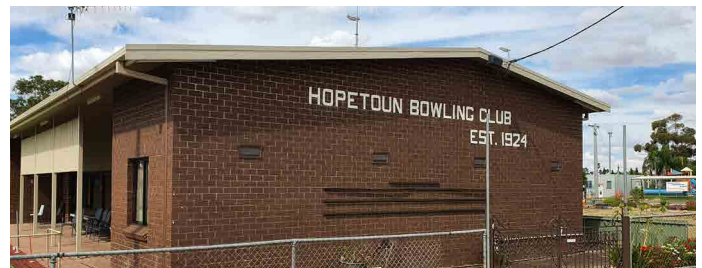


Hopetoun Tennis Club



- resurfacing the courts is needed
- outdoor basketball rings need updating
- court lighting needs upgrading
- toilets need upgrading.

Hopetoun Bowling Club



- upgrade to clubhouse interior
- upgrade to maintenance equipment
- toilets need upgrading.

Hopetoun Golf Club



- clubhouse is in disrepair and needs renovations/ replacement
- would like to diversify the course (e.g. driving range bay)
- would like improvements to be made to irrigation and their access to water.

It was noted by some community members that if the golf clubhouse wasn't improved, there may be the opportunity to use the Recreation Reserve pavilion. While this may work for social functions, for the entire clubhouse operations to relocate, people would need to traverse Golf Links Road/Cummings Street resulting in safety issues.

Directions

Key opportunities and constraints for the future development of Hopetoun Recreation Reserve are summarised below and provide the rationale and direction for the master plan.

Opportunities and constraints

Issue	Opportunities/Constraints	Desired Outcomes/Design Drivers
Movement		
Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The existing entry from Strachan Street is not obvious or inviting <input type="checkbox"/> The informal entry off Cummings Street detracts from the main entry <input type="checkbox"/> There is very little naming signage around the site <input type="checkbox"/> There is the opportunity to better promote the proposed pump track/recreation node at the main entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a more welcoming Strachan Street entry with improved signage and landscaping <input type="checkbox"/> Include promotional and directional signage for the proposed pump track/recreation node at the upgraded Strachan Street entry <input type="checkbox"/> Retain the entry from Cummings Street, but only for the operational use of the tenant clubs
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Only minor improvements required through the improvement to the existing sealed car park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Formalise existing sealed car park with line marking and necessary repairs to edges <input type="checkbox"/> Consider the long term development of additional sealed parking on Mitchell Place if a significant demand is demonstrated following completion of the pump track/recreation node
Pedestrian network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No existing pedestrian network <input type="checkbox"/> Site well used for casual walking <input type="checkbox"/> Connect key nodes with pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Seal the existing gravel track to better cater for community walking and cycling and to provide easy pedestrian access around the site <input type="checkbox"/> New concrete paths between car park and recreation node and netball area
Fencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Existing fencing could be replaced over time with more attractive alternative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Replace existing fencing with powder coated and pvc fencing that blends better into surrounds
Vehicle movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The proposed entry and car park improvements will reduce ad-hoc vehicular movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Encourage use of improved entry and sealed car park <input type="checkbox"/> Retain informal parking areas for large events



Issue	Opportunities/Constraints	Desired Outcomes/Design Drivers
Precincts		
Football, netball and cricket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Large, well maintained playing field with additional area to the south, but uneven irrigation coverage <input type="checkbox"/> Large, functional main pavilion <input type="checkbox"/> Limited shaded spectator areas <input type="checkbox"/> Netball club rooms with limited toilet/change facilities and shaded spectator areas <input type="checkbox"/> Two synthetic grass cricket practice nets in good condition <input type="checkbox"/> Football and netball player dugouts small, old and basic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Extend and upgrade as required irrigation system to provide even coverage over all grassed areas <input type="checkbox"/> Extend main pavilion roof to provide shaded spectator area <input type="checkbox"/> Create small spectator 'hill' as additional viewing space <input type="checkbox"/> Upgrade netball toilets/ change facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Upgrade football and netball player dugouts <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly add turf cricket practice net to existing (if demand is demonstrated)
Recreation node	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Skate park very basic elements and with no shade or supporting features and showing evidence of little use <input type="checkbox"/> No connection from main entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Replace skate facility with new pump track feature <input type="checkbox"/> Landscaping within recreation node to include shade (natural and built) and water bubbler <input type="checkbox"/> Connect to main entry with pathway <input type="checkbox"/> Provide additional seating and tables <input type="checkbox"/> Incorporate other features into final design such as half basketball court and rebound wall <input type="checkbox"/> Existing outdoor exercise equipment could be relocated to recreation node if demand is demonstrated
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Shaded and in fair condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Upgrade existing play features when at the end of life with modern features (including shade canopy if necessary)
Various small buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Horse stables, 'chook' shed and sheep yards identified as surplus to needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Remove horse stables and 'chook' shed and remove sheep yards from within sheep pavilion (but retain building)
Public toilets (Mitchell Place)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Well located to service proposed recreation node and pump track 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Renovate public toilets for expected increased use as result of new recreation node and pump track <input type="checkbox"/> Connecting pathway from main entry (as per recreation node)
Grandstand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hopetoun Community Grandstand currently unsafe and unused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Undertake necessary renovations to grandstand (including ceiling of area underneath)



HOPETOUN COMMUNITY GRANDSTAND



Master Plan

Maintaining a current master plan is a key requirement to guide facility development (to avoid ad hoc and piecemeal progress) and can be a key resource in assisting to attract funding.

The Hopetoun Recreation Reserve Master Plan has been developed by considering all consultation, appropriate strategic contexts, previous research, trends analysis and demand. Overall, it provides an ideal opportunity to develop the facility to meet the identified needs of the sporting community and the recreation (and community facility) needs of locals and visitors.

The Master Plan integrates existing facilities with new elements and embellishments to enhance the current sporting activities and provide improved recreation opportunities to establish a quality community hub.

Vision

The medium- to long-term vision for the Recreation Reserve is:

to ensure quality facilities that not only meet the formal sporting needs of the community but also provide a diverse range of community recreation opportunities and events for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

Master plan elements

Key elements of the Hopetoun Recreation Reserve Master Plan are:

Element	Description	Rationale
1. AFL and cricket ovals	Extend (and upgrade as required) irrigation system to cover all grassed areas	To ensure high quality of playing surface and surrounds is maintained
2. Gravel track	Develop as community walking/cycling track through treatment with an appropriate dust suppressor	Reduce dust and erosion, lessening ongoing maintenance
3. Skate facility	Remove existing skate facility and replace with pump track, half basketball court and rebound wall, and picnic shelter	The creation of a small, modern youth precinct with greater variety of activities and appropriate supporting infrastructure
4 Netball courts	Retain existing netball courts and upgrade player dugouts	To continue the provision of quality netball playing and ancillary facilities
5. Playground and surrounds	Upgrade playground features at the end of their existing life and provide natural and built shade to service both netball courts and playground area	To greatly enhance the recreation opportunities and spectator experience
6. Outdoor fitness equipment	Relocate if a demand is demonstrated and appropriate consultation is undertaken	To enhance the proposed recreation node, increasing the range of opportunities
7. Netball clubhouse	Upgrade existing toilet and change facilities	To provide two change rooms and increased number of available toilets (subject to final design)
8. Cricket practice nets	Retain existing two synthetic grass nets and possibly develop addition turf net if demand is demonstrated	To provide improved training opportunities and assist in attracting higher level games
9. New connecting paths	New pathway connections between car park and main activity nodes with appropriate tree plantings	To improve pedestrian access to key site features with improved shade and amenity
10. Formal parking areas	Improve existing sealed car park with line marking and edge treatment and possibly develop new formal car park as identified at Mitchell Place	To further enhance main entry and minimise ad-hoc vehicular movement. Mitchell Place car park to proceed if a demand is demonstrated following the creation of the proposed recreation node
11. New entry statement	Establish an arrival statement incorporating signage and landscaping at main entry on Strachan Street	To present an obvious entry location for users and visitors and promote the opportunities within the Reserve
12. Overflow parking areas	Retain as indicated	To cater for large events if necessary and also provide additional flexible open space within site
13. Tree planting	Plant trees and understorey vegetation as indicated	To reduce dust and erosion
14. Sports buildings	Retain those indicated and extend main pavilion roof to provide shaded spectator area and renovate grandstand as described	Current viewing a distance from playing field and grandstand currently unsafe to use
15. Public toilets	Retain but refurbish existing public toilet block	Well located to cater for increased use as a result of proposed recreation node
16. Surplus buildings	Remove those buildings as indicated and identified as surplus to needs	To reduce clutter of site and reduce unnecessary maintenance burden
17. Other buildings	Retain those indicated but remove sheep yards from wool pavilion	Buildings adequate for current use but sheep yards a possible risk if accessed by children

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01. Retain existing AFL and Cricket ovals and extend/upgrade irrigation
02. Retain existing gravel track. Apply a dust suppressant product (e.g. Dustex®) to reduce dust and erosion, and to lessen ongoing maintenance needs
03. Remove existing skate facility and replace with a new Youth Precinct that includes a BMX/pump track (shown indicatively), a half basketball court with rebound wall, and picnic shelter
04. Retain existing netball courts (x2)
05. Upgrade existing playground at end of life
06. Possible relocated outdoor fitness station with associated shade and amenity
07. Netball clubhouse with upgraded toilet/change facilities
08. Retain cricket practice nets (x2) with possible new turf pitch added as demand demnsotrated
09. New concrete pathswith a variety of large canopy trees to provide shade and amenity
10. Formalise car parking areas adjacent to key destinations within the Reserve
11. New entry statement
12. Overflow parking areas
13. Plant trees and understorey vegetation to reduce dust and erosion
14. Maintain existing club buildings (but extend main pavilion roof to provide shaded spectator area)
15. Retain and refurbish existing public toilets
16. Removed surplus buildings
17. Retain existing buildings (but remove sheep yards)

MASTER PLAN

HOPETOUN RECREATION RESERVE

Hopetoun VIC 3393



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DECEMBER 2023

Illustrative examples

These images reflect the style of embellishment proposed in the Master Plan for Hopetoun Recreation Reserve.

Upgraded, modern playground



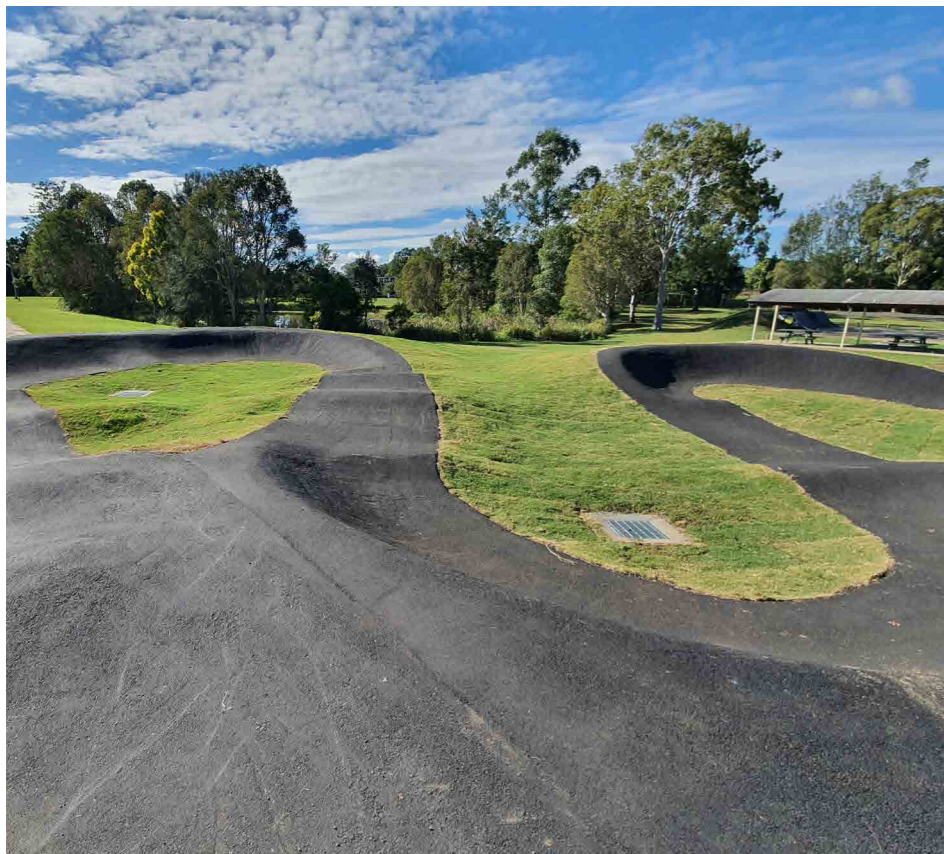
Community gravel (treated) walking track



Half basketball court and rebound wall



Pump track



Upgraded player dugouts (football/cricket and netball)



Entry statements



Staged implementation and indicative costs

The proposed staging and indicative costs provided will depend on a range of factors such as final detailed designs, sourcing of materials, any relevant approvals that may be required, procurement scheduling and financial management. The cost of implementation of the Master Plan is beyond Council's and the community's ability to fund in the short-term. Thus, this section provides for staged budgeting. The information provided is designed as a flexible guide - changes in user priorities or earlier opportunities for funding may alter staging.

These recommendations do not commit Council or the tenant clubs to their implementation. However, the plans do support Council and the community to seek grant funding and other investment opportunities.

Area	Indicative timing	Description	Indicative cost (\$)
<i>Entries and road frontage</i>			
Main entrance (Strachan Street)	Short-term	New landscaping and signage, retain and renovate tickey booth	20,000
Perimeter fencing	Ongoing	Replace over time	120,000
<i>Playing and ancillary facilities</i>			
AFL/cricket oval	Short-term	Extend and upgrade irrigation system	70,000
	Medium-term	Retain main pavilion and extend roof to create shaded spectator area	100,000
	Medium-term	Renovate grandstand and area underneath to acceptable safety and operational standards	not costed
	Long-term	Retain cricket practice nets and install turf practice pitch	25,000
	Long-term	New grassed spectator 'hill'	10,000
Netball	Short-term	Upgrade toilet and change facilities	120,000
	Medium-term	Upgrade player dugouts	20,000
<i>Recreation and community activity opportunities</i>			
Gravel track	Short-term	Treat with appropriate dust suppressor and level as required	150,000
Recreation node	Medium-term	Remove skate facility and install new pump track, half basketball court and rebound wall, picnic shelter, landscaping and water bubbler	360,000
Playground area	Long-term	Upgrade playground features at end of current life, replace shade sail and landscaping	280,000
<i>Common areas</i>			
New internal pathway connections	Short-term	New concrete paths (1.5m wide) connecting key activity areas	30,000
Across site	Medium-term	Plant trees and understorey vegetation across site	50,000
Public toilets	Medium-term	Retain and refurbish existing toilet block on Mitchell Place	80,000
Parking	Medium-term	Upgrade existing sealed car park with line marking and required edge treatments.	50,000
	Long-term	Construct new sealed car park on Mitchell Place (if demand is demonstrated)	300,000
	Ongoing	Retain grassed areas for additional car parking	NA
Surplus buildings	Medium-term	Remove surplus buildings ('chook' shed, horse stables and sheep yards within wool pavilion)	100,000

