

LODDON RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND AQUATIC STRATEGY FINAL REPORT



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Otium Planning Group acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our company is located and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and to Elders, past, present and emerging. Otium is committed to national reconciliation and respect for indigenous peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas, and their rich contribution to society.

Acknowledgement

Otium Planning Group would like to acknowledge the staff and community from Loddon Shire Council who have provided their expertise and input to the **Loddon Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic Strategy**.

Their valuable insights and feedback have been instrumental in shaping the strategic framework and recommendations of this Plan.

Womindjika

We respectfully acknowledge Dja Dja Wurrung and Barapa Barapa people as the traditional owners of the land on which we work and live. We pay our respect to their Elders both past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the original inhabitants of the land and their long and continuing connection to Country.

We are committed to national reconciliation and respect for indigenous peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas, and their rich contribution to society.

Loddon Shire has a rich Aboriginal history and is home to over 1,000 significant Aboriginal landmarks.



Figure 1: Lake Bort Scarred Trees (Source: Lake Bort Scarred Trees Masterplan)

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1. Introduction

Loddon Shire Council (Council) recognises that participation in sport and active recreation improves community health and wellbeing and contributes to the region's liveability and economic prosperity.

The **Loddon Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic Strategy** is a 10-year strategic plan that establishes a clear direction for providing, developing, and managing its sport and recreation, open space and aquatic facilities.

The Strategy informs how Council can create active and healthy communities through:

- Ensuring the Shire has a diverse range of universally accessible, sustainable facilities and outdoor spaces.
- Exploring opportunities that promote participation through structured programs and unstructured, social and incidental activities.
- Effective management and support services include information, leadership, and inclusive governance/management structures.

The Strategy provides a robust evidence base that has informed a planning framework, strategic directions, an implementation plan and a decision-making framework for identifying investment priorities.

The Strategy includes an implementation plan that will be reviewed every two years. This review process will consider the outcomes of planning and funding processes and ensure that any emerging community and industry trends/demands, as well as external funding opportunities and Council funding capacity, are assessed and priority projects remain relevant throughout its 10-year timeline.

1.1 Planning Process

The planning process included a comprehensive community engagement process including interviewing land managers and surveying community, sport and recreation groups and schools.

The following planning process was undertaken. This **Final Report** summarises key research and engagement findings and includes strategic directions.

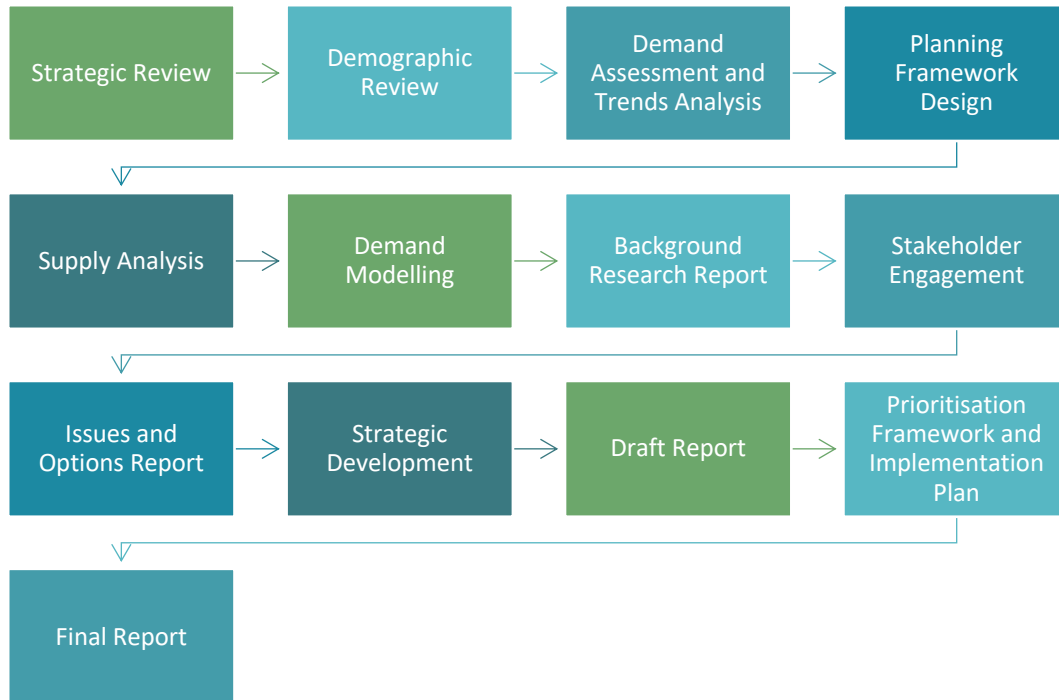


Figure 2: Planning Process

1.2 Location

The Loddon Shire Council is a rural municipality in central Victoria within proximity to the regional town centres of Bendigo, Kerang and Echuca. It shares borders with the following councils: Gannawarra Shire in the north, Campaspe Shire and the City of Greater Bendigo in the east, Mount Alexander Shire and Central Goldfields Shire in the south, and Northern Grampians Shire and Buloke Shire in the west.

It is made up of small towns dispersed throughout the Shire including the towns of Bridgewater, Inglewood, Wedderburn, Korong Vale, Dingee, Mitiamo, Serpentine, Newbridge, Tarnagulla, Laanecoorie, Eddington, Boort and Pyramid Hill.

The Shire covers a total land area of around 6,700 square kilometers. The primary industry is agricultural and horticultural, including grain production, sheep farming, wool, beef cattle, dairy, pigs, poultry, and in recent years, viticulture, olives, and fodder crop cultivation. Major employers within the Loddon Shire include Laucke Flour Mills, Hazeldene's Chicken Farms, Boundary Bend Olives, Water Wheel Vineyards, Southern Riverlands Poultry, ASQ Allstone Quarries, health services in Boort and Inglewood, P-12 colleges in Boort, East Loddon, and Wedderburn, and a P-10 college in Pyramid Hill.

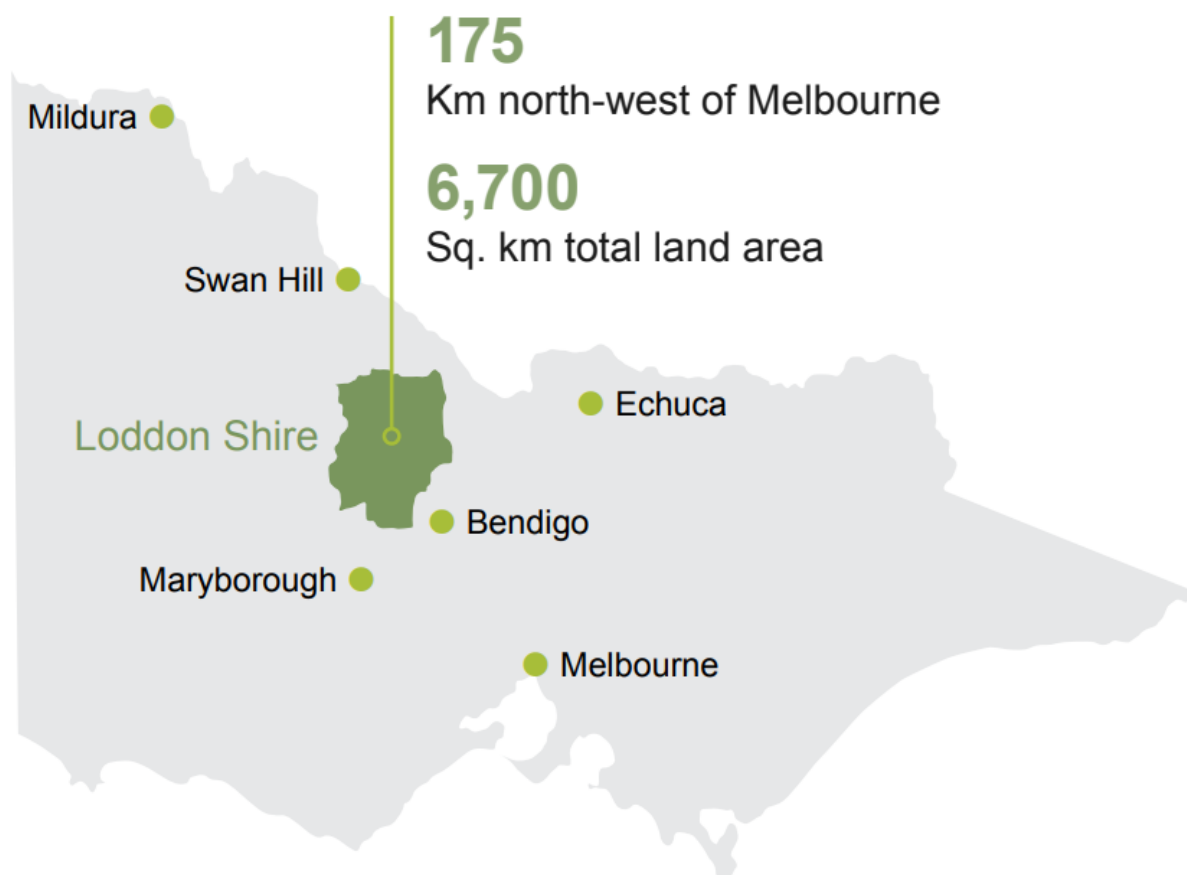


Figure 3: Loddon Shire location in Victoria (Source: Loddon Shire Council)

Loddon Shire Council

ELECTORAL STRUCTURE OF LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

NOTE: By Order in Council made under Section 220Q(k), (l), (m) and (n) of the Local Government Act 1989, the boundaries of wards, the number and names of wards and the number of councillors assigned to each ward of the Loddon Shire Council are fixed as described in this plan.

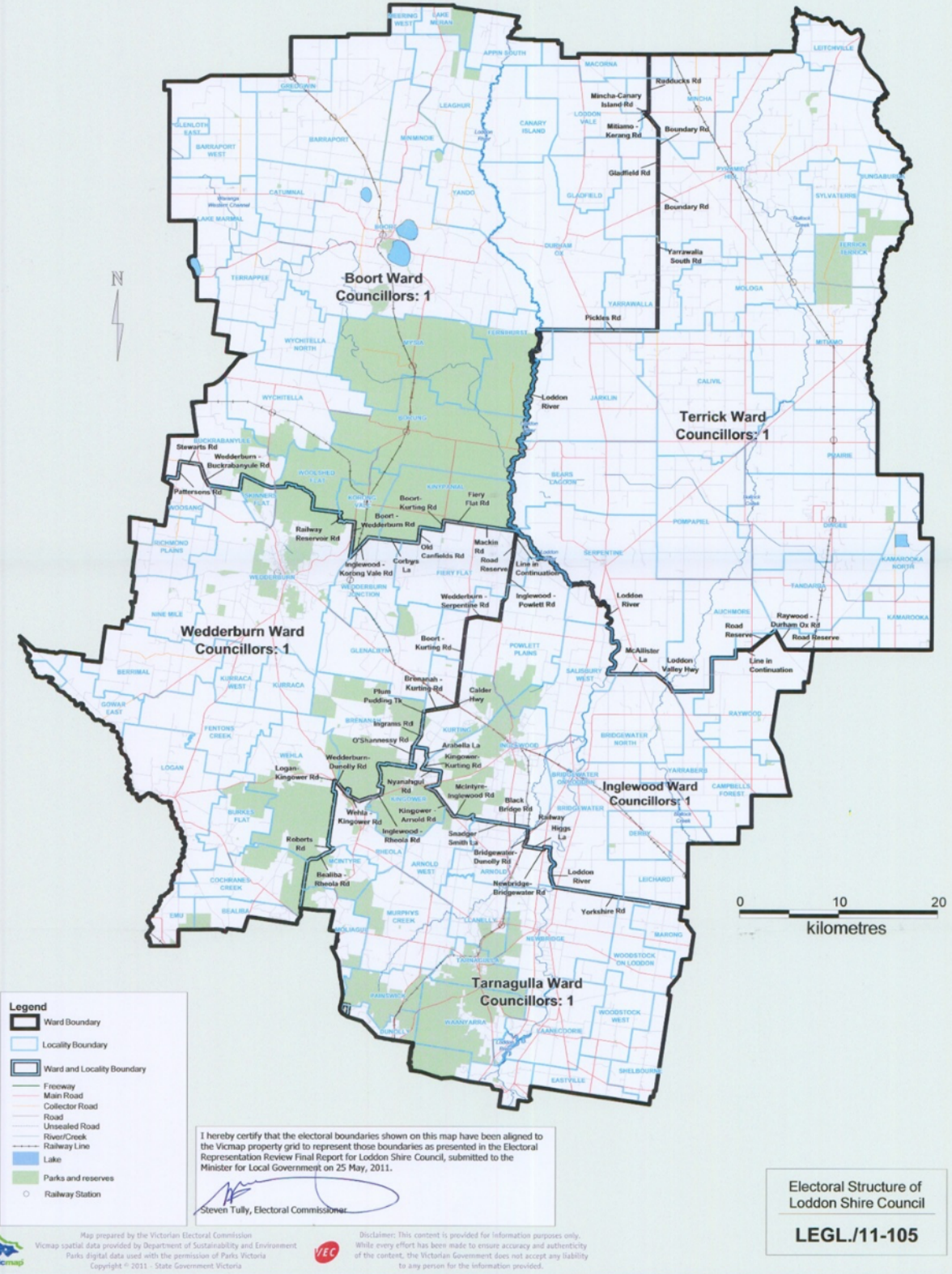


Figure 4: Loddon Shire Council Area Map (Source: Loddon Shire Council)

2. Strategic Review

What strategic commitments have Loddon Shire Council made that will influence the provision, development and management of sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services?

This section reviews local, regional, State and National policies and strategic plans.

2.1 Local Government Strategic Plans

The table below summarises Loddon Shire Council strategies relevant to sport and active recreation, open space and aquatic facilities and services.

Table 1: Loddon Shire Council Strategy Review

Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
Loddon Shire Council Plan	<p>The Loddon Project was designed to develop the Council Vision and Council Plan that form the strategic planning framework for Loddon Shire Council. The process involved a Community Reference Group plus a further 187 participants in phase one engagement and 160 participants in phase two engagement.</p> <p>Four priority areas of interest were identified by community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community – Support of community events and community groups, local facilities and roads. Community engagement was identified as an important priority. • Economy – Supporting local business, tourism, marketing and promotions and planning and events. • Natural environment – Walking and cycling tracks, parks and gardens, tree planting and signage and environmental protection and preservation including weed management. • Services and infrastructure – Roads, improving internet and phone services and water and sewerage. Participants identified childcare and health services as key services that are needed. <p>Community Vision 2031: “Creating a community where everyone is welcome and has the opportunity to live, work and thrive.”</p> <p>To achieve this vision, there are four strategic objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A sustainable built and natural environment 2. A growing and vibrant community 3. A diverse and expanding economy 4. A supported and accessible community. <p>Council Plan 2021-2025 strategies relevant to the Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.1 We will implement financially and environmentally sustainable infrastructure that supports our social and economic needs. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Planning for future facilities and infrastructure that meet community needs (finalising asset management plans and completing funded major infrastructure projects). – Our built and natural environments are accessible (Council assets are accessible). – Maintaining sports and recreation and open public spaces to enable and promote access and participation (Community facility use is maximised). • 1.2 We will work with our partners to preserve and protect our local environment. We will support our community to respond to the impacts of climate change.

Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Plan for and build community capacity to mitigate, respond and adapt to climate change (Participate with regional groups to implement environmental priorities). – Work with our partners to support biodiversity and habitat in our area (Participation with regional groups to maximise opportunities to support biodiversity and habitat). • 2.2 We will support a connected and inclusive community that provides opportunities for current and new community members at all ages, abilities, and stages of their life. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support community groups and volunteers (like Community Asset Committees who manage facilities on behalf of Council; and community groups providing in kind and financial support). – Promote welcoming and safe communities. • 3.1 We will support established businesses and seek to attract new businesses to grow our local economy. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Leverage partnership opportunities to promote and support the local economy (Collaborating with regional partners on broader economic opportunities i.e. nature tourism). • 4.1 We will deliver our core services and advocate for access to other services for our community. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enhance the community’s opportunity to maintain good health and wellbeing, including mental health (Implement initiative and advocate for services to support overall health and wellbeing to the community and partner with agencies in the Short to promote good health and wellbeing). <p>The Council Plan includes ‘adults who get adequate physical exercise’ as a key strategic indicator of success.</p>
<p>Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 – 2025</p> <p><i>Living Well in Loddon</i></p>	<p>Loddon Shire Council’s Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 is a strategic plan that guides Council and other agencies on how to improve the health and wellbeing of the Loddon Shire community.</p> <p>The Plan addresses four strategic priority focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good physical health • Good mental health • Protect and promote health • Feel safe and secure. <p>The key initiatives of the Health and Wellbeing Plan relevant to the Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing partnerships to reduce preventable disease are maintained and strengthened. • The Healthy Heart of Victoria initiative is maintained. • Participation in active recreation is increased. • Partnerships to prevent family violence and improve gender equity are supported and strengthened. • Cooler space options are identified, and access promoted on days of extreme heat.
<p>Loddon Settlement Strategy 2019-2034</p>	<p>Loddon Shire Settlement Strategy is a Council initiative supporting population growth in Loddon Shire through affordable housing development in suitable localities.</p> <p>The Strategy identifies where and how Council will support population and housing growth in its capacity as the planning authority.</p> <p>The key strategic directions are for Council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote growth in Boort, Bridgewater, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn, taking advantage of all available development opportunities to fully develop the existing urban footprint.

Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodate new development in smaller settlements where effluent can be managed. • Support a range of residential forms including rural living and medium density. <p>The Strategy supports maximising the use of existing infrastructure to support population growth including community and sporting facilities; and protecting the environmental assets of Loddon Shire, including native vegetation and waterways for their contribution to amenity, tourism value and agriculture.</p>
<p>Loddon Shire Economic and Development Plan (in development)</p>	<p>The Loddon Economic Development Plan is in development. Key focus areas of the Plan include the following:</p> <p>Economic drivers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture will continue to dominate the Loddon Shire economy in terms of output and employment. Council will continue to advocate for the sector and focus on water and technology to enable viability and sustainability. • Council will continue to encourage business expansion and investment attraction for food producers and processors in Loddon Shire, taking advantage of the over-endowment in suitable land, access to good roads and services. • Council will identify export opportunities for Loddon Shire’s food and beverage producers whilst working to create local and regional connections to regional distribution and sales (UNESCO City and Region of Gastronomy). • We will identify key regions for industrial development and potential industry clustering in the South Eastern region of the Shire. • Council will focus on, influence and encourage residential housing development (and stock diversity) in Loddon Shire key towns, including for the provision of affordable and worker housing (Loddon Settlement Strategy). • We will continue to explore opportunities to enable investment in renewable energy generation and local and regional benefit sharing programs. • We will support main street retail and SME – the Inglewood Streetscape Project is in planning stage, and we submitted a State Government budget bid to fund design and feasibility. • We will promote housing affordability, amenity and liveability to attract investment and population growth. <p>Tourism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council will establish, develop and nurture the Visit Loddon Valley brand – centred on historic towns, natural landscapes, active and passive nature-based experiences and welcoming communities. • Council will invest and expand Council-owned caravan parks, including encouraging diversity in privately-owned short-stay accommodation. • Council will work with Traditional Owners to unlock compelling product and experiences in First Nations cultural tourism at Mt Kooyoora and Boort. • Loddon Shire Council is an active partner and contributor to the Victorian Goldfields UNESCO World Heritage bid – anticipated to land circa 2025. This will attract visitors to Inglewood, Wedderburn and Tarnagulla. • Council will continue to acquire new events and support existing events that showcase Loddon Shire’s unique experiences and communities, to drive visitation. Loddon Shire’s open spaces including waterways and nature parks can support these events. • Council will promote Loddon Shire as a visitor destination that will in turn promote the Loddon Shire as a great place to work and live. • Council will contribute to regional tourism destination plans, showcasing Loddon Shire’s unique natural landscapes, attractions and experiences.

Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
<p>Loddon Activating Open Space Strategy 2019-2024</p>	<p>The Strategy focuses on two key areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving the physical appearance, functionality and opportunities available at public open spaces. 2. Activation of public open spaces through programs, activities, events and services. <p>The following open spaces were included in the Strategy: parks, playgrounds, waterways, shared paths, and bushland.</p> <p>Sport and recreation reserves were excluded from the analysis because each reserve has its own master plan and Reserve Committees are responsible for overseeing these sites. In addition, public halls, indoor leisure centres and aquatic facilities were excluded from the analysis.</p> <p>The Strategy identifies seven key factors to activate open space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the benefits of being physically active to the community. • Create safe, inclusive and accessible spaces and places. • Promote events and programs that encourage physical activity. • Involve the community in planning spaces, places, events and programs. • Promote spaces, places, events and programs where physical activity occurs. • Ensure that our systems, policies and processes encourage physical activity. • Develop partnerships with organisations to help deliver spaces, places, events and activities. <p>The Strategy includes an implementation plan with actions. The status of these actions is provided in the next section.</p>
<p>Loddon Recreation Strategy 2015-2020</p>	<p>The Loddon Shire Recreation Strategy 2015-2020 is now out of date. It has provided Council and partners with a framework to invest in sport and recreation facilities, services and programs.</p> <p>The Strategy includes a vision and ten guiding planning principles that will be reviewed as part of this strategy.</p> <p>Vision: “Loddon Shire is an active, healthy and inclusive community supported by strong community clubs and a diversity of programs and accessible facilities”.</p> <p>Planning principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed to meet demonstrated community need. • Of benefit to the community. • Accessible for people of all abilities. • Inclusive and welcoming. • Sustainable. • Multi-purpose design. • Able to offer diversity of opportunities. • Cost effective. • Designed to enhance and protect natural environment and cultural and heritage values. • Designed to reflect the unique nature of Loddon Shire. <p>The Strategy includes an implementation plan with actions. The status of these actions is provided in the next section.</p>
<p>Asset Plan 2022</p>	<p>The Asset Plan is Council’s asset management plan for the following asset classes: buildings, roads, bridges and major culverts, footpaths, stormwater drainage, recreational, leisure and community facilities, parks, open spaces and streetscapes.</p>

Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
	<p>The plan identifies the necessary funds to provide the agreed levels of service for all assets including operations, maintenance, renewal, upgrade and new assets over the 10-year planning period.</p> <p>Note: Asset values are unknown for recreational, leisure and community facilities, and parks, open spaces and streetscapes.</p> <p>The asset management funding shortfall is a key issue for the Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic Strategy.</p> <p>The Asset classes relevant to the Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational, leisure and community facilities – swimming pools, sports grounds, trotting tracks and lakes (water holdings). • Parks, open spaces and streetscapes – park and street trees, playgrounds, outdoor exercise equipment, picnic shelters, street furniture, barbecues and shelters, rotundas and band stands. <p>The next steps are to review and prioritise all improvement projects in each asset class with a view of grouping projects that can be undertaken together which will lead to efficiencies.</p>
<p>Swimming Pool Improvements Plan 2018-2022</p>	<p>The Swimming Pool Improvements Plan 2018 assessed the current provision of Loddon Shire Council’s swimming pools and provides broad directions and actions to improve services and minor facility works. Significant upgrades to pool facilities in the future require further investigation.</p> <p>The following risks were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation and maintenance costs have significantly increased, placing greater pressure on Council to find ways of operating more efficiently. Water, energy, water treatment and waste-water disposal costs contributed a large portion of operational costs. • Council has little flexibility in limiting costs as legislative requirements dictate levels of compliance in the operations of public swimming pools. For example, new pressures from legislative requirements and government initiatives are impacting how Council delivers swimming pool services including when lifeguards are required to be on duty and how many are required at any given time. <p>The Strategy identifies a balance between cost and benefits is needed to assess Council’s aquatic service. In 2019, Council subsidised patrons \$20.06 per visit. Council does not expect to operate the pools at a profit; however, the expense needs to be justified by the health and social benefits gained. Royal Life Saving Australia recent social and economic benefit assessment shows for every visit to a public swimming pool an average health benefit of \$26.39 is realised.</p> <p>There are five outdoor swimming pools owned and managed under contract management by Loddon Shire Council.</p> <p>There was \$2.5m for capital works and major maintenance for swimming pools between 2008 and 2018 (10 years) that included both Council and external funding contributions. These improvements included installing wet decks, repairs to pool shells, installing water features, solar blankets, improvements to filtration/circulation systems/chlorination, buildings and landscaping (pathways, shade structures, fencing, barbecues).</p> <p>A community consultation process found six key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing opening hours without increasing operational budget. • Participation and partnerships – more structured activities and community events. • Greater communication with the community.

Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading facilities. • Increasing usage by schools of lifeguard hours. • Tracking of data for greater informed future decision making. <p>The Strategy includes an improvement plan with actions for minor and major works, programming and partnerships, communications and promotions and records management. The status of these actions is provided in the next section.</p>
Climate Proofing Loddon’s Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy 2011	<p>The aim of this Strategy is to identify work that will assist to ‘climate proof’ as many sporting facilities in Loddon Shire as possible and at the same time help communities to retain their invaluable sport and recreation assets. The report notes that climate change has had a significant impact on the ability of sport and recreation clubs to access water to maintain sports grounds to a satisfactory standard. Rainfall levels have decreased, temperatures have increased and access to potable or irrigation water through water authorities has decreased.</p> <p>This Strategy has identified several works to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce water use. • Increase the security of supply of water. • Reduce leakage of storage systems at sport and recreation facilities in Loddon Shire. <p>These works included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of hard courts and removal of grass courts. • Resurfacing grass playing fields. • Upgrading irrigation systems. • Water harvesting projects, e.g. installation of water tanks. • Installation of water saving devices. <p>Council received \$900,000 external funding and contributed \$1.7 million to implement the Strategy and redevelop facilities.</p>
Cycling and Walking Strategy 2009	<p>The Cycling and Walking Strategy reviewed the existing tracks and trails located within Loddon Shire and identified tracks and trails provision, future development, management, maintenance and marketing.</p> <p>The Strategy recommendations will be reviewed as part of the Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic Strategy. Key initiatives included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve links between trails. • Improve connectivity of existing trails. • Improve trail design. • Instigate a “Stop and Walk” program. • Identify potential events to encourage usage of tracks and trails. • Ensure interpretation opportunities are made available. • Improve marketing and promotion of tracks and trails. • Improve the coordination, management and planning of trails. • Provide appropriate maintenance schedules.
Loddon Mallee Regionally Significant Trails Strategy 2009	<p>The Loddon Mallee Regionally Significant Trails Strategic Plan provides a framework to guide land managers and trail planning and management groups in the development of regional cycling, walking, mountain biking, horse riding and canoeing/kayaking trails in the Loddon Mallee region.</p> <p>Of relevance to Loddon Shire Council is Captain Melville’s Trail, which links Bridgewater-on-Loddon, Inglewood, Kingower, and Melville Caves. This is a regionally significant trail that brings in economic and tourism benefits from trail users whilst delivering social and health benefits to residents.</p>

Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
	<p>Strategic opportunities relevant to the Recreation and Open Space Strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking trail-related activities to annual local events (such as food and wine festivals) will improve awareness and use of the trail. • The development of packages and some innovative marketing and interpretation (i.e. indigenous and bushranger history) and the naming of the trail to reflect its bushranger past may assist in attracting potential trail users from other parts of the state, and potentially internationally. • There is an opportunity to develop canoe trails, rock climbing and horse riding which would further enhance the reputation of the trail. <p>The major challenge identified was access to public transport and the distance from metropolitan and regional city areas. Also, the trail does not link with other major trails in the regional trail network in Loddon Mallee.</p>

2.2 Activating Open Space Strategy Implementation Plan

Table 2: Activating Open Space Strategy – Action Status

Theme	Action	Status
Parks	1. Review Council’s Park Asset Management Plan 2010 to update policy around hierarchy, standards and service levels.	Not started. This Strategy has updated the hierarchy and service level standards.
	2. Undertake a gradual plan to renew and upgrade parks and reserves throughout the Shire, focusing on planting more shade trees in strategic locations, improved landscaping (using drought tolerant plantings and infrastructure such as rocks and logs), installing drinking fountains, installing more seats with arm and back rests, providing picnic tables, providing BBQs, improving accessibility for people of all abilities, installing paths and installing lighting where appropriate, etc.	Completed as part of funded projects.
	3. Appropriate planning should be undertaken prior to any renewals or upgrades to ensure that the proposed works complement what already exists and will meet community needs into the future. For major sites, a master plan is recommended.	Completed. Master plans have informed projects.
Play Spaces	1. Renew playgrounds when they reach the end of their useful life, taking into consideration diversity of play opportunities, quality of play, etc.	Ongoing
	2. Provide a greater focus on nature-based play and work towards including access for all abilities, particularly in the larger play spaces.	Ongoing
	3. Remove under-utilised play spaces that do not provide play value.	Not started
	4. Encourage each major recreation reserve to maintain and further develop suitable play opportunities for families.	Completed
	5. Explore opportunities to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with local schools to provide access to school play equipment after hours.	Not started
	6. Playgrounds will be included as part of the review of Councils Park Asset Management Plan and will include information about updating policy around hierarchy, standards and service levels.	Not started

Theme	Action	Status
Walking/cycling tracks	1. Develop future footpath infrastructure to be consistent with “Loddon Shire Footpath Asset Management Plan”.	Ongoing
	2. Continue to develop quality walking/cycling tracks throughout the Shire, with suitable supporting infrastructure, e.g. seats, shade, drinking water and signage (subject to feasibility and full costings/whole of life costings being established). Connect any new tracks to the existing walking/cycling network wherever possible.	In part
	3. Consider partnering with golf clubs to develop walking/cycling tracks on golf courses.	Not started
Waterways	1. Develop key water ways as passive recreation facilities for residents and visitors, including infrastructure such as seating, picnic tables, BBQs where relevant, shade, planting of grass, fishing platforms, swimming pontoons, kayak entrance/exit points, play opportunities, etc. There is a real opportunity to turn these spaces into quality family recreation facilities that attract not only locals but also visitors.	Completed
Swimming pools	1. Extend the swimming pool season wherever possible through use of solar heating and implementation of a volunteer lifeguard program.	Not started
	2. Provide a range of activities at each pool throughout summer, e.g. community BBQs, water aerobics, swimming lessons, pool parties and dive in movies to encourage physical activity participation. Share inflatable equipment between the pools. Install drinking fountains. These actions have been picked up in swimming pool development plans.	Not started
	3. Maintain and further develop early morning swimming sessions and other related activities i.e. aquarobics at all swimming pools.	Not started
Signage	1. Install suitable signage (trail heads, directional signage, place signage, kilojoule consumption signage, etc.) so that residents and visitors are aware of facilities available, their location and the benefits of physical activity. Provide interpretive signage where appropriate to enhance the experience.	Not started
Maintenance and management	1. Develop an adequate maintenance schedule and budget to keep infrastructure in a safe and usable state. Consideration for additional staff in Townscape Services to adequately maintain existing open spaces, parks and gardens as well as new additional items added into these areas.	Not started
Affordability	1. Ensure that facilities, events and programs remain affordable for residents to maximise participation.	Completed
Programming	2. Work in partnership with a range of organisations including the health sector, the environmental sector, schools, community organisations such as neighbourhood houses, churches and the private sector to do deliver a range of physical activity programs in parks and open spaces in Loddon Shire. Activities could include yoga, tai chi, walking groups, circus skills, bocce, community cricket games, old fashioned games, running groups, cycling groups, swimming groups, water aerobics, canoeing, stand up paddle boarding, etc. If funds permit, Loddon Shire could potentially train some local people to facilitate some of these programs (as per a key recommendation in the 2015 Recreation Strategy).	In part
Boort Initiatives	1. Implement the recommendations of the Little Lake Boort Draft Master Plan 2019.	Underway
	2. Incorporate rubberised paths to play equipment in Nolen’s Park and more informal play opportunities near Little Lake Boort as part of the Boort Foreshore Plan, e.g. half basketball court, a rock-climbing wall, outdoor table tennis tables, bocce pitch and a kayak launch pad.	Underway

Theme	Action	Status
	3. Sell the Sunnyside Court block and use the funds to expand the play space at nearby Boort Park.	Not started
	4. Renew Jubilee Park playground.	Not started
Bridgewater Initiatives	1. Continue to implement the Bridgewater Foreshore Development Plan (stages 1 and 2), which includes a nature-based play space, shade, seats, signage, art work, pier/jetty, landscaping, lighting and interpretation (black smith area).	Completed
	2. Prepare an upgrade plan in partnership with the local community for Sloan Park to install paths, landscaping, shade trees, a barrier, some form of public art and more exciting play equipment. Ensure that play opportunities available at this site are different to what is available at the Recreation Reserve and along the Foreshore	Not started
	3. Install additional seating at Bridgewater Swimming Hole and more shade trees/structures.	Not started
	4. Install signage on Bullabull track.	Not started
Calivil Initiatives	1. Support the Recreation Reserve COM to upgrade the social aspect of the Reserve to include a BBQ area, shelter, picnic tables, drinking fountain and landscaping. At the same time develop a pedestrian safe area.	Not started
	2. Support the Recreation Reserve COM to develop a walking track around Calivil Recreation Reserve utilising the old golf course.	Not started
Dingee Initiatives	1. Construct access paths at Progress Park and renew existing play equipment when it reaches the end of its lifespan.	Not started
Durham Ox Initiatives	1. Construct environmentally sustainable toilets at Durham Ox for use by canoeists.	Not started
Eddington Initiatives	1. Construct some access paths in the park next to Eddington Community Centre	Not started
Inglewood Initiatives	1. Develop a BBQ area with shelter and picnic tables at Inglewood Recreation Reserve.	Completed
	2. Consider providing active play opportunities for teenagers at J Sloan Park playground, e.g. flying fox, climbing wall, full sized basketball court and upgrade traditional skate park to a modular pump track when it reaches the end of its life.	Completed
	3. Plant more shade trees at J Sloan playground.	Completed
	4. Develop a safe pedestrian area at Inglewood Recreation Reserve in the vicinity of the J Sloan playground and the oval.	Completed
	5. Liaise with Inglewood Golf Club to develop a walking track around the golf course.	Not started
	6. Liaise with the Heart Foundation to establish a walking group in Inglewood, utilising the golf course.	Not started
	7. Upgrade Inglewood Botanic Gardens and Inglewood Reservoir, primarily through a track upgrade, more seats, renewal of infrastructure and better maintenance.	Not started
Kingower Initiatives	1. Advocate for Parks Victoria to upgrade seats, toilets, picnic/BBQ facilities at Melville Caves.	Completed
	2. Support development of Captain Melville's Trail.	Completed
Korong Vale Initiatives	1. Consider upgrading Borella Park to include shelter over the BBQ area, upgraded seats and new play equipment (when the existing equipment reaches the end of its useful life).	Not started
Mitiamo Initiatives	1. Advocate for Parks Victoria to undertake more regular grading of the tracks at Terrick Terrick National Park.	Not started
	2. Upgrade Phelan Park when equipment is at the end of its lifecycle by renewing equipment, installing some form of barrier against the Mitiamo-Echuca Road boundary and planting more shade trees and trees to act as a wind break.	Not started

Theme	Action	Status
Newbridge Initiatives	1. Install BBQs and shelters at Progress Park if feasible and if it aligns with community planning priorities.	Not started
Pyramid Hill Initiatives	1. Redevelop Lions Park in Kelly St to develop a passive recreational space.	Underway
	2. Install a drinking fountain and more comfortable seats at Kelly Park.	Underway
	3. Improve toilets at Pyramid Hill.	Underway
	4. Improve signage and maintenance of Pyramid Hill Walking.	Not started
	5. Redevelop the playground next to the swimming pool and tennis courts and install a barrier to prevent children from running on to the road.	Not started
Serpentine Initiatives	1. Upgrade track condition and wayfinding on the Pon Pon Trail in Serpentine.	Not started
Tarnagulla Initiatives	1. Renew street furniture in Heraud's Place and improve landscaping.	Not started
	2. Add additional play equipment at Soldier's Memorial Park.	Not started
Wedderburn Initiatives	1. Upgrade play equipment at Soldiers Memorial Park (consider installation of a learn to ride bicycle track) and include a screen to act as a wind break. This could become a smart park by installing technologically advanced items such as exercise bikes that charge mobile phones and a demonstration environmental park (i.e. use of solar lighting and water saving measures).	Not started
	2. Develop informal activities for young people, e.g. climbing wall, multi-use games areas, skate park or modular pump park, socialisation space, etc. at Soldier's Memorial Park.	Not started
	3. Install drinking fountains in public places in Wedderburn, e.g. Soldier's Memorial Park and Nardoo Creek Trail.	Not started
	4. Install additional seating and trees along Nardoo Creek Trail.	Not started
	5. Consider developing an off-leash dog area in Wedderburn.	Not started
	6. Prepare a development plan for Skinners Flat Reservoir, particularly focusing on items such as walking track to the site, BBQ, picnic tables, shelter and possibly a toilet.	Not started
	7. Consider installation of some water play features at or near the Wedderburn Swimming Pool.	Not started
	8. Advocate to Parks Victoria to grade tracks in state and national parks and provide additional facilities such as BBQs and seats.	Not started

2.3 Swimming Pool Improvements Plan

Table 3: Swimming Pool Improvement Plan – Action Status

Theme	Action	Status
Minor and Major Works		
Lawn areas:	Mow the lawns more often, inspect and remove evidence of prickles and bees at all pools.	Completed
Trees:	Plant trees on the perimeter of pool fence lines for Boort, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn pools.	Not started
	Trim back existing trees.	Completed
Pools:	Seek to repaint steps into Pyramid Hill pool a different colour for visibility.	Not started
	Paint inside pool edge as paint is flaking around the top of Wedderburn pool.	Not started
Change rooms:	Install hooks on back of shower doors and around the wall of all change rooms (all pools).	Not started
	Install new rubbish bins in change rooms (all pools).	Completed

Theme	Action	Status
	Install mirrors in change rooms (all pools).	Not started
	Assess Pyramid Hill Swimming Pool change room floor.	Completed
	Ensure change rooms are cleaned every day.	Completed
Bins:	Install bins in prominent places around the grounds (all pools).	Completed
Bollards:	Repaint the existing bollards at Wedderburn Swimming Pool.	Not started
Concrete and paved areas:	Investigate if concrete paving needs repainting (Inglewood Swimming Pool).	Completed
	Every day during opening hours, sweep and hose down concrete areas (all pools).	Completed
	Investigate feasibility and viability of rubber mats or alternative options on concrete areas on hot days.	Not started
	Paint four squares within one large square area for a tennis ball game (Wedderburn Swimming Pool).	Not started
	Conduct regular assessments to ensure surrounds of pool concrete are not slippery.	Completed
Portable shade:	Investigate feasibility and funding of portable shade umbrellas being provided at all pools.	Not started
Toilets:	Toilets to be cleaned every day at Mitiamo Swimming Pool.	Completed
Seating:	Seek funding to install more seating, particularly for parents to supervise and some on grass areas and under shade.	Not started
Tables:	Seek funding to install several tables at each of the pools.	Not started
Drinking fountains:	Seek funding to provide drinking fountains at each of the swimming pools.	Not started
Bike racks:	Seek funding to provide bike racks within the swimming pool facility to encourage adults and children to ride to swimming pools.	Not started
Permanent shade structures:	Consult with pool patrons and swimming pool staff to determine where shade structures are preferred.	Not started
	Seek external funding for the installation of permanent shade structures.	Not started
Change rooms upgrades:	Conduct an audit to identify recommendations on upgrading change room, toilets and shower facilities at all pools (except Inglewood Swimming Pool).	Completed
	Include any recommendations in future swimming pool capital works plan.	Underway
Pools:	Investigate feasibility to install extra rails on steps at the Pyramid Hill pool for greater access.	Completed
	Investigate installation of gates around the baby pool at Wedderburn Swimming Pool.	Completed
Kiosks:	Investigate the feasibility of upgrading the kiosks at the Boort, Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn swimming pools.	Completed
Barbecues:	Investigate feasibility of installing picnic tables and chairs near barbecues at all swimming pools.	Not started
Programming and Partnerships	Investigate the development of a volunteer lifeguard program, with regard to the regulatory, legislative and insurance requirements.	Not started
	Recruit and train volunteer lifeguards to supervise adult only morning swimming lessons.	Not started
	Promote and open the pools where there is interest and qualified volunteer lifeguards for regular early morning lap swimming during opening season.	Not started
	Investigate possibility of local community health services coordinating water-based strength activities for older adults in the morning.	Not started
	Continue to support VicSwim and learn to swim programs.	Ongoing
	Host two to three inflatable days at each swimming pool over the summer period.	Ongoing

Theme	Action	Status
	Identify the impact of the roll out of the Swimming in Schools Program and review the current model where Council funds lifeguard costs.	Not started
	Where there is an interest, support the development of a swim club.	Not started
	Promote free entry for adult and child non-swimmers and a reduced price for seniors' tickets.	Not started
Communications and Promotions	Investigate the use of Message Media to text patrons of changes to opening hours or events being held.	Not started
	Implementation of Message Media if investigation concurs.	Not started
	Investigate opportunity to develop a service specific App.	Not started
	Development and implementation of App if investigation concurs.	Not started
	Regularly update the opening hours and any events being held at pools on Council's website.	Not started
	Regularly feed into and update Council's Facebook page on what is happening at the pools.	Not started
	Investigate the possibility of purchasing flags for entry areas of pools to indicate when the pools are open.	Not started
Records Management	Update entry signage at all pools.	Not started
	Investigate systems that record accurate data to capture the details needed.	Completed

2.4 Master Plans

Loddon Shire Council have developed master plans for key sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities. The implementation of the following master plans has been progressing over the last five to 10 years. The following table summarises the key strategic directions and provides a status comment on progress (completed, in progress, not started, not required)

Table 4: Loddon Shire Council Reserve Master Plans – Action Status

Strategy	Strategic Directions	Status
Bridgewater Recreation Reserve Master Plan 2011	The Bridgewater Recreation Reserve Master Plan includes the following actions:	
	1. Develop a water allocation agreement for key sports facilities during restriction periods, implement an ongoing water use monitoring and reporting program.	Completed
	2. Resurface and re-grade the oval and plant with warm season grasses.	Completed
	3. Irrigation specialist to assess the current system and provide recommendations to either upgrade or replace the system.	Completed
	4. Implement the recommendations provided by the irrigation specialist.	Completed
	5. Proceed with the development of a groundwater source at the Recreation Reserve.	Completed
	6. Construct concrete pathways and paving around the Sports Pavilion, construct verandah.	Completed
	7. Construct drainage near the pavilion to reduce pooling of water.	Completed
	8. Install two additional floodlights around the sports ground.	Completed
	9. Replace mower.	Completed
	10. Provide shade and protective barriers around playground equipment.	Completed
	11. Install boundary fencing, particularly along the highway.	Completed
12. Asses the need to purchase and install a rainwater/storm water harvesting system which collects run-off from the netball /tennis courts as a back-up emergency water supply.	Completed	

Strategy	Strategic Directions	Status
Boort Park Master Plan 2011-2020	<p>The Boort Park Master Plan includes the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a water allocation agreement for key sports facilities during restriction periods. 2. Implement a formal water use monitoring and annual reporting process. 3. Construct basic facility with shelter and storage space for hockey club. 4. Install lights to enable hockey club to train on winter evenings. 5. Install a more hard-wearing grass on the sports oval that remains green over winter. 6. Install more lights for football club training purposes. 7. Build new scoreboard near the playground, incorporating regulation size stairs and power. 8. Upgrade toilets, showers and taps to water efficient fixtures. 9. Extend social rooms to cater for club functions (18 m x 5 m extension). 10. Construct a small shed on site to be utilised as a gymnasium. 11. Develop a change room for use by female umpires (if netball change facilities are inadequate). 12. Upgrade kitchen (2 new stoves, 2 range hoods and new fridges) to better cater for club functions. 13. Upgrade public toilets. 14. Install rainwater tanks to collect water from club house roof and use for toilet flushing, cleaning and other non-drinking purposes. 15. Extend netball shelter full length of court. 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Not Required</p> <p>Not Started</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
Calivil Recreation Reserve Master Plan 2018	<p>The Calivil Reserve Master Plan includes the following actions:</p> <p>Implement a formal water use monitoring and annual reporting process.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Investigate the sinking of a bore to provide an alternative source of water for the Recreation Reserve. 2. Resurface courts and relocate light towers to meet Netball Victoria standards. Line-mark these two courts for tennis. 3. Install a new irrigation system to reduce water use. 4. Install lights for bowls to allow night time training and games. 5. Construct a BBQ to encourage visitors. 6. Resurface cricket practice nets. 7. Consider development of a campground at the Recreation Reserve. 8. Install shade sails to provide a safer and more attractive play space. 9. Re-vegetate and landscape around the entire recreation reserve to improve visual amenity of the site. 10. Consider the development of a farmer's market and alternative expos at the Recreation Reserve to increase local revenue. 11. Modify power supply to the football shed. 12. Install safety signage around play area and additional directional signage to and around the reserve. 13. Retain two grass courts in the short term and develop two new hard courts if demand dictates. 14. Install two extra light towers on the football oval. 15. Construct a covered and paved area which links the pavilion to the change rooms. 16. Explore the possibility of developing an Opportunity Shop in the tennis pavilion at the Reserve. 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
Donaldson Park Master Plan 2018	<p>The Donaldson Park Reserve Master Plan includes the following actions:</p>	<p>Completed</p>

Strategy	Strategic Directions	Status
Community Hub Redevelopment Project 2023	1. Calculate the yield of the old town water supply system and put in place a water allocation process.	Not started
	2. Develop and implement an ongoing program of works for Skinners Flat Reserve and Caravan Park dam.	Not started
	3. Investigate potential for storm water harvesting from Nardoo Creek.	Completed
	4. Develop a water allocation agreement for key sports facilities during restriction periods.	Completed
	5. Develop a new pavilion on the current site of the spectator shed. The new pavilion is to be constructed in two stages.	Completed
	6. Upgrade second netball court to meet Netball Victoria standards.	Completed
	7. Extend kitchen and construct administrative space in bowls pavilion. Ensure kitchen upgrade includes provision for low water use fixtures and appliances.	Completed
	8. Demolish the old tennis shed and develop an adventure/ outdoor play space in this area, and a more traditional play space near the netball courts.	Completed
	9. Plant with warm season grasses to reduce water use and costs.	Completed
	10. Replace two grass tennis courts with two synthetic (hard) tennis courts with lights to reduce water use and to provide for year-round tennis.	Completed
	11. Upgrade existing hockey irrigation system.	Completed
	12. Review use of harness racing in 2011 to determine future of pavilion and the track. Increase use of the pavilion, e.g. hockey change facility, cricket pavilion, community gym shared with Wedderburn P-12 College, etc. and install a DDA compliant toilet and ramp suitable for people with disabilities.	Completed
	13. Install signage that reflects Council's corporate style and provides information on opportunities at the park.	Completed
	14. Improve landscaping throughout the park, to create a more attractive and welcoming environment.	Completed
	15. Seal main entrance from Chapel St to improve condition of internal roadway.	Completed
	16. Install two lights at the southern end of the hockey field.	Not started
	17. Demolish existing sheds and build one new shed, able to provide some shelter, seating and storage for hockey equipment.	Completed
	18. Decommission Hospital Street toilet block once pavilion extension is complete.	Not started
	19. Render and smarten up existing public toilets near the bowls green.	Not started
	20. Develop an electronic ground booking system.	Ongoing
	21. Continue to explore opportunities for new activities/user groups.	Ongoing
	22. Continue to plant trees along Nardoo Walking Track.	
	<p>The Donaldson Park Community Hub Redevelopment Project will include a new multi-purpose facility, replacing the current pavilions for football, netball and hockey club and harness racing club. The new community hub will support these sporting teams and increase sport participation whilst also providing a community facility able to host large-numbered community groups and events.</p>	
	<p>The project includes the following actions. These are due for completion in 2023/2024:</p>	
	1. New multi-sport and community-focused community hub	
	2. Car park	
	3. Solar installation with batteries	

Strategy	Strategic Directions	Status
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Pavement works 5. Landscaping 6. Playspace for all abilities 7. Additional landscaping 8. Internal paths adjacent to the new building. 	
Inglewood Recreation Reserve Master Plan 2018	<p>The Inglewood Reserve Master Plan includes the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a water allocation agreement for key sports facilities during restriction periods. 2. Calculate the yield of the Old Inglewood Reservoir and put in place a water allocation process. 3. Develop and implement an ongoing program of works for the Old Town Reservoir. 4. Implement a formal water use monitoring and annual reporting process. 5. Secure water for the ground by upgrading catch drains to allow the Inglewood Reservoir to fill so that water can then be transferred to the sports complex for irrigation purposes. 6. Upgrade toilet facilities in Sports Centre. 7. Install a new irrigation system to allow more efficient use of water and plant warm season grasses to provide a better playing surface. 8. Install a range hood in the kitchen area to meet regulations. 9. Install some speed humps with signage around the sports oval. 10. Upgrade Sports Centre to improve overall appearance and amenity. 11. Develop change facilities for netballers and female umpires – as part of the tennis pavilion. 12. Install heating and cooling in the pavilion. Cover louver windows. 13. Install more shelter, shade and seating around the Recreation Reserve. 14. Upgrade the canteen and the bar. 15. Upgrade lights for sports oval and netball courts. 16. Upgrade football/cricket showers and toilets in change rooms. 17. Upgrade public toilets. 18. Develop a rebound wall to allow people to practice their tennis alone or in pairs. 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Not started</p>
Inglewood Streetscape Improvement Project	<p>The Inglewood Streetscape Project will be a major influence in uplifting Inglewood's main street appeal and experience and has the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beautification: Transform the streetscape into an inviting, visually pleasing environment that reflects the unique character and history of Inglewood. • Infrastructure Upgrades: Upgrade kerb and channel systems, enhancing drainage and accessibility while maintaining historical architectural elements. • Footpaths: Develop pedestrian-friendly footpaths that promote safe movement and accessibility for all residents and visitors. • Underground Power: Implement underground power installation to improve the aesthetic appeal and safety of the streetscape. • Greening Initiatives: Integrate landscaping and urban greening strategies, incorporating plantings to improve air quality, biodiversity, and aesthetics. • Traffic Calming: Implement traffic calming measures to reduce vehicular speed and enhance pedestrian safety, encouraging alternative modes of transportation. 	<p>In progress</p>

Strategy	Strategic Directions	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian Safety: Enhance pedestrian crossings and signage to prioritize pedestrian safety and encourage walking within the town. • Overall Amenity: Create functional gathering spaces, seating areas, and resting points, contributing to the overall comfort and enjoyment of the streetscape. • Heritage Loan Scheme Policy: Seek to adopt the draft Heritage Loan Scheme Policy, to coincide with this project. • Place-Making: Develop spaces that foster a sense of identity and community, where residents and visitors can connect and engage in cultural and social activities. Enhance existing heritage walking trails and signage. • Public Art: Integrate artistic installations that tell the story of Inglewood's history, culture, and aspirations, creating points of interest and visual engagement. • First Nations Recognition: Incorporate design elements that acknowledge and celebrate the First Nations people and their connection to the land, integrating cultural significance into the streetscape. <p>The project has commenced and will be completed by September 2024 and will cover planning and actions for period 2025-2029.</p>	
<p>Mitiamo Recreation Reserve Master Plan 2019</p>	<p>The Mitiamo Recreation Reserve Master Plan includes the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop an agreement with the MRWS to access water from the proposed pipeline and install rainwater tank. 2. Develop a water allocation agreement for key sports facilities during restriction periods. 3. Decommission all 5 lawn tennis courts and construct 2 new shared netball/tennis courts (which meet Netball Victoria standards). 4. Relocate existing light poles and upgrade lighting of the courts. 5. Improve drainage around the court area so that water does not pool on the courts. 6. Relocate entrance to pavilion further to the east to allow a car-free area around the netball/tennis and play area. 7. Survey oval and improve drainage on southern side of ground. 8. Revegetate Recreation Reserve. 9. Construct a basic club facility to provide shelter, toilet, shower and storage space next to the courts. 10. Implement a formal water use monitoring and annual reporting process. 11. Install sturdy cafe plastic sheeting around the verandah to increase capacity of the pavilion to cater for events. 12. Relocate the two water tanks and connect to the roof for toilet flushing. 13. Install water efficient fixtures. 14. Assess the need to supplement the water supply and implement a stormwater harvesting system. 15. Extend pavilion by approximately 4 metres to increase capacity for events and functions and to provide additional storage space. 16. Improve the existing irrigation system on the sports oval. 17. Upgrade light towers around the sports ground to allow football games to be held at night. 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Underway</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not required – Plastic sheeting recommended solution.</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>

Strategy	Strategic Directions	Status
Newbridge Recreation Reserve Master Plan 2018	<p>The Newbridge Recreation Reserve Master Plan includes the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a water allocation agreement for key sports facilities during restriction periods. 2. Implement a formal water use monitoring and annual reporting process. 3. Install an in-ground irrigation sprinkler system to decrease water use; decrease amount of time spent watering; and improve condition of the ground. 4. Develop a new community sports pavilion to cater for social events and to provide suitable change facilities for players and umpires, and upgrade power. Incorporate water efficient fixtures and additional rainwater tanks. 5. Reconstruct netball courts to meet Netball Victoria standards (over existing tennis courts). 6. Mentor young people to take on administrative roles on the Newbridge Recreation Reserve Committee of Management to ensure its ongoing sustainability. 7. Provide shade trees and a BBQ in playground/picnic area to provide a more comfortable place for people to recreate. 8. Develop a track along reserve extending this around the top of the reserve. 9. Fence the site to prevent sheep from causing damage. 10. Liaise with Coliban Water on potential for recycled water option if the proposal to provide a reticulated sewage system to the town goes ahead. 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
Pyramid Hill Mitchell Park Master Plan 2018	<p>The Mitchell Park Master Plan includes the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a water allocation agreement for key sports facilities during restriction periods. 2. Implement a formal water use monitoring and annual reporting process and set up an agreement with Loddon Shire to access a set volume of water from the Loddon Shire’s Pyramid Hill-Boort Irrigation water share. 3. Reseal both courts and extend run-off to meet Netball Victoria standards and to improve safety for netballers. 4. Replace existing irrigation system. 5. Upgrade fire service to ensure safety of patrons in the pavilion should a fire break out. 6. Install light near playground to improve visibility of children playing in the area. 7. Install signage to warn motorists to slow down. 8. Provide access for people with disabilities to top floor of the pavilion. 9. Collect rainwater from clubhouse and use for toilet flushing and other non-drinking building purposes. 10. Consider replacement of turf wickets with synthetic wickets to reduce water usage. 11. Need to install heating and cooling in the pavilion, a skylight and better acoustics. 12. Construct a verandah to the south end of the pavilion for netball spectators. 13. Improve aesthetics of the ground through ongoing planting and upkeep of more trees. 14. Seal internal road around oval and provide signage and speed humps. 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Completed</p>

Strategy	Strategic Directions	Status
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Replace training lighting around the sports oval to improve visibility during training sessions. 16. Replace gate, fence and track to provide safe access for users of Mitchell Park. 17. Replace original toilet block. 	<p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p>
Pyramid Hill Tennis and Bowls Facility Master Plan 2018	<p>The Pyramid Hill Tennis and Bowls Facility Master Plan includes the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a water allocation agreement for key sports facilities during restriction periods. 2. Implement a formal water use monitoring and annual reporting process. 3. Set up an agreement with Loddon Shire to access a set volume of water from the Loddon Shire’s Pyramid Hill Boort Irrigation water share. 4. Develop two synthetic tennis courts with lights to reduce water usage and to provide year-round tennis opportunities for the community and install an in-ground irrigation system on the tennis courts to eliminate the need for flood irrigation and to irrigate the tennis courts more effectively. 5. Install a fence near the channel to prevent children from falling into the water; between the playground and the fire training track; and between the playground and the main road. 6. Erect signage from main road to direct people to the tennis courts. 7. Plant trees on the western side of the tennis/swimming pavilion to help keep players and the pavilion cooler and to provide additional shade in the car park. 8. Purchase a new motorised spraying machine to maintain the bowls greens more effectively. 9. Upgrade the bowls pavilion kitchen by installing a new oven and relocating the hand basin; and installing new carpet throughout the pavilion. 10. Upgrade play equipment to ensure provision for younger and middle age groups. 11. Undertake additional planting and landscaping around the tennis area, particularly at either end of the complex once the end tennis courts have been removed. 12. Install lighting at the Bowls Club to allow night time training, competitions and events. 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Not started</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Not started</p>
Pyramid Hill Streetscapes Revitalisation Project 2023	<p>The Pyramid Hill Streetscapes Revitalisation Project is funded and will include tree planting, improved pedestrian amenity and navigation around the centre and between key community facilities, and a unified, exciting civic area along Kelly Street.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
Serpentine Recreation Reserve Master Plan 2018	<p>The Serpentine Recreation Reserve Master Plan includes the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a water allocation agreement for key sports facilities during restriction periods. 2. Implement a formal water use monitoring and annual reporting process. 3. Upgrade irrigation system so that it is fully automated. 4. Purchase and install a storage tank and associated pipework to connect to the new pipeline. 5. Re-level, laser and resurface sports ground oval to create a more uniform playing surface. 6. Replant sports oval with warm season grasses to reduce water use. 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>

Strategy	Strategic Directions	Status
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Increase run-off on netball to meet Netball Victoria standards. 8. Improve landscaping around the front of the Community Centre and by planting drought tolerant species. 9. Install a new playground with a protective barrier or fence. 10. Re-route Coliban water tankers from internal road at the Reserve to an alternative/new road when accessing the treatment plant due to potential safety issues and degradation of the internal roads. 11. Consider closing off road between netball courts and the Community Centre to increase safety. 12. Drop off area in front of Community Centre. 13. Upgrade inefficient water fixtures (toilets and taps). 14. Develop the area behind the netball courts into a native bush land area (known as Pon Pon Reserve), featuring a shared trail with fitness stations around it. 15. Increase size of football and netball change rooms, and improve umpire change rooms, the social rooms and canteen facilities. 	<p>Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Not started Completed</p>
<p>Winzar Recreation Reserve Master Plan 2018 (Dingee)</p>	<p>The Winzar Recreation Reserve Master Plan includes the following actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a water allocation agreement for key sports facilities during restriction periods. 2. Implement a formal water use monitoring and annual reporting process. 3. Consider purchasing a permanent water allocation. 4. Convert one lawn tennis court to hard court to allow for year-round multi-purpose use; install lights; and line mark for other sports such as netball and basketball. 5. Upgrade lighting on the bowling green. 6. Continue to develop the walking track around the reserve to form a self-contained loop from Dingee and link up with Tang Tang Reserve. 7. Upgrade cricket practice nets. 8. Improve condition of cricket wicket and oval. 9. Fill in the dam as water will be sourced from a pipeline in the future and a new water storage tank has been installed recently. 10. Level ground around pavilion; repair exterior wall to match new extension; and install carpet in function area. 11. Review the adequacy of the tennis courts sprinkler system and replace or upgrade the sprinkler system if required. 12. Share a caretaker with another community to maintain sports facilities. 13. Formalise bowls club parking area with pine bollards and install lighting. 	<p>Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed</p>

2.5 State Government Strategies

The table below summarises State Government strategies relevant to sport and active recreation, open space and aquatic facilities and services.

Table 5: State Strategy Review

Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
<p>Active Victoria</p>	<p>Active Victoria is the Victorian Government’s strategic framework for sport and recreation in Victoria. The framework aims to reset the sector following the COVID-19 global pandemic, build on the existing foundations for the State to be recognised as the nation’s sporting capital and to deliver a more active Victorian population.</p> <p>The vision of Active Victoria is to build a thriving, inclusive and connected sport and active recreation sector that benefits all Victorians.</p> <p>The framework includes twelve key directions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase and promote opportunities so Victorians can participate in ways that suit them. 2. Target efforts towards individuals and communities who participate less. 3. Improve community sport and active recreation infrastructure coordination to better meet demand, with a focus on areas and populations who need it most. 4. Deliver inclusive, multi-use and sustainable community sport and active recreation infrastructure. 5. Attract and retain a skilled sport and active recreation workforce (paid and unpaid). 6. Promote more financially sustainable organisations that reduce duplication and inefficiencies in service delivery. 7. Implement frameworks to create safe and inclusive sport and active recreation settings. 8. Build insights through better use of evidence and data. 9. Develop a world-leading suite of major stadium and state facilities. 10. Connected and co-ordinated pathways exist to pursue sport at the highest level. 11. Invest in state infrastructure that can host international and regional events and support event content that boosts the Victorian economy. 12. Partner to maximise leverage from investment in Victoria’s major events. <p>The Strategy will need to respond to the strategic directions outlined above, and directly align with the identified need to increase participation and deliver multi-use sustainable community sporting infrastructure.</p>
<p>Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan 2014</p>	<p>Regional growth plans provide broad direction for land use and development across regional Victoria. They also provide more detailed planning frameworks for key regional centres. Each of regional Victoria’s regions is covered by a regional growth plan, which, together with Plan Melbourne, provide strategic land use plans for Victoria.</p> <p>The regional growth plans have been developed in a partnership with local government and state agencies and authorities through consultation with the community and key stakeholders.</p> <p>The Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan covers the municipalities of Central Goldfields, Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Macedon Ranges and Mount Alexander. The Plan is endorsed by each council and is reviewed every four years.</p> <p>The Regional Growth Plan supports Bendigo as the regional city and Inglewood and Bridgewater as hinterland towns to encourage sustainable population growth; and to protect character and amenity of smaller settlements.</p> <p>The land use framework supports:</p>

Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitating ongoing agricultural productivity and new opportunities that respond to climate change through ongoing adaptation and flexibility in the Loddon Shire. Identifies areas containing high value terrestrial habitat in Loddon Shire (National and State Regional Parks). Key transport corridors of Wimmera Hwy, Calder Hwy and Loddon Valley Hwy. Rail corridors connecting Bendigo through Loddon Shire to Swan Hill/Kerang and connecting Maryborough through Loddon Shire to Boort and Mildura. Support the ongoing role of the region's small towns and settlements. Acknowledge the non-urban population's contribution to the region. Invest in liveability, infrastructure and urban design initiatives. Build community connectedness and reduce areas of social disadvantage. <p>The land use planning framework provides for sport and recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services to deliver liveability benefits to the region.</p>
Recognition and Settlement Agreement 2013	<p>The Recognition and Settlement Agreement supports Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the land.</p> <p>As part of the agreement, six parks including Hepburn Regional Park, Paddys Ranges State Park, Kooyoora State Park, Wehla Conservation Reserve, Greater Bendigo National Park and Kara Kara National Park have been transferred to the Traditional Owners on Aboriginal Title.</p> <p>The Dhelkunya Dja Land Management Board have a joint management plan with the State Government (Parks Victoria) for managing the parks. The plan includes strategies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conserve the natural values and cultural values. Managing threatened species. Recognition and utilisation of traditional Dja Dja Wurrung knowledge and customs. Attracting and managing visitors and identifying opportunities for benefits flowing from enhanced park experiences for visitors, the Dja Dja Wurrung people and wider community. Connection with broader Dja Dja Wurrung Country. Consequent economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits for Dja Dja Wurrung people and the wider community. <p>Public access to the parks and reserves continues in accordance with applicable legislation.</p>

2.6 National and International Strategies

The table below summarises National and International strategies relevant to sport and active recreation, open space and aquatic facilities and services.

Table 6: International, National and State Strategy Review

Other Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
International	
World Health Organisation: Brief for Action on Urban Green Spaces (2017)	<p>Urban green spaces are a feature of healthy settlements and that the evidence proves <i>"green spaces benefit cities and urban quality of life"</i>.</p> <p>The brief found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban living limits access to nature and can increase exposure to certain environmental hazards such as air and noise pollution. Many urban areas face increasing pressure from expanding populations, limited resources and growing impacts of climate change.

Other Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These challenges must be addressed for cities to provide healthy and sustainable living environments. <p>“Green spaces” include parks, playgrounds or vegetation in public and private places. They offer nature-based solutions that can help ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents have adequate opportunities for exposure to nature. • Biodiversity is maintained and protected. • Environmental hazards such as air pollution or noise are reduced. • Impacts of extreme weather events (heatwaves, extreme rainfall and flooding) are mitigated. • Quality of living (Liveability benefits) is enhanced. • Health and wellbeing of residents is improved. <p>The brief includes planning and design advice based on an extensive evidence base reviewed as part of the brief. Key planning considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put the green space close to people. • Consider simple design features to improve the comfort of green space use. • Plan for a diversity of green space types. • Think of the maintenance needs of green space.
<p>World Health Organisation: Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health (2010)</p>	<p>Physical inactivity is now identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality. Physical inactivity levels are rising in many countries with major implications for the prevalence of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and the general health of the population worldwide.</p> <p>The focus of the Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health is primary prevention of NCDs through physical activity at population level and the primary target audience for these recommendations are policymakers at national level.</p> <p>The recommendations address three age groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children and young people aged 5–17 years old physical activity includes play, games, sports, transportation, recreation, physical education or planned exercise, in the context of family, school, and community activities. To improve cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, bone health, cardiovascular and metabolic health biomarkers and reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression, the following are recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily. • Physical activity of amounts greater than 60 minutes daily will provide additional health benefits. • Most of daily physical activity should be aerobic. Vigorous-intensity activities should be incorporated, including those that strengthen muscle and bone, at least three times per week. 2. Adults 18–64 years old physical activity includes recreational or leisure-time physical activity, transportation (e.g., walking or cycling), occupational (i.e., work), household chores, play, games, sports or planned exercise, in the context of daily, family, and community activities. To improve cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, bone health and reduce the risk of NCDs and depression the following are recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or do at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week, or an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous-intensity activity. • Aerobic activity should be performed in bouts of at least 10 minutes duration. • For additional health benefits, adults should increase their moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes per week or engage in 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week, or an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous-intensity activity.

Other Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscle-strengthening activities should be done involving major muscle groups on two or more days a week. <p>3. Adults 65 years old and above, physical activity includes recreational or leisure-time physical activity, transportation (e.g., walking or cycling), occupational (if the person is still engaged in work), household chores, play, games, sports or planned exercise, in the context of daily, family and community activities. To improve cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, bone and functional health, and reduce the risk of NCDs, depression and cognitive decline, the following are recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or do at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous-intensity activity. • Aerobic activity should be performed in bouts of at least 10 minutes duration. • For additional health benefits, adults aged 65 years and above should increase their moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes per week or engage in 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity per week or an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous-intensity activity. • Adults of this age group with poor mobility should perform physical activity to enhance balance and prevent falls on 3 or more days per week. • Muscle-strengthening activities should be done involving major muscle groups on two or more days a week. • When adults of this age group cannot do the recommended amounts of physical activity due to health conditions, they should be as physically active as their abilities and conditions allow. <p>Overall, across all the age groups, the benefits of implementing the above recommendations and of being physically active outweigh the harms. At the recommended level of 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity activity, musculoskeletal injury rates appear to be uncommon. In a population-based approach, to decrease the risks of musculoskeletal injuries, it would be appropriate to encourage a moderate start with gradual progress to higher levels of physical activity.</p>
National	
Sport 2030: Sport Australia (2018)	<p>This Strategy is Australia’s first national sport plan; it is the vision and the plan for sport and physical activity in Australia over the next 12 years to be delivered in partnership with Australia’s sporting, physical activity, technology, education and corporate community. The Plan on a page summary:</p> <p>The impact/effect of Sport 2030 on local government is within the first Strategic priority (Building a More Active Australia) with the role of local government being recognised as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the sporting ecosystem. • A partner with Australian and state governments, non-government organisations and corporate sector that share the vision for a more active Australia. • Working alongside Australian and state governments in funding infrastructure that meets the ever-changing needs of Australian communities.

Other Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Australian government and national sporting organisations to create database of sports infrastructure and to develop a national approach to mapping infrastructure across the country. <div style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Australia: To be the world’s most active and healthy sporting nation, known for its integrity and sporting success.</p> </div>  <p>STRATEGIC PRIORITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building a More Active Australia Achieving Sporting Excellence Safeguarding the Integrity of Sport Strengthening Australia's Sport Industry <p>MISSION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce inactivity amongst Australians by 15% by 2030 National pride, inspiration and motivation through international sporting success A fair, safe and strong sport sector free from corruption A thriving Australian sport and recreation industry <p>TARGET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More people of all ages engaged in sport and physical activity throughout every stage of their life A world class high performance system that is empowered to achieve sporting success through tailored approaches for sports and athletes Australian sport is seen as safe, trustworthy and fair with secure, reliable systems for deterring, detecting and dealing with threats to competition A strong, viable, contemporary and inclusive sports industry with high quality successful organisations driving economic and social benefits <p>OUTCOMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved physical health Improved mental health Personal development Strengthening our communities Growing the economy
<p>Sport Australia Australian Physical Literacy Framework (2019)</p>	<p>Physical Literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is lifelong holistic learning acquired and applied in movement and physical activity contexts. Reflects ongoing changes integrating physical, psychological, social and cognitive capabilities. Is vital in helping us lead healthy and fulfilling lives through movement and physical activity. <p>A physically literate person can draw on their integrated physical, psychological, social and cognitive capabilities to support health promoting and fulfilling movement and physical activity – relative to their situation and context – throughout the lifespan.</p> <p>The Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Categorises a range of movement-related skills, knowledge and behaviours into interrelated domains, elements and stages. Helps identify a person’s capability across all four domains and allows people to make informed decisions about their physical literacy.

Other Strategies	Relevant Themes/Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a common language around effective development of physical literacy. • Accommodates the entire range of abilities, ages and backgrounds of all Australians. <div data-bbox="686 336 1149 806" data-label="Diagram"> <p>The diagram consists of a central white circle containing the text 'PHYSICAL LITERACY'. Surrounding this central circle are four overlapping, semi-circular segments arranged in a ring. Starting from the top and moving clockwise, the segments are: a blue segment labeled 'PHYSICAL', a yellow segment labeled 'PSYCHOLOGICAL', a green segment labeled 'SOCIAL', and a red segment labeled 'COGNITIVE'. The segments overlap each other, creating a sense of interconnectedness.</p> </div> <p>This diagram demonstrates the four domains that the Framework is arranged around.</p> <p>The role and relationship of community/ industry segments to the Framework is articulated; with Policy makers being the most relevant to this Strategy; and the Framework application to policy makers helps them embed physical literacy through systems and policies (health, education, sport and physical activity), using physical literacy as a tool to improve individual and societal health and wellbeing.</p>
<p>Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines</p>	<p>For Children and Young People (5-17 years)</p> <p>Physical Activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accumulating 60 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day involving mainly aerobic activities. • Several hours of a variety of light physical activities. • Activities that are vigorous, as well as those that strengthen muscle and bone should be incorporated at least three days per week. • To achieve greater health benefits, replace sedentary time with additional moderate to vigorous physical activity, while preserving sufficient sleep. <p>Sedentary Behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible. • Limit sedentary recreational screen time to no more than two hours per day. • When using screen-based electronic media, positive social interactions and experiences are encouraged. <p>For Adults (18-64 years)</p> <p>Physical Activity Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing any physical activity is better than doing none. If you currently do no physical activity, start by doing some and gradually build up to the recommended amount. • Be active on most, preferably all, days every week. • Accumulate 150 to 300 minutes (2 ½ to 5 hours) of moderate intensity physical activity or 75 to 150 minutes (1 ¼ to 2 ½ hours) of vigorous intensity physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both moderate and vigorous activities, each week. • Do muscle strengthening activities on at least two days each week. <p>Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise the amount of time spent in prolonged sitting. • Break up long periods of sitting as often as possible.

2.7 Research Findings

How do people use our open spaces and sport and recreation facilities today and into the future?

What are the benefits of public open spaces?

Our parks, sport and recreation facilities are critical for community health and wellbeing, helping to benefit our community:



Physically and mentally by promoting physical activity and active lifestyles, reducing illness and disease, improving mental health and creating a sense of wellbeing.



Socially by generating stronger and more connected communities with improved social interaction and inclusion through provision of active and vibrant community hubs, access to facilities and resources, opportunities for volunteering and involvement.



Environmentally by developing well-planned and attractive settings encouraging active transport and use of public parks and leisure services. The provision of parks and green environments also include temperature reduction and mitigation of the urban heat island effect; air quality improvement; management of storm water reducing the incidence of flooding and water-borne disease; ecosystem support and biodiversity enhancement.



Economically by assisting to reduce health care cost through reduction in disease and illness associated with lack of physical activity and social interaction. A park and public space network can also provide local employment and investment opportunities and contribute to maintaining a healthy workforce.

“Evidence from around the world for building cities and regional areas around public open space, active recreation areas, green streets and walking and cycling infrastructure, has repeatedly demonstrated this approach will deliver improved health, social cohesion, vibrant local economies, productivity, and environmental benefits.” (State of New South Wales 2020 Draft Greener Spaces Design Guide).

Public open space, sport and recreation infrastructure could be defined as a critical investment in current and future populations. This “Urban Health Infrastructure” delivers multiple returns on investment.

The National Heart Foundation observes:

- The health effects of physical activity are compelling. However, the potency of physical activity as a policy investment for Australia extends far beyond health. Active living plays a key role in broader economic and social goals for our nation; walking, cycling and public transport are affordable and sustainable solutions to traffic congestion.
- These same behaviours contribute to cleaner air, reduced carbon emissions and sustainable environments.
- Active neighbourhoods and cities are more liveable, with higher levels of social capital and community cohesion and lower levels of crime.
- In the context of an ageing community, physical activity enables older Australians to live more active lifestyles with reduced risk from disabling and costly chronic diseases.
- Fit and active workers are more productive, take fewer sick days and make a positive contribution to our economic wellbeing.

(A Blueprint for an Active Australia, Heart Foundation, 2019)

In 2019 the National Heart Foundation of Australia released its third edition of the **Blueprint for an Active Australia**. The report highlights the importance of sport and physical activity to our health and wellbeing.

Some key evidence cited in this report includes:

- Physical activity can significantly reduce heart disease risk and the burden of a range of other chronic diseases, as well as improve mental health.
- Heart disease remains the single leading cause of death in Australia.
- Nearly 6 in 10 adults, 3 quarters of seniors and over 8 in 10 children and young people are not active enough for good heart health. This ranges Australia among the world's most inactive nations.
- 1 in 3 Australians aged 15 and over do very little or no exercise at all.
- 70% of Australian men and 56% of Australian women are overweight or obese.
- 1 in 5 Australians experience a mental illness.
- Physical inactivity contributes to 19% of diabetes cases, 16% of bowel cancer cases, 16% of uterine cancer cases, 14% of dementia cases, 11% of breast cancer cases, 11% of coronary heart disease and 10% of strokes.

These statistics are even more severe across disadvantaged groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that suffer two to three times worse off on most social and health indicators reported.

What is the economic cost of physical inactivity?

The University of Sydney study found in 2013 that physical inactivity costs Australia \$805 million each year (Source: Lancet Journal, 2016). This cost is made up of direct health care expenses linked to chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease and indirect costs of productivity losses when people die prematurely because of physical inactivity.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recently conducted research into the global cost of physical activity. Key findings were:

- 499.2 million new cases of preventable major non communicable diseases (NCDs) would occur globally by 2030 if the prevalence of physical inactivity does not change, with direct health-care costs of INT\$520 billion.
- The global cost of inaction on physical inactivity would reach approximately \$47.6 billion per year. Although 74% of new cases of NCDs would occur in low-income and middle-countries, high-income countries would bear a larger proportion (63%) of the economic costs.
- The cost of treatment and management of NCDs varied—although dementia accounted for only 3% of new preventable NCDs, the disease corresponded to 22% of all costs; Type 2 diabetes accounted for 2% of new preventable cases but 9% of all costs; and cancers accounted for 1% of new preventable cases but 15% of all costs.

What is the role of government in reversing this trend?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) Constitution (1947) best defines the rights of Australians and the government's role: "Having the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition and that governments have the responsibility for the health of their peoples which can be fulfilled only by the provision of adequate health and social measures".

In 2017, the World Health Organisation (WHO) released a **Brief for Action on Urban Green Spaces**. The brief is based on extensive evidence supporting the need for urban green space and includes blue spaces, water bodies and corridors.

WHO explains that urban green spaces are a feature of healthy settlements and that the evidence proves “*green spaces benefit cities and urban quality of life*”.

Our urban green spaces including parks, civic spaces, active transport corridors, sport and recreation facilities and spaces, streets, water bodies and open space corridors, enable people to live a healthy and active lifestyle. These spaces and places help people escape from the built environment and reconnect with nature. They provide social spaces for us to connect with each other and strengthen our sense of community. They help us learn. They protect natural environments, important habitats and cultural heritage. They offer opportunities for tourism, sustainable economies and investment in social capital. Our green spaces are the lungs of our growing cities and the solution to overheating as the climate continues to change.

We need to have urban environments that make it easy and attractive to exercise as well as provide a range of opportunities to enable activity. While it is important to promote the benefits of physical activity to children and adults, there is a need to ensure that our parks can support and encourage physical activity for all ages, abilities, genders, cultures and socio-economic groups.

The **Healthy by Design Framework** supports availability of green spaces, including parks, playgrounds and streetscapes that are safe, accessible, walkable and inviting are a key component of an environment that supports physically active lifestyles.

2.8 Key Findings of the Strategic Review

There is strategic support for improving the accessibility, diversity and quality of recreation, open space and aquatic facilities and services to improve community health and wellbeing in Loddon.

Sport and active recreation, open space and aquatic facilities and services are integral to achieving the visions of Loddon Shire Council and are recognised as key ingredients to achieving community health and wellbeing in Loddon and an important part of the social fabric and character of our agricultural/farming communities. They provide opportunities to be active and are highly valued by the Loddon communities, delivering social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits.

The Strategy aligns with Loddon Shire Council’s strategic plans and commitments. Specifically, the Strategy will respond to the *Loddon Council Plan 2021-2025* directions to ‘Plan for Future Facilities and Infrastructure That Meet Community Needs’ and ‘Maintain Sports and Recreation and Open Public Spaces to enable and Promote Access and Participation’.

The Strategy will supersede the Recreation Strategy 2014 and be an overarching strategy that consolidates strategic priorities identified in the:

- *Activating Open Space Strategy 2019-2024*
- *Swimming Pool Improvements Plan 2018-2022*
- Outstanding actions identified in recreation reserve masterplans.

The Strategy will also align with State Government policy. Specifically, Sport and Recreation Victoria’s *Active Victoria (Strategic Framework)* and the *Loddon Mallee Regional Growth Plan*.

This Strategy now requires a planning framework that will help guide and inform the Council on what types of sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities are required to meet the short, medium and aspirational needs of the Loddon Shire community.

The Strategy will prioritise and align project outcomes with Council's Annual Budget, Council's Asset Management Strategy and other potential funding mechanisms.

Loddon Shire Council has invested significantly in the improvement of sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities following flooding events

Loddon Shire Council has improved the sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services over the last 10 years. This includes upgraded sports fields, courts, lighting and pavilions. The Council has also invested in developing walking and cycling trails and streetscape improvements within township areas.

A program of sport and recreation reserve master plans has been implemented over the last 10 years that has improved the function, capacity and quality of facilities. Continued investment in the implementation of master plans will ensure contemporary facilities that meet user needs and experiences.

Asset condition varies, and the asset renewal funding gap is widening

The assets vary in condition, with several ageing and needing renewal. Council's asset management obligation is a key consideration for the project. The Asset Plan 2022 projects a funding shortfall to meet the current asset replacement and maintenance requirements in the next 10 years.

A strategic approach that considers a hierarchy and agreed design and maintenance standards is required to improve sport and recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities in the future.

Further, condition audits for Council's five outdoor public swimming pools and a review into the operational performance of Loddon Shire's aquatic service found the asset condition and ongoing operation of the outdoor pools is a concern. The pools do not meet current industry standards and are now 50+ years old. They are currently costing Council \$40-50 per visit. The Strategy will need to explore how a sustainable aquatic service can be provided in Loddon Shire.

Council will need to consider the long-term financial capacity to renew assets. An examination of the need for an asset at the time of renewal is required to ensure the current and future needs of community are met within a funding profile available to Council.

Sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services will need to respond to State, National and International issues and strategies

Sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services follow trends being influenced by broader state, national and internal policy. Loddon Shire Council must ensure future planning for sport and active recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities is adaptable to this changing environment.

WHO Urban Green Spaces: A Brief for Action (2017) highlights the important role green spaces (our parks, playground and vegetated areas) play to ensuring:

- People have adequate opportunities for exposure to nature.
- Biodiversity is maintained and protected.
- Environmental hazards such as air pollution or noise are reduced.
- Impacts of extreme weather events (heatwaves, extreme rainfall and flooding) are mitigated.

- Quality of living (Liveability benefits) is enhanced.
- Health and wellbeing of residents is improved.

Delivering accessible “green spaces” is critical to our health and wellbeing. WHO Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health (2010) highlight that physical inactivity is now the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality. This challenge is further evidenced by Sport 2030: Sport Australia (2018) report which incorporates a mission to reduce physical inactivity amongst Australians by 15% by 2030.

The WHO suggests a multifaceted approach to supporting increased physical activity levels and differentiates the targeted duration and intensity of physical activity goals by age, as follows:

- Aged 5 – 17 years - Accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily.
- Aged 18 – 64 years - At least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week, or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity.
- Aged 65+ years - At least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week, or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity.

Whilst Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines differ slightly from the above goals, the overall objectives remain the same. That is, to increase physical activity levels by Australians across all age cohorts. Sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services play a critical role in achieving this through maximising opportunities for people to be physically active and facilitating a connection to nature. With limited resources available to local governments to support these outcomes, strategies must be realistic and focus on maximising participation and environmental outcomes.

3. Demand Assessment

Who are we planning for?

This section assesses the different drivers of demand on our sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services, including population and demographic influences and local and national participation trends.

3.1 Demographic Influences

Current Population

The following table represents the demographics of Loddon Shire broken down into townships and is categorised by population, age and cultural diversity. Data is sourced from the *Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021*.

The total population of Loddon Shire in 2021 was 7,759. The biggest township in the Shire is Boort with a population of 808, followed by Inglewood with a population of 779.

There is an almost even split of the population between males and females, with 50.6% of the population being male and 49.4% female.

Table 7: Current Population

Township	Total Population 2021	Males	Females	Median Age	Overseas population	Aboriginal
Loddon Shire	7,759	50.6%	49.4%	52	1,572	170
Boort	808	46.1%	53.9%	58	220	14
Inglewood	779	49.6%	50.4%	55	132	23
Wedderburn	650	48.2%	51.8%	57	145	12
Pyramid Hill	475	48.3%	51.7%	47	159	14
Bridgewater	341	50.0%	50.0%	50	56	8
Serpentine	222	48.4%	51.6%	40	40	0
Dingee	195	50.3%	49.7%	50	20	0
Laanecoorie	179	54.9%	45.1%	57	38	3
Newbridge	171	52.9%	47.1%	58	6	3
Tarnagulla	153	52.9%	47.1%	59	29	9
Korong Vale	143	52.7%	47.3%	57	28	9
Mitiamo	116	48.2%	51.8%	50	26	0
Eddington	113	48.3%	51.7%	42	8	4

Future Population

The following graph shows an increase of 0% and 1% over the last 10 years. Loddon Shire Council takes the view that the estimated population growth rate for Loddon Shire over the next decade is, on average, 0.5%.

The 2022 estimated population rate of 7,748 is projected to grow to 8,144 by 2032 (+396). The townships identified for population growth in the Loddon Mallee Regional Growth Plan are Bridgewater and Inglewood.

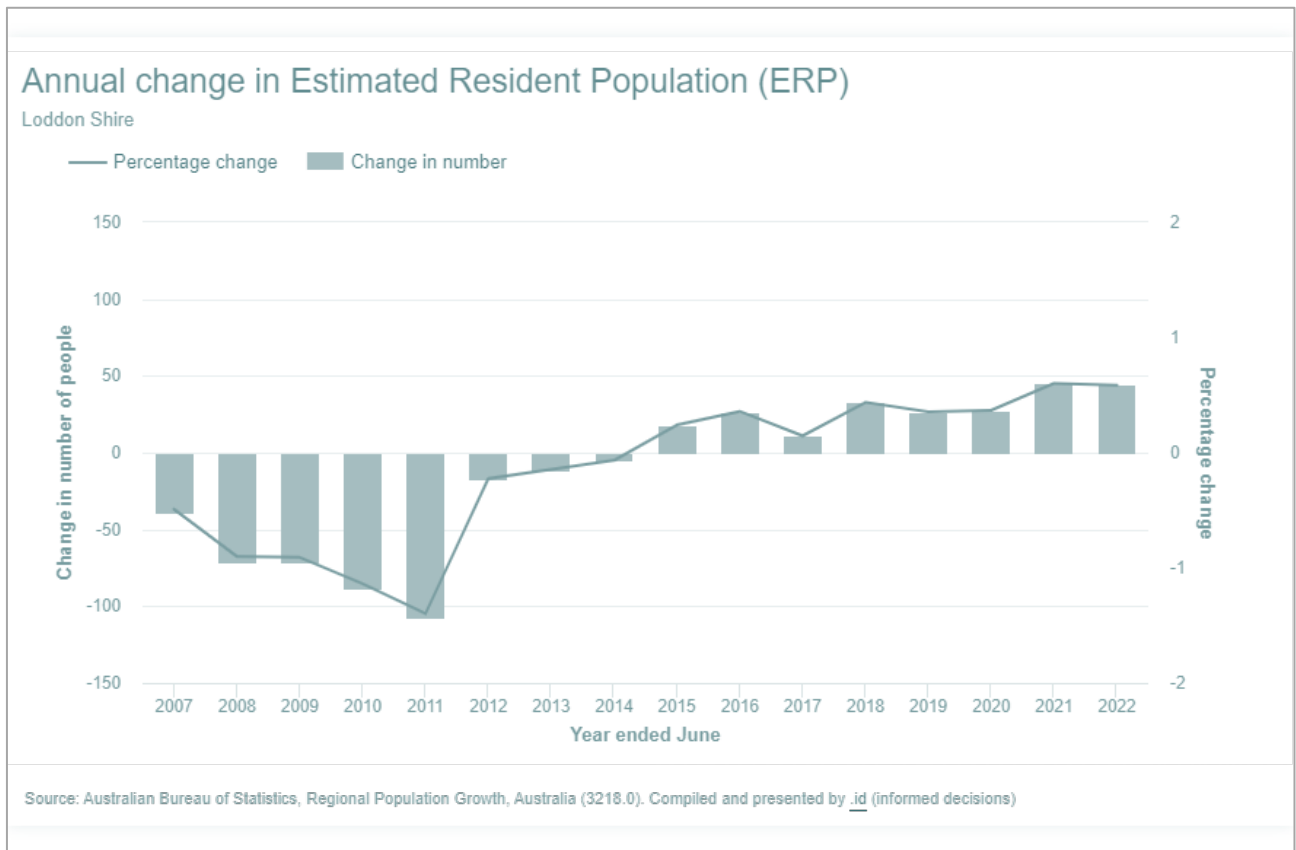


Figure 5: Loddon Shire Population (Source: .idcommunity)

Age profile

Loddon Shire is ageing. Key statistics show:

- The median age of Loddon Shire residents is 52 years. While most townships reflect the same median age, Serpentine (40), Eddington (42) and Pyramid Hill (47) have a relatively younger population.
- The age group with the highest population in most townships is 60 to 69 years.
- There are 24.6% of the population under 25 years, 30.4% between 22 and 54 years and 44.9% over 55 years.

Loddon Shire’s older demographic will need accessible active recreation facilities, programs, and services to support fitness, therapy and socialisation.

Diversity

Loddon Shire has a moderate level of diversity. Key statistics show:

- 2.2% of the population are Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander, compared to 1.9% in Regional Victoria.
- 8.6% of the population was born overseas (Cultural and Linguistically Diverse), compared to 12.4% in Regional Victoria.
- 7.5% of the population reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability, compared to 6.9% in Regional Victoria.
- The highest number of people born overseas were born in England (185), followed by Philippines (107) and New Zealand (74).

- There are pockets of CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) communities in Loddon Shire. Particularly in Boort, which has the highest number of Indian population (17) and Pyramid Hill, which has the highest number of Philippines population (74).

Aboriginal and CALD populations in Loddon Shire townships highlight the need for inclusive and culturally sensitive sport and active recreation facilities, open space and aquatic facilities and services.

The high rates of disability in Loddon Shire mean accessible facilities and participation opportunities like adaptive sports and therapy-based programs are required to encourage participation.

To address the diverse needs of different cultural backgrounds in the Loddon Shire community, the Strategy will engage with representative groups and understand preferences with a view of offering tailored programs and services that leads to greater participation.

Social disadvantage

Loddon Shire has a high level of social disadvantage when compared to Victoria. It is ranked 72 out of 79 councils in Victoria on the socio-economic indexes for areas (SEIFA). Key statistics show:

- SEIFA Index of Disadvantage for Loddon Shire in 2021 was 948.
- The median weekly personal income in Loddon Shire is \$554 which is lower compared to the Victorian median weekly income of \$803.
- The median weekly household income in Loddon Shire is \$1,039 which is lower than the Victorian median household income of \$1,759.

The high levels of socioeconomic disadvantage experienced in Loddon shows the need for affordable and inclusive sport and active recreation facilities, open space and aquatic facilities and services.

The Strategy will explore targeted interventions that may be necessary to deliver equitable access to participation opportunities for people experienced social disadvantage.

Health and wellbeing characteristics¹

Loddon Shire is part of the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership, which also includes the Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Greater Bendigo, Macedon Ranges and Mount Alexander Shires. The regional partnership has prioritised health and wellbeing through the Healthy Loddon Campaspe initiative which continues to fund place-based projects to address rates of obesity, chronic disability and high-risk behaviours.

The following figure highlights the key statistics in relation to health and wellbeing of Loddon residents when compared to Victoria.

¹ Source: Australian Health Policy Collaboration: Australia's Health Tracker Atlas, published Sept 2020; Australian Health Policy Collaboration (AHPC) at Victoria University and the Public Health Information and Development Unit (PHIDU) at Torrens University

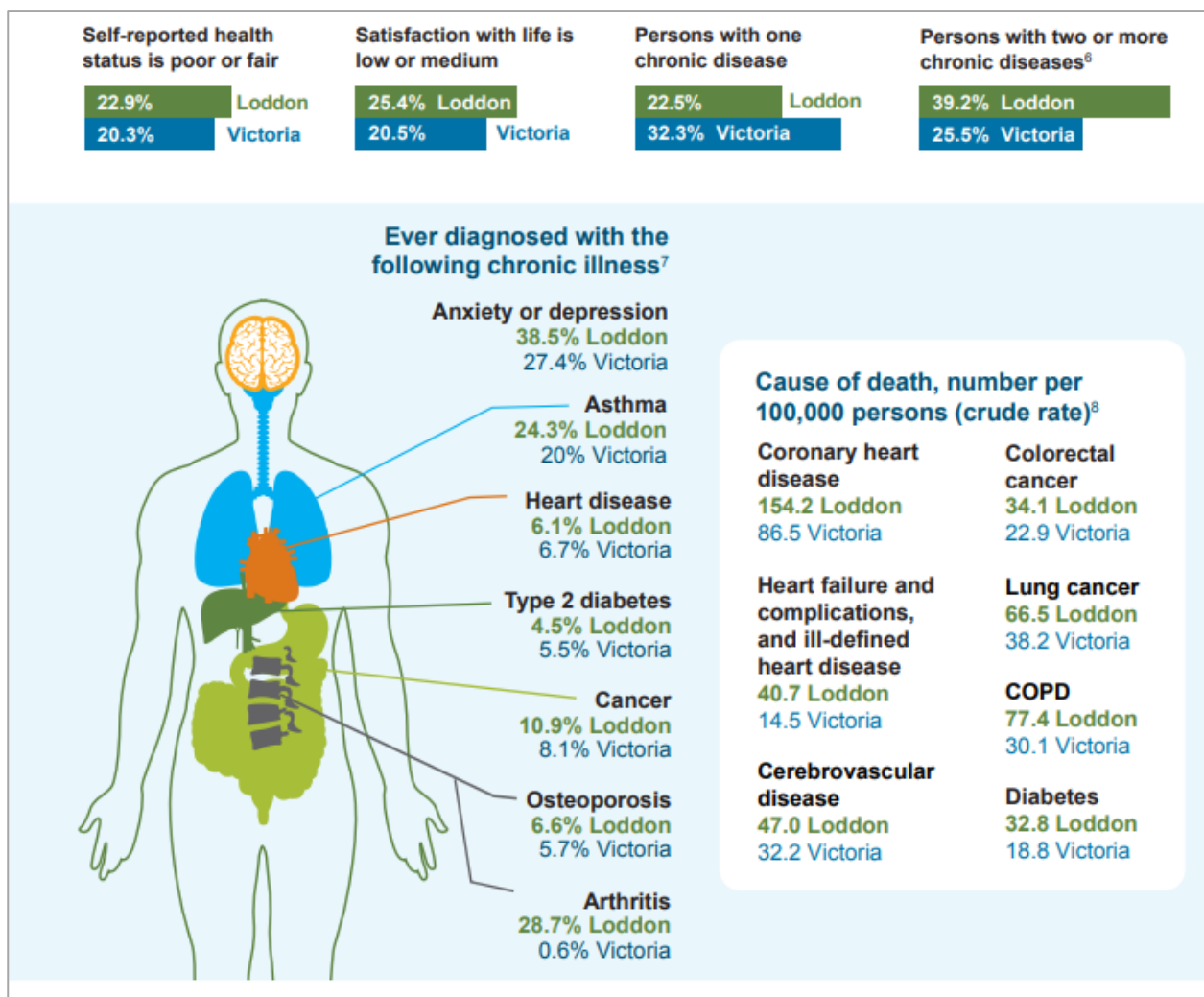


Figure 6: Loddon Shire Council Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 snapshot

Other key health and wellbeing statistics:

- One-third (36.6%) of Loddon people (compared to 24.4% of Victoria) self-reported dental health status as fair/poor.
- Nearly one-third (30.1%) of Loddon people (compared to 33.9% of Victoria) avoided or delayed visiting a dental health professional due to cost.
- One quarter (26.95%) of Loddon people (compared to 16.7% of Victoria) reported as a current smoker with most (25.5%) smoking daily.
- Half (50.1%) of Loddon people (compared to 50.8% of Victoria) are pre-obese or obese.
- Community members highlighted increased social isolation as a major mental health issue related to the pandemic. Associated with this is the increased importance of self-care during these times.
- There were 43.1% of people reporting insufficient physical activity time and sessions as per physical activity guidelines. This compares to 41.1% in Victoria. Main barriers to meeting daily physical activity guidelines were time poor (45.1%), poor health or disability (21%) and cost (19.6%).
- On average, Loddon residents travel 20.6km to get to their activities. Walking is the most popular physical activity among residents, with 19.6% of the population reporting that they walked for exercise in the previous 12 months. Most residents who walked for exercise in the past 12 months did so once per week or more (72.1%).

A key objective of the Strategy is to **get Loddon active** and reverse the significant health issues being experienced in Loddon Shire such as heart diseases, cancer, anxiety, depression, and diabetes. The Strategy will explore ways to promote physical fitness, mental wellbeing, and community engagement and offering preventive and rehabilitative measures. This will in time reduce healthcare costs and improve the overall health and quality of life for Loddon Shire residents.

3.2 Local Participation Trends

Active Living Census 2019

This section summarises the findings from the *2019 Active Living Census* for Loddon Shire.

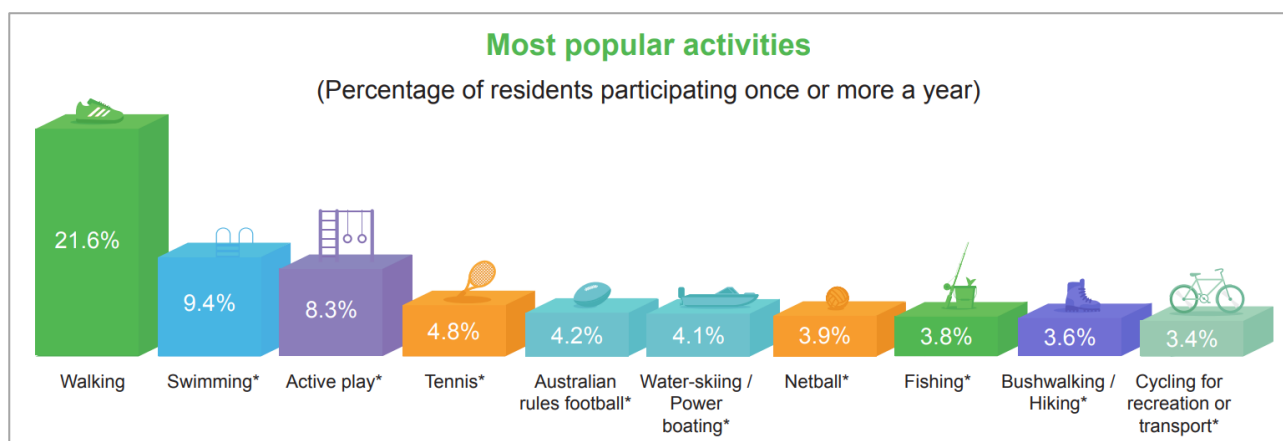












Figure 7: Most Popular Activities in Loddon Shire

The table below shows the 20 activities with the highest rates of annual participation (participating at least once per year). It also displays the rates of weekly participation for those activities (participating at least once per week during the previous 12 months).





















Table 8: Participation, Quality and Accessibility

Activity	Total	Weekly	Quality (out of 5)	Accessibility (out of 5)
Walking	19.6%	72.1%	4.0	4.2
Swimming	9.0%	46.9%	4.1	4.1
Active play	6.6%	54.1%	4.2	4.2
Tennis (indoor / outdoor)	5.8%	68.6%	4.0	4.2
Bush walking / Hiking	5.3%	28.5%	4.1	4.0
Australian rules football	4.3%	83.3%	4.1	4.1
Netball (indoor / outdoor)	3.8%	93.7%	4.2	4.3
Lawn bowls	3.6%	62.1%	4.3	4.2
Fishing	3.5%	8.8%	3.6	3.7
Golf	3.3%	42.9%	3.8	4.2

	Activity	Total	Weekly	Quality (out of 5)	Accessibility (out of 5)
	Fitness: Gym	3.1%	79.0%	4.3	4.5
	Cycling: General cycling for recreation or transport	3.1%	54.3%	4.0	4.4
	Horse riding/Equestrian	1.9%	35.2%	4.3	4.3
	Fitness: Indoor group activities	1.7%	79.7%	4.5	4.3
	Fitness: Outdoor fitness	1.7%	79.9%	4.3	4.6
	Canoeing/Kayaking/Rowing/Paddle boarding	1.6%	15.8%	3.9	3.9
	Water-skiing/Power boating	1.5%	8.9%	3.8	3.9
	Jogging/Running	1.4%	83.4%	3.9	4.3
	Hockey (indoor/outdoor)	1.3%	94.8%	4.2	4.1
	Martial Arts/Tai Chi	1.3%	75.3%	4.1	4.4

The table below indicates the percentage of residents aged three years and over, participating once or more a year, broken down by gender.

Table 9: Sport Participation Broken Down by Gender

Male participation			Female participation		
	Walking	16.5%		Walking	22.2%
	Swimming	8.1%		Swimming	9.7%
	Australian rules football	8.0%		Active play	6.7%
	Active play	6.4%		Tennis	5.5%
	Tennis	6.1%		Bushwalking/Hiking	5.6%
	Bushwalking / Hiking	5.1%		Australian rules football	1.0%
	Lawn bowls	4.9%		Netball	6.6%
	Fishing	4.9%		Lawn bowls	2.5%
	Golf	4.8%		Fishing	2.3%
	Cycling for recreation or transport	3.7%		Golf	2.0%

Following were the main recreation facilities used in Loddon Shire as reported in the Active Living Census:

- Little Lake Boort Trail, Boort
- Boort Park
- Donaldson Park, Wedderburn
- Bridgewater River Walk/Bridgewater foreshore, Bridgewater on Loddon
- Serpentine Recreation Reserve
- Boort Swimming Pool
- Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Kangaroo Flat
- Wedderburn Pool
- Bridgewater Recreation Reserve, Bridgewater on Loddon
- Boort Bowls, Croquet and Tennis Facility.

The figure below shows the reported barriers to being more active in Loddon Shire:

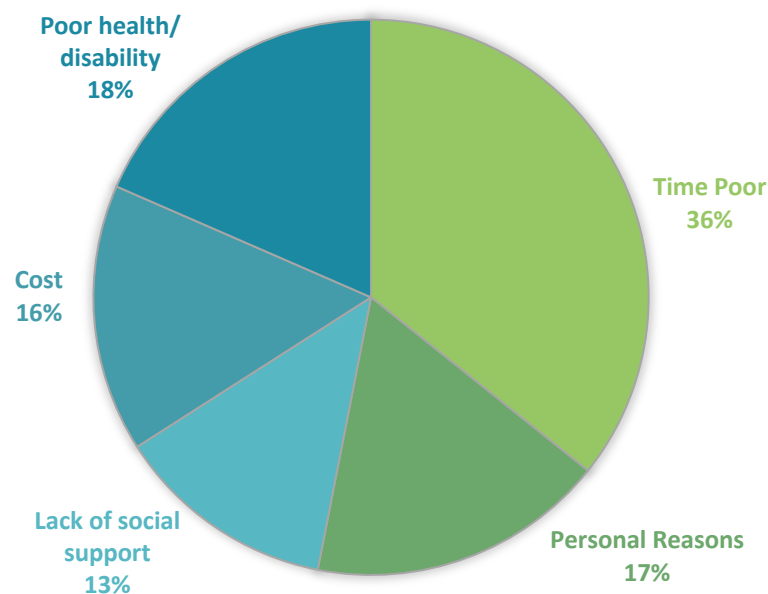


Figure 8: Barriers to people being more active in Loddon Shire

Some groups were particularly affected by certain barriers to participation in physical activities. For example, cost was identified at high rates by people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and by food insecure or low-income households.

People in Loddon Shire reported wanting to be more active. There were 54.6% of people who want to participate in more activities, including adult females, males between the age of 18 and 69, low-income households, food insecure households, people who identify as LGBTQIA+.

Key findings of the participation data for Loddon Shire captured by the Active Living Census included:

- **Sport Participation:** The data shows that walking is the most popular physical activity, with 21.6% of the population participating in the activity. Swimming, active play, tennis, and bush walking/hiking also have notable participation rates, although they are less popular than walking.

- **Weekly Participation:** Walking has the highest weekly participation rate at 72.1%, followed by active play (54.1%) and tennis (68.6%). This suggests that these activities are part of regular routines for many individuals.
- **Quality Ratings:** The quality ratings for these activities range from 4.0 to 4.2, indicating that they are generally well-regarded in terms of the quality of the experience they provide. Higher quality ratings suggest that participants have positive experiences and are satisfied with the activities.
- **Accessibility Ratings:** Accessibility ratings for these activities are relatively high, ranging from 4.0 to 4.2. This implies that these activities are accessible to a wide range of people, making them convenient and available for the community.
- **Use of Open Spaces:** A significant 79.6% of people reported using open spaces, with more than half (51.9%) using open spaces weekly or more often. This highlights the importance of open spaces in promoting physical activity and recreation within the community.
- **Meeting Physical Activity Guidelines:** Approximately 50.8% of Loddon residents meet the physical activity guidelines, which is a positive sign. However, there is still room for improvement to increase the number of people meeting these guidelines.
- **Age and Gender Differences:** The data indicates that physical activity levels tend to decline with age for both males and females. This finding underscores the need for strategies to promote physical activity among older populations. Additionally, there is a desire for more physical activity, especially among females aged 18+ and males aged 18 to 69, which suggests an opportunity for targeted interventions.
- **Low-Income Households:** Cost is a significant barrier to physical activity, particularly for individuals identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, as well as for those in food insecure or low-income households. This finding underscores the importance of addressing financial barriers and making physical activities more affordable and accessible for these specific groups. Strategies to reduce the financial burden associated with participation in sports, recreation, and aquatic activities may be needed to promote inclusivity and equity in these activities.

3.3 Local Sports Participation Trends

AusPlay participation rates in sport

To gain an insight into the local participation level of major participation sports in the Loddon Shire Council area, the AusPlay participation rates were applied to the current (2021) and 2041 population forecasts. State participation rates were used for sports where data was reported. National participation rates were used for sports where State participation rates were not available.

The table below summarises the outcomes of applying the adult and children AusPlay participation rates to the current (2021) and 2041 population forecasts for major participation sports played at Loddon Shire sport and active recreation reserves.

Please note that the following sports were not assessed because they are supported by 'regional' sports facilities in Bendigo and Kerang: cycling, athletics, basketball, volleyball, swimming, table tennis, badminton and soccer.

The following sports have regional centres in Bendigo but are included in the assessment because there is a local competition provided in Loddon Shire. These are Australian Rules football, cricket, netball, tennis and hockey. The regional sports facilities are profiled in the supply analysis chapter.

Table 10: Population Projections 2022-2042

Loddon Shire Council Population	Adult (15yr+)	Children (0-14yrs)	Total
2021	6,592 (85%)	1,159 (15%)	7,751
2041	6,926	1,218	8,144

The table below shows minimal participation growth by 2032 if the current participation rate is maintained for major participation sports models.

There is a potential for additional participants if new playing formats and competitions are introduced. Recent improvements at sport and recreation reserves have improved the capacity for these facilities to meet any future participation growth over the next 20 years if there is an upsurge in participants through these initiatives.

Table 11: Participation Projections 2021-2041

Sports	2022 Total Participation – Model Participation Rate	2041 Total Participation – Model Participation Rate
Outdoor Field Sports	689	724
Australian Football	393	413
Cricket	227	239
Hockey	68	72
Outdoor Court and Green Sports	1,080	1,135
Netball	289	303
Tennis	375	394
Bowls	79	83
Golf	337	354
Total	1,769	1,858

3.4 National and State Participation Trends

Since 2001, data has been collected on participation in exercise, recreation and sport by adults aged 15 years and over. Consistent data was collected via the Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) between 2001 and 2010. Similar data was collected by the ABS between 2011 and 2014. The **AusPlay Survey** was introduced by the Australian Sports Commission in 2015 and collects sports participation data for children aged 0-14 and adults aged 15 and over. The latest data was released in October 2022, with results for the 2021-22 financial year. Annually, about 20,000 interviews are conducted with adults aged 15 and over and about 3,500 interviews with parents/guardians of children under 15 years of age.

The AusPlay survey results are summarised in this section.

Key physical activity participation statistics from AusPlay show:

- Children (0-14 years) are getting back to regular participation, at least 1+ per week. 42% of children participated in organised out-of-school hours sport and physical activity in 2020-21 increasing to 47% in 2021-22. This shows participation levels in organised sport and physical activity is returning to pre-COVID pandemic levels.
- Mental health is a growing motivator of participation across all age groups and genders.

- Inactive adult Australians reporting that physical activity is not a priority has increased from 7% in 2020-21 to 11% in 2021-22.
- Adult participation in sport and physical activity remained at similar levels since 2016-17 to 2021-22:
 - 81% of adults participate at least 1+ per week in 2021-22 compared to 80% in 2020-21 and 81% in 2016-17.
 - 41% of adults participate in sport-related activity at least 1+ per week in 2021-22 compared to 41% in 2020-21 and 42% in 2016-17.
 - 21% of adults participate through a sports club or association at least 1+ per week in 2021-22 compared to 21% in 2020-21 and 21% in 2016-17.
- Physical health and fitness remain the primary motivators for 83% of 15+ year olds and for all ages and abilities. A greater percentage of 15–19-year-olds recorded health and fitness as their motivation, the most significant increase (14%) of all age/ability groups from 62%-84% between 2016-17 and 2021-22.
- Nearly double the percentage of the population were motivated by mental health benefits over the same period, increasing by 15% from 16% to 31%. This trend occurred equally across all age/ability groups apart from the 55+ age group for whom the increase was 11%.
- Fun and enjoyment have continued to be the second most significant motivator for engagement in physical activity across all age and ability groups (46%), the increase being more significant in the 55+, LOTE (Language other than English) and disability cohorts. However, it continues to be the primary motivator for 70% of 15-19-year-olds, followed by fitness and health.
- Young people 15-19 (39%) are also more motivated by the social benefits compared to the general population (39%). Benefits associated with being in the outdoors is now significantly more important to females (23%) than males (17%) than in 2016-17 when it was important to 16% of females and 13% of males.
- Poor health or injury (27%), not enough time/too many other commitments (24%) and not a priority (11%) are major barriers to participation.
- Children’s participation (0-14 years) in sport and physical activity has increased in the last 12 months but is still below 2016-17 levels:
 - 47% of children participate in out-of-school hours sport and physical activity at least 1+ per week in 2021-22 compared to 42% in 2020-21 and 62% in 2016-17.
 - 43% of children participate in out-of-school hours sport and physical activity at least 1+ per week in 2021-22 compared to 37% in 2020-21 and 57% in 2016-17.
 - 43% of children participate through a sports club or association at least 1+ per week in 2021-22 compared to 41% in 2020-21 and 46% in 2016-17.

The following figure shows the adult frequency of participation rates:

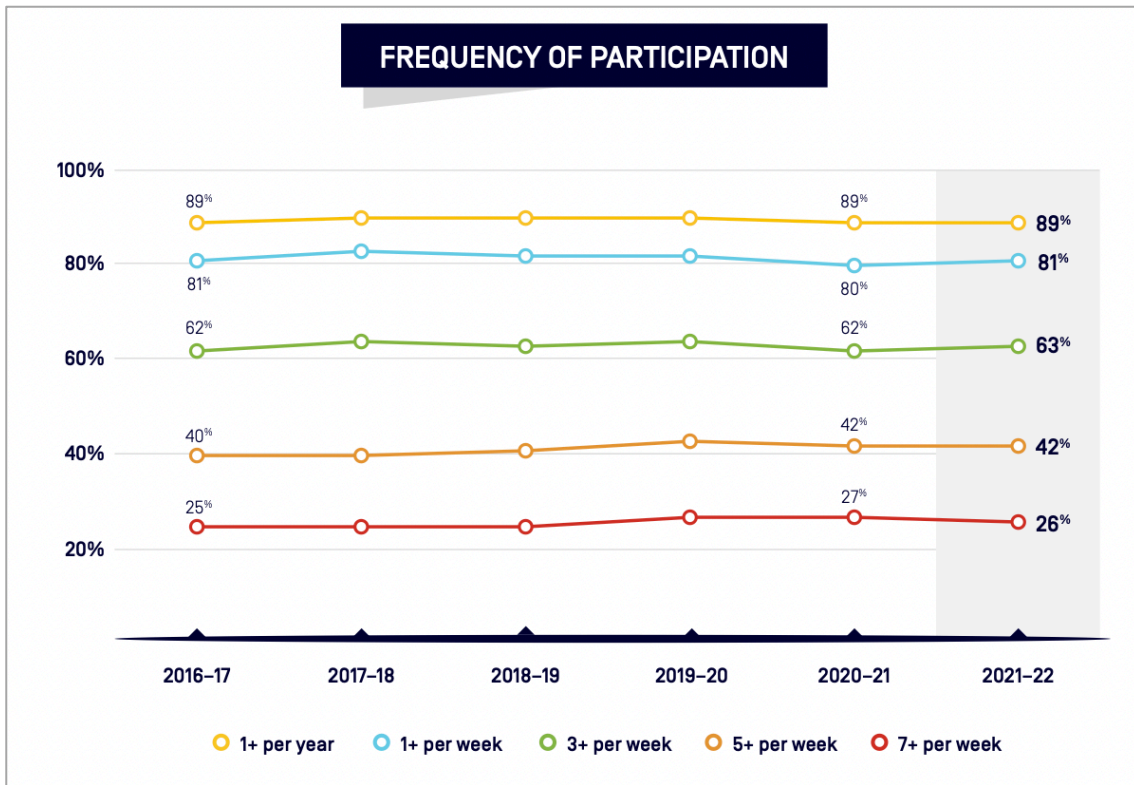


Figure 9: Adult Frequency of Participation 2016-17 to 2021-22

The figure below shows the children frequency of participation rates:

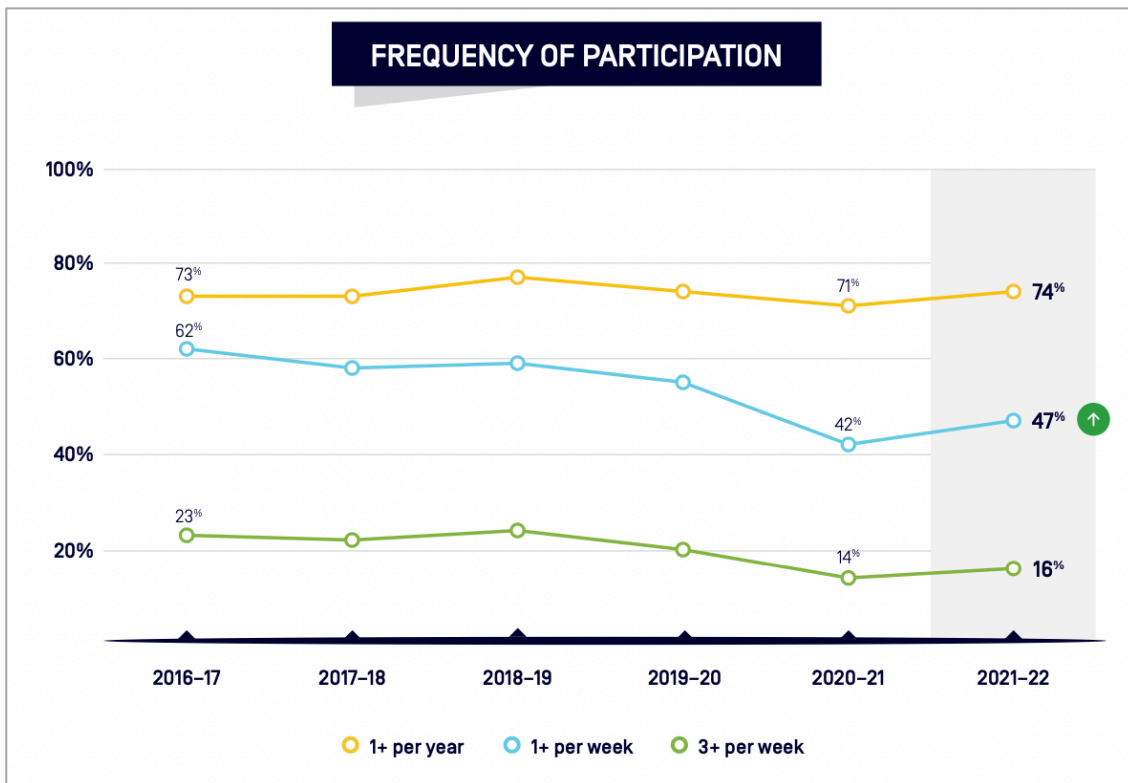


Figure 10: Children Frequency of Participation 2016-17 to 2021-22

Key organised sport participation statistics from AusPlay show:

- The top 15 club sports (organisation/venues used by activity) in Victoria for adults are shown in the table below. Golf, Australian Rules football, tennis, basketball and cricket are identified as the top five sports.
- The top 10 organised participation by activity in Victoria for children are shown in the table below. Swimming, basketball, gymnastics, Australian rules football and football are identified as the top five sports.
- Key sports played in Loddon Shire are identified in the top club sports and include golf, Australian Rules football, tennis, cricket, netball, bowls and hockey.

Table 12: Adult Club Sport Participation

Sport (Organisation/venues used by activity – club sports)	Participation rate
Golf	5.1%
Australian football	4.0%
Tennis	4.5%
Basketball	4.2%
Cricket	2.6%
Football/soccer	3.7%
Netball	3.2%
Bowls	1.2%
Athletics, track and field (includes jogging and running)	5.3%
Badminton	2.0%
Hockey	0.7%
Swimming	11.8%
Equestrian	0.7%
Volleyball (indoor and outdoor)	0.7%
Rugby union	0.4%

Table 13: Organised participation by activity

Sport (Organised participation by activity)	Participation rate
Swimming	40.3%
Basketball	13.7%
Gymnastics	13.5%
Australian football	11.2%
Football/soccer	9.3%
Tennis	6.8%
Netball	6.7%
Dancing (recreational)	6.2%
Cricket	4.8%
Athletics, track and field (includes jogging and running)	3.4%

Key swimming participation statistics from AusPlay show:

- Swimming is the organised activity of choice for a large proportion of Australian children aged 0-14 years, ahead of football and gymnastics.
- For children aged under 15 years, Victoria has the highest participation rate across the country at 36.8%.
- For adults (aged 15 +), the dominant reason to participate in swimming was physical health and fitness (51%) with fun/enjoyment also a key motivator at 34%.
- Swimming was also listed as one of the activities with the most gender equity amongst adults.
- The annual population estimate of Australian Adults (15+ years) participating in swimming was 2,984,880 or 14.8% of the adult population.
- Overall, females accounted for 56% of participants and males 44%.
- Swimming participation rates increased steadily from early adulthood to their peak in the 35 to 54-year age groups.
- Conversion to club participation was low with only 6% of participants a member of an organised swim club.
- An estimated 1.5 million children (under 15 years) participating in organised swimming out of school e.g. learn to swim or squad classes. This accounts for around one third of all Australian children.
- The peak participation rates for children in organised out of school swimming were five and eight years.
- Adult swimmers participated regularly with a median frequency of 48 sessions per annum for a duration of 45 minutes.
- The highest rating reasons for participating in swimming was 'physical health/fitness (51%) and 'fun/enjoyment (34%).
- The highest rating reasons for drop out were 'not enough time/too many commitments (19%) and poor health or injury (16%).

3.5 Demand Analysis Model

A facility demand model has been developed to inform the current and future field requirements to meet field sports participation demand in the short-term, medium term and long-term.

The Otium Analytics **Demand Analysis Model** determines the estimated participants, required hours of access, number of facilities, playing space and total space for activities, and by user sharing potential. The key inputs into the model include:

- Participation rates by activity
- Available facility capacity
- User access needs
- Typical field size and ancillary space required
- Demographic information
- Current supply.

The interactive model allows us to adjust individual aspects of the inputs to ensure the model is a true reflection of the local context, including adjustable inputs on:

- Participation rate in adults and children.
- Season length, users per field, access needs per week.
- Facilities lighting across the network.
- Field size and ancillary spaced needed.

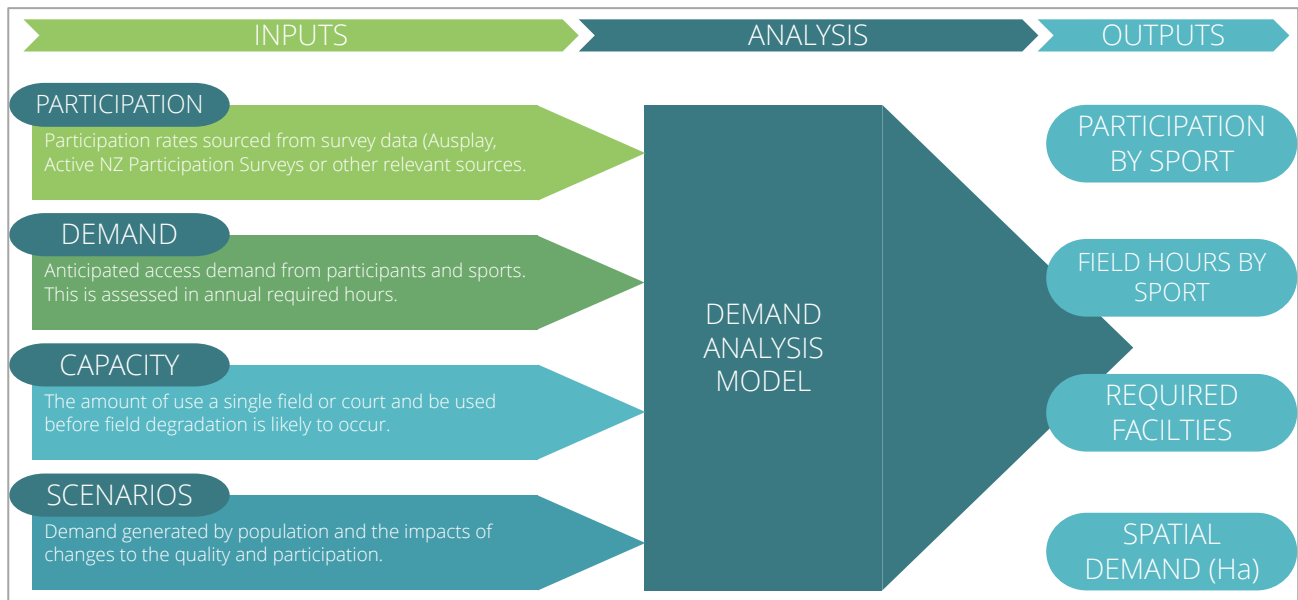


Figure 11: Diagram of the Otium Analytics Demand Analysis Model

The model considers the current field capacity, participation rates, and usage levels. Other factors such as the capacity of a field to accommodate playing numbers, the current distribution of clubs to fields, and opportunities for clubs to share need to be overlaid.

Demand Analysis Model Assumptions

The model applies full optimisation of all fields and courts for average field and court capacity, based on participation and usage assumptions. A field or court is only added if a field is fully optimised.

The following fields usage (training and competition) and capacity levels have been assessed and categorised as follows:

- **Level 1** – A grass sports field with no drainage or irrigation, winter grasses = approximately 15 to 20 hours per week.
- **Level 2** – A grass sports field with basic drainage, irrigation and winter grasses and lighting = approximately 20 to 25 hours per week.
- **Level 3** – A grass sports field with full drainage, irrigation and warm season grasses and lighting = approximately 25 to 30 hours per week.
- **Level 4** – A synthetic sports field with lighting = up to 54 hours per week.

The model is used as a guide to facility demand requirements. It has been applied to major field and court participation sports played in Loddon Shire, except golf.

Table 14: Model Assumptions

Category	Assumption												
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loddon Shire population will grow from 7,751 (2021) to approximately 8,144 by 2032. The proportion of people aged between 0-14 years (children) was 15% and for 15+ years (adults) was 85%. The population forecast shows that this proportion is the same in 2021 and 2032. 												
Sport Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation rates for major participation sports identified in the recent AusPlay Participation Survey 2021-22 for once-a-week organised sport participation. The table below shows the participation rate for each sport. 												
Field Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 2 natural grass field capacity has been used for Australian Rules football and hockey sports fields with a capacity of 25 hours of use per lit field and 15 hours of use per unlit field each week. Level 3 natural grass field capacity has been used for cricket sports fields with a capacity of 30 hours of use per lit field and 25 hours of use per unlit field each week. Outdoor tennis courts have a capacity of 40 hours of use per lit court and 15 hours of use per unlit court each week. Outdoor netball courts have a capacity of 40 hours of use per lit court and 15 hours of use per unlit court each week. 80% of sports fields in Loddon Shire are lit. 												
Utilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The benchmark average training and competition hours each week and participant numbers per field has been informed by State Sporting Associations. <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Rules football </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult – 5 hours per week and 40 participants per oval Child – 3 hours per week and 60 participants per oval Seasonal – Winter (6 months) </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cricket </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult – 7 hours per week and 24 participants per oval Child – 4 hours per week and 24 participants per oval Seasonal – Summer (6 months) </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hockey </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult – 3 hours per week and 24 participants per field Child – 2 hours per week and 24 participants per field Seasonal – Winter (6 months) </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Netball </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult – 3 hours per week and 18 participants per court Child – 2 hours per week and 18 participants per court Seasonal – Winter (6 months) </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tennis </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult – 2 hours per week and 4 participants per court Child – 1 hours per week and 8 participants per court All Year </td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowls </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult – 3 hours per week and 32 participants per green Child – 1 hours per week and 32 participants per green All Year </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australian Rules football 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult – 5 hours per week and 40 participants per oval Child – 3 hours per week and 60 participants per oval Seasonal – Winter (6 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cricket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult – 7 hours per week and 24 participants per oval Child – 4 hours per week and 24 participants per oval Seasonal – Summer (6 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hockey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult – 3 hours per week and 24 participants per field Child – 2 hours per week and 24 participants per field Seasonal – Winter (6 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Netball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult – 3 hours per week and 18 participants per court Child – 2 hours per week and 18 participants per court Seasonal – Winter (6 months) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tennis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult – 2 hours per week and 4 participants per court Child – 1 hours per week and 8 participants per court All Year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult – 3 hours per week and 32 participants per green Child – 1 hours per week and 32 participants per green All Year
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Table 15: Model Sport Participation Rates

Sport	Model Adult Participation Rates	Model Children Participation Rates
Outdoor Field Sports		
Australian Football	4.00%	11.20%
Cricket	2.60%	4.80%
Hockey	0.70%	1.90%
Outdoor Sports Courts and Greens		
Netball	3.20%	6.70%
Tennis	4.50%	6.80%
Bowls	1.20%	0.01%

Demand Analysis Model – Facility Requirement Modelling

For each sport, the model shows a current and future demand for access to the number of playing fields, courts and greens.

The model found no demand for additional outdoor sports fields or outdoor sports courts and greens in Loddon Shire.

Table 16: Facility Requirements for Major Sports

Sport	Current Field Access	Current Field Access Requirement for Participation Demand (2021)	Surplus / Deficit of Field Access	Future Field Access Requirements for Participation Demand (2032)	Surplus /Deficit of Field Access
Outdoor Sports Fields					
Australian Rules Football	10 fields	2 fields	+8 field	2 fields	+8 field
Cricket	9 fields	3 fields	+6 fields	3 fields	+6 fields
Hockey **	2 fields	1 field	+1 field	1 field	+1 field
Outdoor Sports Courts and Greens					
Netball	19.5 courts	2 courts	+17.5 courts	2 courts	+17.5 courts
Tennis **	80 courts (70 lawn and 10 synthetic)	5 courts (synthetic)	+75 courts	5 courts	+75 courts
Bowls	11.5 rinks	1 rink	+10.5 rinks	1 rink	+10.5 rinks

* All fields are full-size equivalent. The field requirement does **not** mean new fields are needed. It means the sport will require access to this number of fields to meet participation demand. This could be achieved through shared fields with other sports.

** Loddon Shire is serviced by regional facilities with multiple sports fields, courts and greens in Bendigo for these sports.

The modelling indicates an oversupply of outdoor sports fields and outdoor sports courts and greens in Loddon Shire. However, overlaying with local factors impacting a field's use is important particularly the distance between rural townships. These include:

- **Importantly**, distribution and accessibility of fields. This is a particular factor impacting Loddon Shire that is rural in nature and townships are dispersed (in most cases over 20 minutes from the nearby township) making it difficult to share fields.
- Capacity of the field to accommodate the number of players for training and competition.
- Quality and condition of fields.
- Practicality of clubs sharing.
- Participation numbers within clubs changing from year to year.
- Programming of sports competitions.
- Inequitable participation distribution and other users (i.e., community and school use).
- Lack of validated data on how many hours each team plays and trains for.
- Location of facilities that have a wider catchment beyond a municipal boundary.

The modelling shows the key focus of this Strategy is on **activating sport and active recreation facilities (excluding aquatic and indoor stadiums)** rather than needing to improve the capacity of existing facilities or build new facilities.

3.6 Key Findings of Demand Assessment

The Loddon Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic Strategy should be inclusive, accessible, and tailored to the specific needs of the population. It should prioritise programs and facilities that promote physical health and mental wellbeing, address socioeconomic disparities, and promote cultural diversity and sensitivity.

Providing sport and active recreation, diverse open spaces and access to aquatic facilities and services opportunities is important to maintaining vibrant rural townships

The current Loddon Shire population of 7,759 (ABS Census 2021) has grown over the last 10 years, and by 243 people since 2016 (7,516). The population is projected to grow by an average 0.5% annually to 8,144 by 2032. The townships identified for population growth in the Loddon Mallee Regional Growth Plan are Bridgewater and Inglewood.

The population is distributed across many rural townships that support a strong agricultural/farming industry. Providing services like sport and recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services and in local townships that support farming communities is an important social and economic driver.

Sport and active recreation in the Loddon Shire are considered the “heartbeat” of these rural communities and important for participation, community gathering, capacity building and economic development. Maintaining this benefit is important for rural living and the success of our townships. There is a history of migration of people to small townships to support local sports clubs.

Accessible, social and therapy participation opportunities will be important to meet the needs of an ageing Loddon community

The median age of the Loddon Shire is 52 years, indicating a predominantly older population. To address the unique needs and interests of older residents, a sport, recreation, and aquatic strategy should prioritise programs and facilities that focus on social engagement, fitness, and therapeutic activities.

Serpentine, Eddington, and Pyramid Hill have relatively younger populations. The Strategy should consider diverse offerings to engage residents of all age groups in these areas.

Intergenerational play and universally accessible spaces and places will be important design features of future open spaces.

Culturally sensitive participation opportunities will encourage Loddon Shire’s Aboriginal and CALD community

The presence of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and diverse overseas-born populations in townships like Boort and Pyramid Hill, highlights the need for an inclusive and culturally sensitive strategy. Tailored programs, cultural competency, and accessibility for all residents, regardless of their cultural background, should be prioritised.

Affordable participation opportunities are important to encourage Loddon Shire to lead healthy and active lifestyles

The low median income and SEIFA Index of Disadvantage emphasise the need for an inclusive and affordable strategy. Prioritising affordability, community outreach, and programs addressing specific challenges faced by disadvantaged populations is crucial to promote wellbeing and reduce barriers to participation.

Loddon Shire is facing a health crisis – We need creative ways to reverse this trend

The high rates of dental health problems, smoking, and pre-obesity/obesity underline the importance of a strategy focusing on physical and mental wellbeing. Such a strategy can offer preventive and rehabilitative measures, reduce healthcare costs, and improve overall health.

The impact of two flooding events and the COVID-19 pandemic has seen a decline in participation and an impact on social connectedness, physical health and mental wellbeing as residents endured isolation from family, friends and community. Addressing these concerns and exploring ways to encourage a return to participation in sport and active recreation will be important to improving levels of community health and wellbeing in Loddon Shire's rural communities.

Time constraints, poor health or disability, and cost are identified as common barriers to meeting daily physical activity guidelines. The Strategy should address these barriers and provide solutions to make physical activity more accessible.

To address this challenge, we need to adapt and design sport and active recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services for the Loddon Shire communities in a way that responds to participation trends, leisure patterns and community expectations.

Traditional competition sport is in decline and Loddon Shire residents now seek diverse active recreation activities and flexible playing formats

Key organised sports played in Loddon Shire include Australian Rules football, netball, cricket, hockey, tennis and lawn bowls. These sports are often played at a centralised sports precinct within each township. Providing fit for purpose venues that meet universal design, female friendly and industry sport standards will be important to maintain participation.

Sports clubs have been struggling to attract participants in Loddon Shire. A further two clubs (bowls clubs) have disbanded in the last 12 months. Junior teams are struggling with participation and volunteerism is in decline. The same volunteers are running sports clubs. Further exacerbating this issue is the flood impact that has impacted local contributions and resulting in volunteer fatigue. Loddon Shire sporting clubs rely on strong family connections. Distance and cost are a challenge. Leagues are getting larger, and people are having to travel further.

In general, competition structures still operate a traditional format of play. New modified formats are only being offered in Loddon Shire if a club volunteer drives the change i.e. tennis competition still operates an eight game Saturday competition, and cricket is a one-day competition. Engagement with Local and State Sporting Associations is important for the project. Exploring how we create flexible structures to support clubs is a key investigation with Local Sporting Associations. Also, defining the roles of Local Government, State Sport Association, Local Sport Association, Regional Sports Association will be an important outcome of the project. We must recognise the State Sporting Association resourcing is a challenge and are State Sporting Association programs fit for purpose for country clubs. What is sustainable product in country Victoria?

Recent consultation by Sports Focus with young people has shown they seek places to play that include active recreation and social play space opportunities. There needs to be a focus on active recreation and structured sport.

The recent Active Living Census survey shows the importance of active recreation in Loddon Shire with over 80% of residents utilising open spaces weekly with walking, play, and swimming being amongst the most popular types of active recreation in Loddon (Healthy Heart of Victoria, 2020). Providing diverse open spaces for social recreation, play and trail-based activities will be important ingredients in the network of places and spaces in Loddon Shire townships.

There is no demand for additional outdoor sports fields or outdoor sports courts and greens in Loddon Shire.

Total current participation across major sports played in Loddon Shire is 1,769 players in 2021, which will grow marginally to 1,858 players by 2032. This will only be achieved if new sport formats are introduced in Loddon Shire.

Using the AusPlay 2021 Participation Survey, the current participation for outdoor field sports played in Loddon Shire (Australian Rules football, cricket and hockey) is 689 players. The current participation for outdoor sports courts and greens played in Loddon Shire (netball, tennis, bowls and golf) is 1,080. If a 0.5% population growth rate is used and current participation rates maintained, participation in outdoor field sports will grow to 724 players whilst participation in outdoor court and green sports will grow to 1,135.

The modelling indicates an oversupply of outdoor sports fields and outdoor sports courts and greens in Loddon Shire. However, overlaying with local factors impacting a field's use is important particularly the distance between rural townships.

The modelling shows the key focus of this Strategy is on **activating sport and active recreation facilities** rather than needing to improve the capacity of existing facilities or build new facilities.

4. Trends Analysis

What participation and facility trends will influence the development and management of recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities?

This section reviews participation and facility trends and how they will influence the programming and facility requirements of recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities in Loddon Shire Council.

4.1 General Participation Trends

Factors affecting participation and facility provision

Otium research has identified a range of general participation trends that are likely to impact on local communities in the future. These are:

- **A gradual ageing of the population.** As life expectancy increases, birth rates stay low and the “baby boomers” of the 1950s and 1960s grow older. The percentage of population of 5 to 14-year-olds will continue to decrease with the greatest growth in the 55+ age group. This will create a demand for programs and services that go beyond a focus on junior and adult participation.
- **Flexibility in the times when people recreate.** As demands on people’s time increases and work practices change, people are seeking to take their sport and recreation at different times, over a broad spread of hours and at facilities that offer a lot of activities in one place.
- **Increased variety in sport and recreation options.** People’s sport and recreation options are changing towards newer, more varied activities offered over a greater range of timeframes compared to previous decades where limited variety in activities and scheduling occurred. This has supported the trend to more multi-use facilities to attract a broader range of users, multiple programs to meet different needs at the one facility, and different playing formats that support junior and social sport.
- **Constraints to sport and recreation participation.** Lack of time, lack of facilities nearby, family and work constraints, health problems and cost of service or use of facilities are the main constraints to many people’s sport and recreation participation. The development of new playing formats for junior and social sport, new competitions for girls and women, targeting specific markets of users through tailored programs and services has assisted in reducing some of these participation constraints.
- **Changing employment structures, trading and work hours.** These trends often make participation in traditional sport and recreation activities difficult and therefore people are looking for facilities that are open longer hours and have a lot of activity options at the one site. This makes opportunities such as indoor sports courts attractive as their long opening hours and days open per year means usage can be made in a wide range of social, training, competition and educational settings.
- **Different people want different activities.** The different population characteristics sees the need for facilities to offer potential users a much more varied range of programs and services than previously offered. Year round available indoor and outdoor sport and recreation facilities is an example where a greater diversity of activities can be provided throughout the different seasons and limiting the impact of poor weather.
- **Provision of high standards and quality of facilities and services.** People are more and more looking for high standard, high quality facilities and services to meet their sport and recreation needs. This has also seen the trend for indoor facilities becoming very popular as they allow activity in safe and secure spaces in all weather and environmental conditions. This leads to

indicating that building low standard, low-cost facilities will not attract the maximum user market. The development by several peak sporting bodies of sport specific facility standards and guidelines has also placed pressure on facility providers to meet higher standards of provision.

- **Desire for activities to be affordable.** The development of multi-purpose recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities has enabled the high operating cost activities to be cross subsidised by more profitable activity areas such as health and fitness, food and beverage and entertainment areas. This has enabled many facilities to keep general entry fees low to encourage use whilst seeking users who want special services to contribute at a greater level to the cost of such activities. In general, there is a greater reliance on locally accessed and lower cost opportunities by those without the resources to travel and pay for more expensive activities.
- **Recognition of strong links between physical activity and health.** Preventative health care and active lifestyles are very important to many people. There is increased recognition of the strong links between involvement in recreational activity and good health, and the development of appropriate activities and services which support this.
- **Expectations of equity and access.** Today's society expects all people to have equitable access to public facilities. There is a particular demand to provide sports facilities for the growing female participation across all sports. There are a growing number of competitions and programs for people all abilities to participate. This means we need to improve the design of our recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities and ensure we provide accessible facilities.
- **Sustainable development.** In addition to the trends above, there are specific trends relating to the design and operations of recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities that responds to more sustainable and eco-friendlier practices.

All recreation facility, open space and aquatic facility providers are operating in an environment of change. Providers will need to respond to the following challenges:

- **Consumer expectations.** As a result of consumers being exposed to high quality programs, events and services through the media and other leisure industry providers they are expecting more and more from their programs. This includes quality of facilities, support amenity, player and spectator comfort, quality of service, coaching and expecting the service to be provided when they want it. However, this has meant that significantly less program space can be achieved per investment dollar.
- **Competition for participants.** All of Australia's sporting codes have recognised the need to recruit young players into their sport at an early age. Many of the sports face competition from large, well-funded junior programs and high-profile sports as well as other forms of entertainment competing for the time and interest of young people. A key challenge for many sports and recreational activities is the retention of those recruits beyond their early to mid-teen years.
- **Reliance on external revenues.** Participants provide a large proportion of funding for most activities, programs and services. Competition is intense for funding, sponsorship, users and members. Providers will need to clearly differentiate and market products and benefits to seek to access other revenue streams. This is particularly important in the development and upgrade of facilities and equipment.
- **Funding challenge.** Developing new and maintaining existing facilities and services is a major challenge for Local Government and the industry. The future may require providers to partner in multi-activity developments either in local government or commercially built complexes.
- **Well-trained personnel:** Volunteers predominantly service most sport and recreation clubs together with supporting aquatic facility operations in local communities. Recruiting and retaining paid staff and volunteers are critical to operations. In an increasingly regulated world, volunteers need and demand access to training and education in a flexible delivery model that responds to

their busy lives. Coaches, officials and administrators must be supported to ensure the delivery of quality programs and competitions. Supporting and recognising volunteers is a task not to be underestimated.

4.2 Sport Participation Trends

Peak sporting bodies are using Sport Australia’s megatrends research - **The Future of Australian Sport**, conducted by CSIRO in 2013 and again in 2022, together with their participation data (existing and potential markets), to design new participation programs to attract a broader audience or improve the retention rates of players.

The 2022 megatrends are patterns of social, economic, or environmental change that will shape the Australian sports sector over the next decade and beyond.

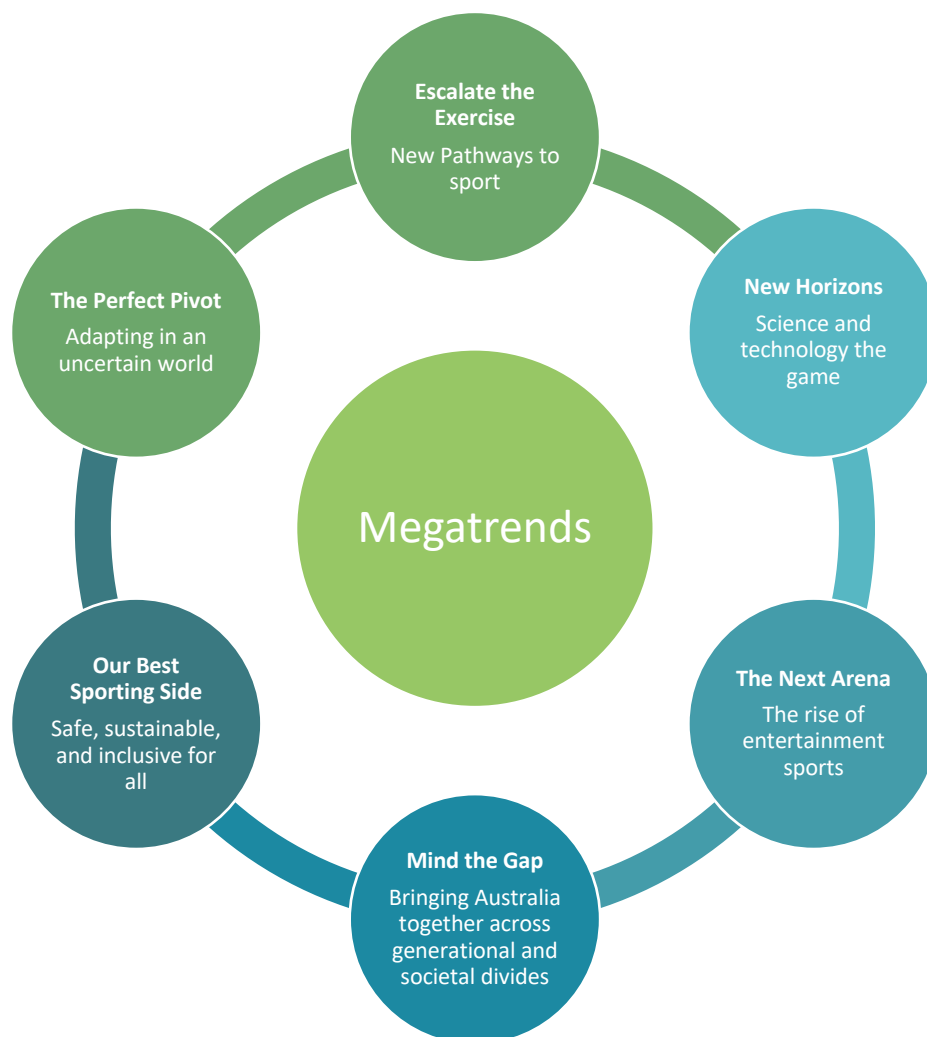


Figure 12: Sport Megatrends (Source: Sports Australia, 2023)

These 2022 megatrends are described in detail in the next section with supporting case study examples about how sports are responding to these trends.

Escalate the Exercise - New pathways to sport

Organised sports across Australia bring communities together and provide a platform where volunteers, players, sponsors, local businesses and organisers can form relationships on and beyond the sporting fields.

This is particularly apparent in regional and rural communities where sporting competitions build deep social connections and create a meeting place for people who live across larger distances.

Participation in organised sports across Australia has remained relatively steady over the past decade, but there has been a rise in participation in non-organised physical activities such as walking, running, cycling and gym-based fitness. This trend was further boosted by the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing, periods of home isolation, and the subsequent increase in adoption of home-based gym equipment, fitness apps, and wearable technologies. Much of the increase in fitness-based activity has been through non-formal or semi-formalised participation in fitness centres, home gyms, exercise groups, online communities, and individuals accessing outdoor recreational infrastructure and green space within their communities.

The increase in convenient and ad-hoc exercise by a proportion of the population hasn't generally translated to involvement in more formalised sports competitions and leagues. The rise of fitness-based activities presents new opportunities for sports organisers who can bring the game to the people, increase inclusion, promote the social benefits of playing together and utilise new technologies to increase convenience.

Barriers to participation in formalised sports remain significant for some groups, including older populations, people from regional and remote areas, First Nations peoples, low socio-economic individuals, LGBTIQ+ people, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, and people with disability. These groups may benefit from specialised or modified sporting services and competitions. Overall, the pathways into organised sport are changing and diversifying.

Social Sport, a Melbourne-based organisation established in 2007, aims to 'take the hassle out of playing sport'. It started as a weekly social futsal game among friends in the northern suburbs of Melbourne. In 2022 Social Sport had grown to run competitions for over 10,000 players of all ages and abilities in four different sporting codes.

New horizons - Science and technology changing the game

Australia has long been seen as a global leader in sport. Despite having a population of just over 26 million, Australia has been in the top ten on the medal tally of Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games since Sydney 2000, and in many games before then.

Our global reputation in this sector can be linked to several factors including support for sport at all levels from Australian governments, and a strong high-performance system led by the Australian Institute of Sport [AIS].

Over the next decade the world will look to Australia as we approach the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Much of the success of Australian high-performance sports teams to date can be attributed to advances in sports science and medicine, coaching, organisation, and ongoing investment in the potential of Australia's elite athletes.

New technologies and advances in areas of technical expertise that support the enhancement of performance (including but not limited to human physiology, nutrition, psychology, genetics, engineering and materials science) are now changing the game in sports. A better understanding of the individual and biological diversity of athletes is leading to an individualised approach to performance support across a range of technical direction disciplines, from coaching to sports medicine and training. Training programs tailored to the individual, resulting from the work of multi-disciplinary teams, can optimise sports performance, assist with injury prevention, enhance physical and mental recovery, and maximise the wellbeing and long-term psychological benefits of sport. The adoption of new and emerging technologies

will support this individualised approach but comes with issues to be negotiated around ethical implementation and privacy protections.

The global sport technology and innovation market continues to see significant growth. Australia will host a significant number of international sporting events over the next decade, and this will provide our science, technology, health, education and manufacturing sectors with an opportunity to invest in sport innovation and showcase and export their know-how and products to the world.

CSIRO is currently working on creating a human digital twin. A digital twin is a virtual or digital representation of a physical object or being. The human digital twin project uses readily available cameras on mobiles, iPads, webcams and computers to capture the movements of a human body and creates an overlay of biomechanical modelling of bones and muscles. By combining deep-learning algorithms with knowledge of a person's musculoskeletal mechanics, the human digital twin could identify movements that present a risk of injury. The digital twin can be used to devise modifications to these movements aimed at increased efficiency and decreased injury risk. Over time a human digital twin will likely have additional information on blood flow, digestion, and respiration and be able to provide comprehensive real-time analysis of athletic physiological performance during training and competition.

The next arena - The rise of entertainment sports

Australians consume sport across a range of markets and platforms. Many Australians love to be entertained by sport, whether this is attending a live event or listening to or watching sport through the various broadcast and online options available.

Over-the-top (OTT) video-streaming platforms, with the ability to deliver sports content to many Internet-enabled devices, are increasingly challenging traditional sports broadcasting business models on satellite, cable, free-to-air (FTA) television and radio, creating new audiences and connecting viewers globally.

Some sporting organisations – particularly the major codes in Australia – generate significant revenue streams through broadcast rights deals, major events, merchandising, sponsorship activities, endorsements and branding.

Digital sport and e-sports are becoming increasingly popular, offering access to new activities in virtual environments. Some of these digital sport variants more recently supplemented or provided redundancy for cancelled real-world sporting events during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, urban and adventure sports are engaging the next generation of sports fans as they become more visible and available to mainstream audiences.

Over the coming decade we will see more sporting organisations and products compete for a share of national and global audiences. As a result, both established sporting codes and sports new to these markets will consider how to engage contemporary consumers and adjust their view of spectators to take advantage of the increasingly dynamic and diverse global media landscape.

Sports, including BMX, skateboarding, sport climbing and snowboard half-pipe, have become increasingly mainstream and part of the Olympic Games program. These sports may no longer be considered extreme, but the lifestyle elements are especially important to many participants, and the degree of organisation is still developing.

Mind the gap - Bringing Australia together across generational and societal divides

Sports organisations can champion positive change across society. They do this by emphasising sporting values of fair play, egalitarianism, inclusivity, and teamwork.

By showcasing these values and creating a meritocracy based on commitment, fitness and skills development, sports offer a source of inspiration, create shared experiences, and build pride.

Sport can bridge the cultural and demographic gaps existing and emerging across Australian society. Australia's population overall is ageing increasingly diverse. In 2022, nearly a third of Australians are born overseas, 3.2% are members of First Nations groups, 17% live with disability, and just over half of the population are women. Young Australians are growing up with new technologies and global connections, creating distinctly different behaviours and values.

Over the coming decades, sports organisations and individual athletes will play a unique role in broader societal change and help bridge the gaps between demographic groups. Sport will provide a sense of common purpose, identity and belonging to Australians from many different backgrounds and abilities.

In 2015, the Australian Women's Football Team (the Matildas) went on strike for equal pay from the Football Federation Australia and in November 2019, a ground-breaking equal pay agreement was announced. This has now become part of a global movement to eliminate gender discrimination in pay in elite team sport. Equal pay deals for women's football teams in England, Brazil, Norway and New Zealand have now been announced. Groups such as 'Women Sport Australia' and 'Male Champions of Change: Sport' are actively mapping pathways for gender pay equality across all major sporting codes in Australia.

Our best sporting side - Safe, sustainable, and inclusive for all

As Australia's demographic profile becomes more diverse and social values shift, organised sports in Australia will also transform and reflect these changes.

Persistent societal challenges such as racism, violence, abuse and other poor behaviours in sport have elevated the importance of sports integrity, safety and ethics in the sports industry at all levels. Stronger accountability, reporting structures and advocacy for vulnerable Australians will place further pressures on sports to provide a safe and welcoming place for all.

Community-driven sports clubs will increasingly seek to tap into the benefits of engaging a broader cross-section of Australian society. Many will place more emphasis on providing positive participant experiences and promoting inclusive behaviours on- and off-field. Growth in competing markets and competition for new participants will also provide further impetus for sporting organisations and clubs to implement positive change.

In the coming decades sports organisations will be faced with even stronger social licence obligations and will seek well-informed practices to encourage diversity, inclusivity and fair-play and offer athletes more choice, advocacy and individual expression.

Since the first 'Green' Olympic and Paralympic Games in Lillehammer (1994), sporting events have been seeking to minimise their environmental impact, including waste and carbon emissions, sustainable sourcing of construction materials, and understanding potential impacts of facilities and events on biodiversity. Some research has ranked the sustainability of previous Olympic and Paralympic Games as 'medium' and shown that its sustainability rating has declined over time. For example, between 1992 and 2020 the most sustainable Games were in Salt Lake City in 2002, while the least sustainable were Sochi 2014 and Rio de Janeiro 2016. The Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games are now expected to have sustainability and human rights strategies and outcomes as part of their planning and legacy.

The perfect pivot - Adapting in an uncertain world.

The world is entering historically uncertain times. Climate change is increasing seasonal temperatures and the frequency of extreme weather events. Heightened geopolitical tensions have given rise to more wars

along with the threat of further military conflicts globally, trade sanctions, and threats and acts of terrorism.

Pandemics, like the COVID-19 pandemic, have increased in likelihood – with a 47% to 57% chance of a second pandemic of the same magnitude occurring in the next 25 years.

These factors have all disrupted scheduled sporting activities over recent years and this disruption is likely to continue and increase in frequency over the coming decades. This uncertainty will affect all sports, including event planning, infrastructure design and the types of sports that can be played in certain seasons. It will increase the need for some sports and their associated business models to make strategic ‘pivots’ or rapidly deploy alternative approaches and resources, move venues and competitions at short notice, or respond to other unexpected challenges when required.

This megatrend is far broader than just sport but has relevance to a sector with multiple points of exposure to geopolitical, extreme climate and pandemic-related risks. Australian sporting organisations will need to be flexible and ingenious over the coming decades.

Military conflicts, threats and acts of terrorism, pandemics, and climate change, including increasing temperatures and extreme weather events, have disrupted scheduled sporting activities over the previous decade. For example, following the conflicts in Russia, Formula 1 has decided not to partner with the Russian promoter for any future races.

4.3 Open Space Trends

Changes in how we value open spaces

We value our parks and open spaces more. We expect to have bikeways and walking tracks available in our neighbourhoods, and we are increasingly getting out and using the path and park networks for exercise and activity.

We have also increased our expectations for the quality of development in our parks and open spaces:

- **Increased participation in walking**, combined with rising participation in cycling and running in parks and natural areas means that the demand for pathway networks within open space is probably the largest emerging infrastructure need.
- Research has shown the importance of a **supportive environment** to encouraging participation. This means parks and shaded pathways, natural landscape settings, a sense of safety and good access to public open space increases participation.
- Many local governments are facing **increasing financial constraints** to funding of infrastructure and future maintenance. Planning and finance controls such as contributions caps and borrowing restraints have meant that funding parks and recreation facilities is increasingly difficult. A key challenge is to deliver open space and recreation infrastructure in a timely manner as demand emerges.
- Community **expectations are increasing** as to the quality of parks and sporting areas and the level of access to these. There is increasing awareness of “high quality” destination parks with regional scale play and active recreation elements.
- The rise of **exercise and fitness as recreation** has meant that public parks have become the new venues for formal and informal group fitness and social exercise. This is increasing pressure on local parks as well as increasing demand for shade and water as key elements.
- The **infiltration of technology throughout our lives** means we have unlimited access to knowledge, information and engagement and expect instantaneous communication. There is

potential for increased digitisation of public spaces through virtual and augmented play experiences and use of “smart” features, such as smart lights which can double as a Wi-Fi node, smart benches with solar powered USB charging docs and interactive kiosks that provide information on weather and local news.

- Increased value on the importance of our **environment and sustainability** will drive incorporation of sustainable design into parks and play spaces and creation of green spaces and corridors that mitigate urban heat island effects.
- There is an increasing desire to **exercise with our pets** which will lead to increasing demand for dog-friendly parks, particularly in urban areas.

4.4 Aquatic Facility Trends

Changes in how we use aquatic and leisure facilities

There has been a much greater emphasis in the development of a variety of water spaces within public aquatic centres including:

- Program pools designed for learn to swim and a variety of aquatics programs.
- Warm water pools which are used for rehabilitation and therapy, one of the highest use spaces within public aquatic and leisure centres.
- Water play including large, enclosed slides, water jets and other leisure play opportunities.

Health and fitness programming have also advanced with a greater emphasis on programs for older adults as well as a much broader range of opportunities including Pilates, Yoga and Boot Camp.

Components that contribute to successful contemporary aquatic and leisure facilities are summarised in the figure below.

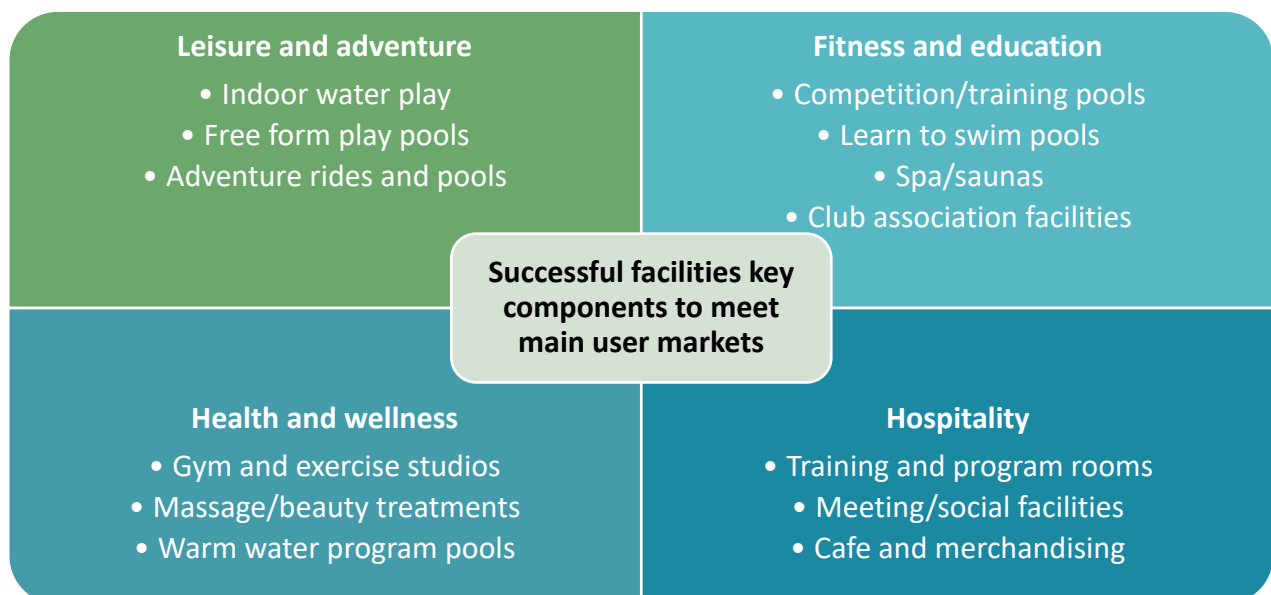


Figure 13: Successful Aquatic and Leisure Facility Model

Detailed planning and comprehensive feasibility studies show targeted user profiles with the majority of aquatic facility market research indicating complexes must equally cater for four distinct aquatic user markets, summarised in the figure below.

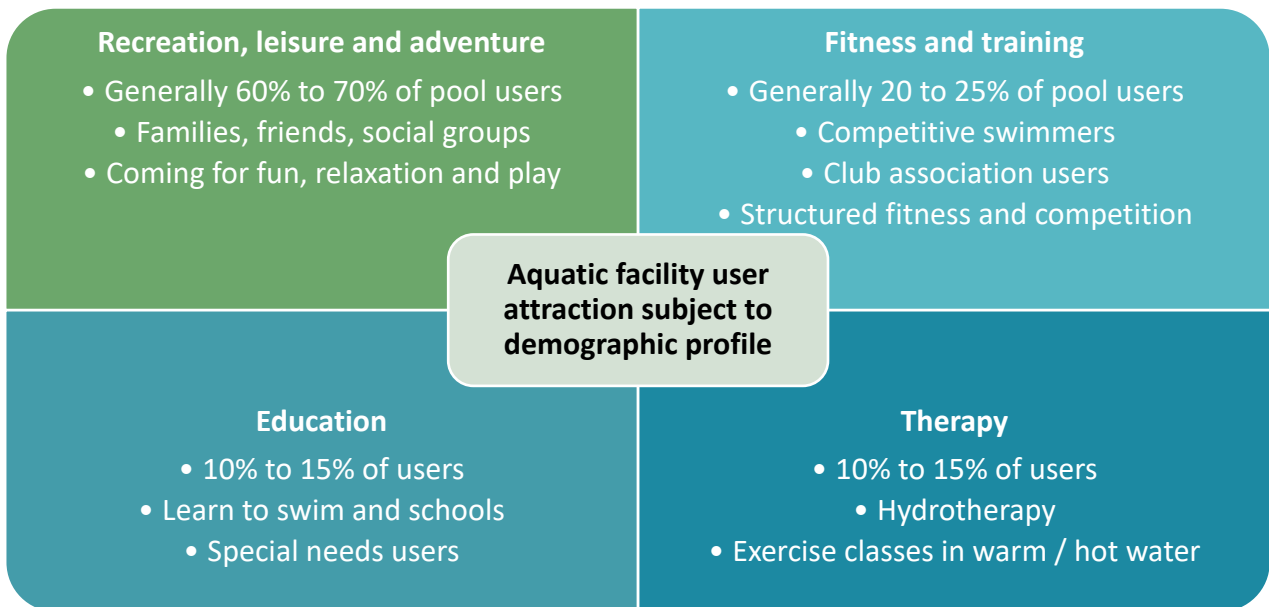


Figure 14: Main Aquatic and Leisure Facility User Markets

What makes a successful aquatic and leisure centre?

The most successful facilities attract all user markets, draw users from a large catchment and should be set up to allow people to participate in a range of activities at the one site.

Successful future facility trends indicated several common success factors:

- **One stop shop:** Large range of activity areas at the one site to maximise use/help share the costs.
- **Reduce operating losses:** Need a mix of community and commercial activities at the one site, however the location needs to be right to make this viable.
- **Programmable spaces:** Need to offer programs and memberships to keep users coming back.
- **Cater for all ages and interests:** Need to develop facilities for broad range of people.
- **Community/social hub:** Needed to offer quality food, beverage, social and entertainment spaces. This could also provide a range of other services like community and cultural services, health and allied services and/or commercial precincts.

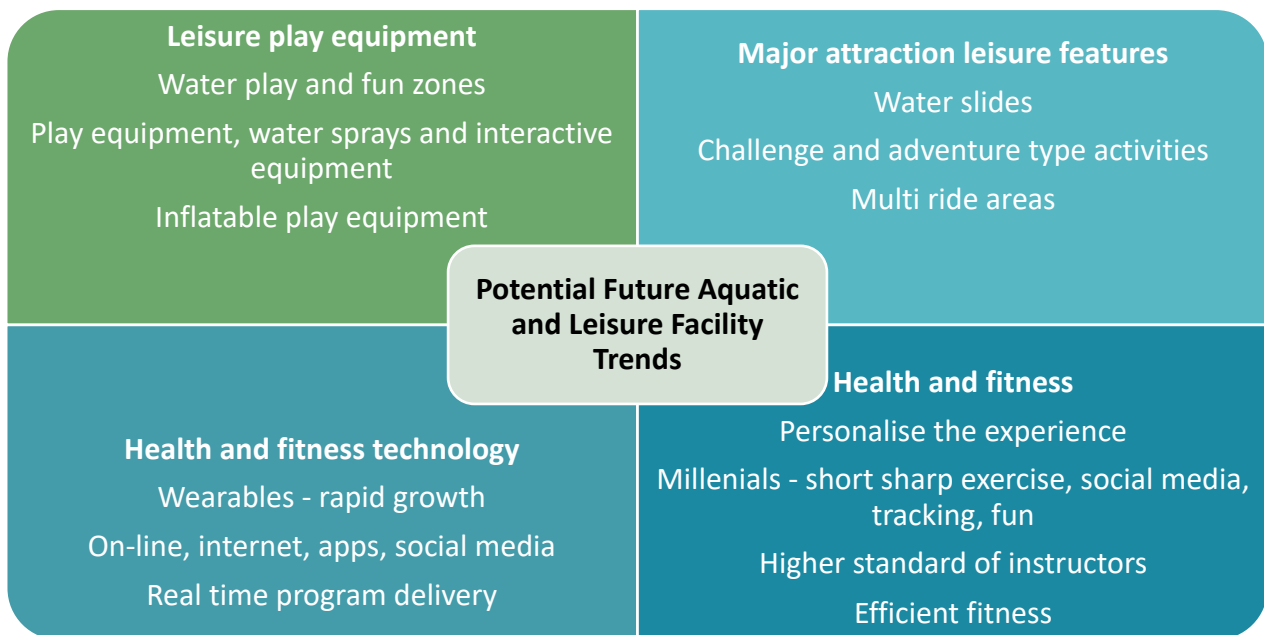


Figure 15: Potential Future Aquatic and Leisure Facility Trends

Residents do not necessarily access services within their local government area

Service catchment mapping shows that the use of services can be seen to be linked to travel to work patterns, where children attend schools, travel times and direct road/public transport link as well as types of experiences being sought. The aquatic service in Loddon Shire would primarily service a local catchment with major aquatic centres in Bendigo, Kerang and Echuca, providing for some school and swim club carnivals and aquatic programs like learn to swim and aqua aerobics.

Aquatic, fitness and leisure services and experiences are offered by a range of providers

Providers include:

- State Government, through accessible natural waterway sites.
- Local government through major aquatic, fitness and leisure centres.
- Range of private business providers, including swim schools, fitness centres and personal trainers.
- Community groups taking on the management of outdoor pools.

Private businesses continue to successfully operate in the 'learn to swim' and health and fitness market with an increased growth in this type of facility in many communities. Some of these pools are also offering aquatic program opportunities such as aqua aerobics. These pool facilities tend to be 15m to 20m indoor heated pools. Privately operated health and fitness facilities include 24/7 budget gyms as well as group fitness gyms offering cross fit, Pilates and yoga classes, personal training and women only gyms.

Golden Square Outdoor Pool in the City of Greater Bendigo is an example of a community group successfully managing an outdoor pool. They have designed a service that complements the aquatic and leisure centre programs at Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre, Faith Leech Aquatic Centre and Peter Krenz Leisure Centre. They have over 50 volunteers who support the operations of the pool and host programs and events including a swim safe program for those disadvantaged in the community, a pool fit bootcamp, yoga and Zumba classes and a full events calendar that includes a live beats music concert series and a range of community partnerships that deliver targeted community programs.

Growth of water play

There has been a growth in the development of water play parks in Victoria.

The Seville Water Play in Yarra Ranges Council was one of the first outdoor water play spaces. It includes sprays and water flow within the footprint of the 25m pool retaining the pool walls as seating areas. It also includes boulders for scrambling over and a dry nature-based playspace creating a community destination for not only the summertime but year-round. Seville Water Play has been very successful with 200 people regularly visiting daily in the summer holiday period. The facility has received awards and featured as a best practice facility in many news and Australian Leisure journal articles.

Yarra Ranges Council has since opened the Warburton Water World that has attracted 500 people visiting daily. This water play park is located next to a caravan park and includes a community event space. They have also included a splash pad in the regional Lillydale Lake playspace that has also been very popular.



Figure 16: Seville Water Play and Warburton Water World (Source: Yarra Ranges Council)

The success of these water play parks has encouraged other municipalities to invest in water play parks including in Swan Hill, Shepparton, Bendigo and Ballarat. Local, State and Federal Government funding has been provided to these developments together with introducing water play in play spaces for learning and development of children. This has been possible through Local Government's acceptance of maintenance requirements and costs e.g. Hadfield Park (Splash Pad) in Mitchell Shire Council and Creswick Skate and Splash Park.

There is an opportunity to reimagine leisure, adventure and water play for children and young people at Loddon Shire aquatic facilities. An example to learn from could be the Darling Quarter at Sydney Harbour that has water damming and sprays with social 'beach style' seating options.



Figure 17: Darling Quarter Water Play Park (Source: Darling Harbour)

Natural water swimming areas

Natural water swimming areas offer a swimming and water play experience in nature, providing significant health and wellbeing benefits to people. The Loddon River swimming hole in Bridgewater is considered a unique place that attracts local communities and visitors to the region.

The future Loddon Shire aquatic service should complement the local natural swimming areas and offer a safe regulated place for people to learn to swim.



Figure 18: Bridgewater Swimming Hole (Source: Visit Loddon Valley)

Innovative ways of activating aquatic centres

There is a recognition that the old 1950's pools don't embrace all key markets and there is an opportunity to explore different ideas. Water play parks are one idea, however an exploration of a range of ideas to diversify the experiences for young and old will create a new concept of aquatic centre as a community destination. Ideas could include places for fun and adventure, fitness, for socialising and eating. They could be commercialised or community spaces.

Activation ideas:

- Blacktown City Council hosts a family fish-in day at the Mount Druitt Swimming Centre in the wintertime when the seasonal pool is closed.
- Solo rock climbing that relies upon the presence of water at the base of a climb. The image below is of the U.S. National Whitewater Centre.
- Spaces for young people. These include multisport activity spaces or beach volleyball court.
- Spaces for women and girls. These include places to hang, jump and cartwheel, socialise and role play.
- Café with lunch style social seating areas.
- Spaces for seniors. These include social and therapy spaces, warm water bathing, senior fitness station, sensory garden. The image below is of the Australian Royal Botanic Gardens sensory garden.
- Movie nights and music concerts at the pool. The image below is of Wet n Wild Theme Park.

2023 Blacktown City Family Fish In

Next date: Friday, 11 August 2023 | 05:00 PM to 08:40 PM

Blacktown City's fishiest event is back in 2023 - the Family Fish In!

Held over the weekends of 4 - 5 and 11 - 12 of August, 600 trout will be game for all fishing enthusiasts wanting to try their luck at the perfect catch. All you need to bring is your own fishing rod, fishing line and bait (power bait is also available to purchase on the night).

This event is proceeding under a permit from NSW Department of Primary Industries.



Figure 19: Ideas for diversifying use and experiences

4.5 Facility Trends

Contemporary sports facility design principles

Otium research has identified the following design principles for contemporary sports facilities:

- **Take a place-making approach.** The Creating Places for People urban design protocol should be used in designing sports facilities. This approach will be supported by adherence to Universal Design and female-friendly design principles.
- **Be hub precincts.** Sports facilities can be provided within a hub for sport, entertainment, community, health and/or tourism activities. A regional sports hub should complement other precincts in a city/township for retail, food, arts, and culture, etc.; and connect via pedestrian and public transport links.
- **Meet contemporary standards** for building and sports including for community, regional, national and international competition, depending on the hierarchy classification of the sports facility.
- **Design and maintain facilities to hierarchy level.** This will mean Council can strategically invest in quality sports facilities to the level the sports facility provides for, whether that is delivering for local (community) standard competition or for regional (elite) standard competition. If a regional facility, the facilities will offer a higher level of service and quality design standard.
- **Be multi-purpose, promote shared-use and offer mixed-use programming.** Sports facilities will be active places that operate seven days a week in peak and off-peak times. Use should be optimised. This is particularly relevant for rural and regional areas such as Loddon with limited access to funding resources.
- **Be designed to deliver multiple solutions.** The design of sport facilities should include a canopy that provides shade for daily activities and capture rainwater; a roof structure with solar panels that generate energy for the building; maximise the use of natural light and double glazing for climate control; flexible lighting systems that offer security and safe passage for pedestrians.
- **Be sustainable.** The design should include strategies like harvesting water, creating energy, turning waste into food, enhancing the habitat and adding value for the surrounding community.
- **Respond to the community.** Sports facilities will interact with and support a mix of community sport and event activity. The design will include a future expansion area that will future-proof sports facilities if additional facility needs or opportunities are identified.
- **Consider biomimicry in design.** Sports facilities will respond to the local climate, allowing the building to breathe, provide comfort for every human sense and adapt to year-round requirements.
- **Embrace technology.** Sports facilities will respond to new technology in terms of entertainment, operations and monitoring facility performance.
- **Efficient.** Sports facilities will consider the maintenance and operational requirements of facilities with a view to making them efficient and easy to maintain.
- **Keep budget in mind.** Government is operating in a tight fiscal environment and therefore the design must balance the above principles with delivering the service objectives of sports facilities and to a reasonable budget.

Making spaces for girls and women

The design for sport and active recreation facilities and services has been more suited to male participation. The following design guidelines and resources respond to extensive research and engagement with women and girls that focus on barriers faced when participating.

Make Space for Girls Design Resource

The 'Make Space for Girls' is a resource that includes research, design principles and case studies for making space for women and girls in a public space.

Specifically, the website refers to research and guidelines developed by the University Leads titled Safer Parks – Improving Access for Women and Girls". The guidelines included extensive research and reports the concern about safety as the "biggest single barrier to women and girls' enjoyment of parks and green spaces". The guidelines include the following design principles:

- Eyes on the park:
 - Busyness and activation – Provide alternative seating options, locate spaces popular with women and girls in busier areas of the park, encourage businesses to use the park increases activity, a broad range of activities to activate the park and encourage new users and circular running or walking routes.
 - Staffing and authority figures – Arrange working patterns to maximise staff presence.
- Awareness:
 - Visibility and openness – Provide canopies above head height to enable a clear view, maintain bushes and shrubs alongside paths to ensure visibility, locate facilities close to main routes and busy areas of the park, mounds and high points give good prospects.
 - Escape – Provide wide and clearly visible park entrances and park edges as open and accessible as possible with regular breaks and regular exits with clear signposts.
 - Lighting – Provide human-scaled lighting rather than floodlights - low and even light can be safer than bright lights that create strong contrast and glare. Using lighting helps activate key routes and spaces, and lighting should enable good colour rendering.
 - Wayfinding and layout – Provide a clear hierarchy of paths that connect with routes beyond the park, a circular path around the perimeter with regular exit points, paths should connect key facilities with each destination and clear signage with directions to key destinations.
- Inclusion:
 - Belonging and familiarity – The naming of facilities to signal multiple uses broadens their appeal, statues and artworks can indicate belonging, and specific facilities aimed at women and girls signal that they are welcome.
 - Image – A tidy park signals care, remove graffiti and repair any vandalism, well-maintained vegetation around paths and well-maintained signage and information boards.
 - Access and location – Access should be via safe and well-used routes. Prioritise entrances close to public transport connections and signpost nearby places as safe zones.
 - Co-production and engagement – Engagement with existing women's and youth groups can be a good starting point for co-production, co-designing parks might change what is included and how spaces feel, engagement must be intersectional and involve existing and potential park users and safety walks help to articulate perceptions of safety in the park.

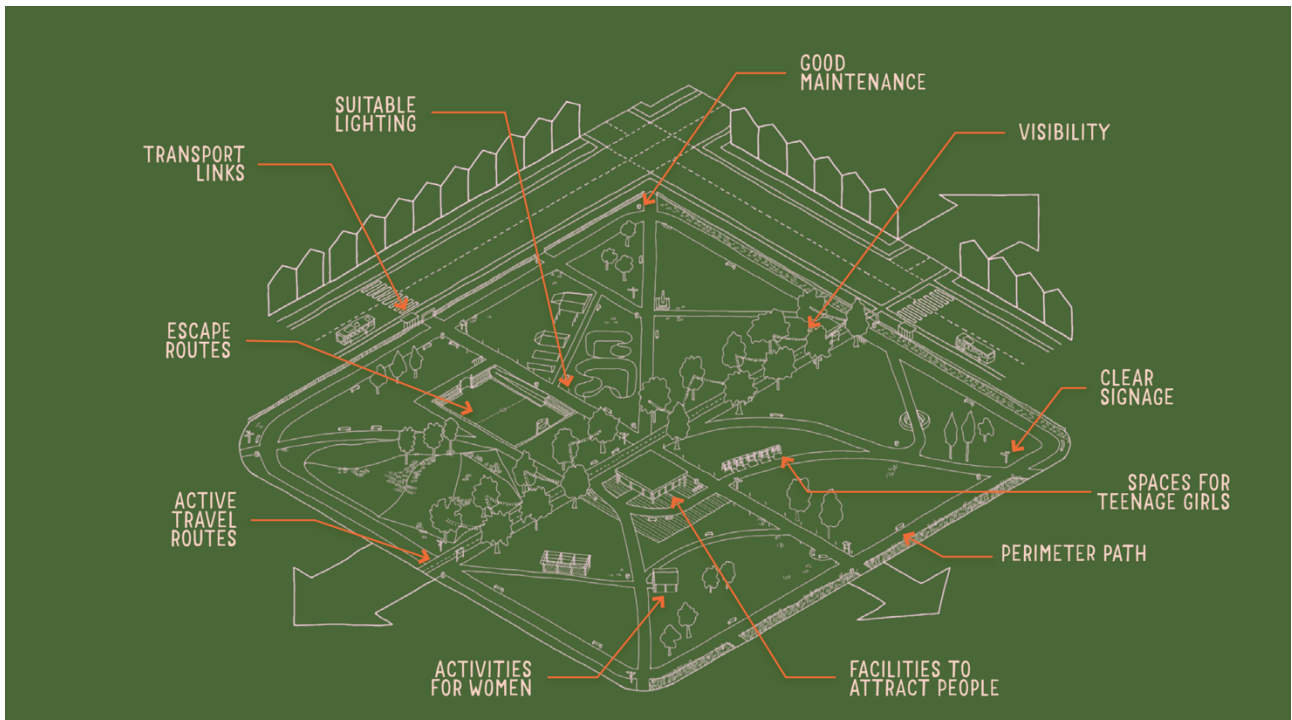


Figure 20: Design Advice for Improving Access to Parks for Women and Girls (Source: Safer Parks, 2023)

Female-Friendly Sport Infrastructure Design Guidelines

Female sports participation at the elite and peak of athlete pathways is increasing and rapidly in line with an increase in grassroots participation in sport and physical activity. This represents an exciting time for Australia but also presents challenges for sports administrators and facilities.

Sport and Recreation Victoria has developed the Female Friendly Guidelines that include the following design principles to create female-friendly facilities:

- **Fit for purpose:** While promoting a flexible and multi-use approach, ensure female-friendly design elements and specific requirements meet the level and type of activities being delivered, as well as occupant, club or tenant needs.
- **Multi and shared use:** Infrastructure should be efficiently designed to promote equitable and flexible use by a mixture of users capable of sharing facilities and usage times. The facility space planning and design of public spaces should adopt a multi-purpose approach.
- **Compatibility:** Identification of compatible sports, teams, activities, clubs or organisations with similar objectives and requirements for facility design, use and management should be promoted.
- **Universal Design:** The principles of Universal Design should be applied to community sport and recreation facilities so that they accommodate users of all ages, gender, ability and cultural backgrounds.
- **Public Safety:** Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) takes into consideration the relationship between users and the physical environment in the design of public spaces in crime prevention and assists with public safety.
- **Health and safety:** Security and safety of users should be paramount. Sport and active recreation facilities and their surrounds should be designed, built and maintained in accordance with relevant occupational health and safety standards. They should also incorporate child safe and safer design principles into facility design.
- **Functionality:** Facility design and layout should promote safe and optimal functionality to accommodate formal, competitive, social and recreational forms of usage and participation.

Making spaces for people with disabilities

Otium has engaged with Disability Sport and Recreation Victoria about key drivers and barriers for participants with disabilities engagement and facility, program and service ideas for delivering their meaningful engagement in sport and recreation.

The following key drivers were identified by participants engaged with sport:

- Providing opportunities for physical activities.
- Ability to play sport they enjoy, as close to able-bodied rules as possible.
- At the same time, considering their various needs to ensure they enjoy the activity.
- Clear pathways of progression as skills improve.
- Where possible, integration and understanding between able and disabled participants.
- Providing opportunities for social connection and emotional support.

The following key barriers were faced by participants' engagement with sport:

- A lack of awareness of the sport and where to play.
- Time, cost and effort involved in travel.
- The cost involved in getting kitted out.
- Lack of critical mass of participants.
- Lack of consistent and convenient scheduling.
- General lack of organisation and administration, needing them to step into this role to ensure gameplay goes ahead.

Disability Sport and Recreation Victoria advocates for 'Disability Sport Hubs' that service a regional catchment. These hubs are seen as an important ingredient to encouraging people with disabilities to participate.

Loddon Shire has high rates of disability. Partnering with City of Greater Bendigo and advocating for a Disability Sports Hub in Bendigo would service the Central Victoria region.

The Disability Sports Hub would provide:

- An information portal for how people with disabilities can get involved in sport.
- A central physical location, a dedicated fit-for-purpose space for adaptive (disability) sport.
- A place for bringing people together and cross-pollination of experience and expertise.

The Disability Sports Hub would involve project partners who would connect and engage with various stakeholders including the local community of people with disabilities, State Sporting Associations, disability sport organisations and local disability service providers.

The programs and services at a Disability Sports Hub would be:

- Driven by people with disabilities.
- Low-cost participation opportunities.
- Encourage engagement with local schools, sport clubs, coaches, leisure providers and disability organisations.

The physical activities and programs would be complemented by an information and education hub for the delivery of capacity-building training amongst local providers of sport and recreation programs. This would create a welcoming and skilled environment that supports greater participation by people with disabilities, addresses the key barriers and delivers more sustainable long-term outcomes.

The facility requirements of a Disability Sports Hub would consider:

- Indoor sports courts are ideal for most disability sports.
- Netting/walls.
- Ample circulation space.
- Access to facilities is important – older venues are set up for one or two people in a wheelchair (one accessible toilet and car park). When you have competition, you could have up to 40 people.
- Storage areas for wheelchairs (10 chairs) for programs.
- Lifts (bigger is better).
- Light switches at the right height.
- Braille signage.
- Access keys/downloadable information.

Disability Sport and Recreation identified the **Phoenix USA – Ability360 Sport and Fitness Centre** as the best example of a fit-for-purpose Disability Sports Hub for adaptive sports. It is a best practice in terms of welcoming and functional requirements for people with a disability.

The centre has wheelchair-accessible weight machines, an aquatic area equipped with lifts and elevators, accessible locker rooms, indoor courts, a climbing wall (35ft), an indoor track, personal training, swim lessons, group fitness classes, recreation therapy, team sports, etc. All programs, facilities, and activities are inclusive.

See the following weblinks to a fly-through of the facility:

<https://ability360.org/sports/>

<https://nirsa.net/nirsa/portfolio-items/ability360-sports-and-fitness-center/>

Universal Design Principles

The seven Principles of Universal Design were developed in 1997 by a working group of architects, product designers, engineers and environmental design researchers. The following principles will guide the design of the new Sports Performance Event Activity Centre in terms of place and function, environment and sustainability, products and communications:

- Equitable use: The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
- Flexibility in use: The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- Simple and intuitive use: Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language, skills, or current concentration level.
- Perceptible information: The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
- Tolerance for Error: The design minimises hazards and errors – most used elements, most accessible; hazardous elements eliminated, isolated or shielded.
- Low physical effort: The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

- Size and space for approach and use: Appropriate size and space are provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.

4.6 Key Findings of Trends Analysis

There is an opportunity to explore innovative ideas that diversify the experiences in an aquatic centre environment that creates a community destination year-round.

Diverse and accessible network of sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities are needed to deliver the full range of activities and benefits

Key trends influencing the provision and design of sport and recreation facilities and services are:

- There is a trend for new or improved sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities to be designed as multi-use and multi-functional. This is partly due to facility investment being used smarter to not put unnecessary financial pressure on Council by duplicating facilities with available capacity.
- Insights from the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of local open spaces and the growing expectations from the community around the quality of their open spaces. The community is increasing their informal active recreation use of sports precincts which is resulting in conflict with formal sport programming and facility capacity issues.
- The large growth in female participation within traditionally male-oriented sports is increasing pressures on playing facilities and increasing the need to diversify amenities to be universally accessible.
- Whilst the nature and intensity of participation in sport may change over time, the need for suitable and adaptable spaces to accommodate demand will remain. Future facility provision and design needs to ensure spaces are adaptable to accommodate changing participation trends.
- The location of sports precincts needs to be accessible to most of the community to maximise use. They should be well connected by active transport links and public transport.

There is no demand for additional formal sport facilities

The Demand Analysis Model found an oversupply of outdoor sports fields (Australian Rules football +8 fields, cricket +6 fields, Hockey +1 field) and outdoor sports courts and greens (Netball +17.5 courts, tennis +75 courts and bowls +10.5 rinks) in Loddon Shire. **However**, overlaying with local factors impacting a field's use is important. Specifically, the distribution and accessibility of fields to communities. This is a particular factor impacting Loddon Shire which is rural in nature and townships are dispersed (in most cases over 20 minutes from the nearby township) making it difficult to share fields.

The modelling shows the key focus of this Strategy is on activating sport and active recreation facilities rather than needing to improve the capacity of existing facilities.

Sports facilities in the future will need to respond to emerging sports and new formats

The sporting landscape can rapidly change. The graphic below shows the most recent AusPlay Survey 2021 results for the most popular sport and physical activities across age groups. The graphic shows a wide range of sports and physical activities are now being played, outside traditional sports. This is particularly the case for adult participation where unstructured sports that can be played at flexible times and support a person’s lifestyle, health and wellbeing are now preferred.



While a high proportion of children are active in organised sport out-of-school hours, as people age the focus of physical activity shifts more and more from organised sport to recreational non-sport physical activities. This is reflected in the most popular physical activities at each life stage, as shown here above.

Figure 21: AusPlay Survey 2021 results for the most popular sport and physical activities across age groups

We have seen traditional sports introduce new formats that are gaining in popularity and growing participation. These new formats of traditional sports have broadened the audience of participants to sports. Examples include:

- New formats that are derivatives of traditional sports. Examples include pickle ball and padel are derivatives of tennis now being played in indoor courts and outdoor tennis court venues, footgolf and disc golf are derivatives of golf, football and ultimate frisbee.
- Social fast paced competition formats that are played on smaller fields, takes less time to play and are more accessible. Examples include AFL9's Netball Fast 5, Cricket T20, and Rugby Sevens.

The recent AusPlay Survey 2021 also shows several new emerging sports and trends in Australia. These include:

- Female sports – Women and girls sports have been the fastest growing participation across traditional and emerging sports.
- eSports (Exergaming) – eSports or competitive gaming has been gaining popularity not just in Australia but worldwide. There are now several eSports leagues and tournaments.
- Virtual training and racing – Zwift is an example of an online platform that allows cycling to connect their indoor trainers or stationary bikes to a virtual environment through a computer or smart phone. Zwift features include gamification elements, allows for multiplayer and social cycling, and hosting of racing events and challenges.
- Adventure racing: Trail based events that are hosted in nature and include extreme sports like mountain biking and trail running. These sports are growing in popularity.
- Adaptive and inclusive sports – Adaptive sports for people with disabilities are gaining recognition and support. These sports promote inclusivity and support people with a wide range of abilities. There is a growing number of adaptive sport competitions offered from local community to elite level. These include blind cricket and wheelchair sports for Australian Rules Football, rugby, basketball and tennis.
- Combat sports – Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) is an example of a combat sport in Australia growing participation with more gyms and competitions emerging and greater visibility of the sport through the global popularity of Ultimate Fighting Championships (UFC).
- Climbing and bouldering – Indoor and outdoor climbing and bouldering facilities have become more popular.

The redesign of sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities should adopt industry design principles that deliver inclusive, multi-use and sustainable facilities and programs

The following design principles have been developed to help inform the future design of the sporting infrastructure within Loddon Shire. It will be used to guide the future prioritisation framework.

- **Accessible and Inclusive:** Facilities and spaces will be universally designed and inclusive, fostering participation in physical activity by all our community, across all life stages, genders and cultures.
- **Diverse and Equitable:** Facilities and spaces will offer a diverse mix of facilities, programs and experiences. Council will provide an equitable access to facilities across the Shire.
- **Safe and Welcoming:** Facilities and spaces and programs are designed to be visible, open and welcoming to the community, creating a safe place for girls and women to participate.
- **Multi-Use:** Facilities and spaces will be multi-use, offering several activities, programs and experiences for users.

- **Connected:** Well-planned recreational facilities and areas of public open space will provide connectivity across our localities and provide access to our unique natural environment.
- **Sustainable:** Facilities and spaces will be designed to operate efficiently, whilst being well managed and maintained.

The following reference documents are provided for guiding design principles:

- [Creating Places for People](#)
- [Making Places for Girls](#)
- [Healthy Active by Design](#)
- [Crime Prevention through Environmental Design](#)
- [Universal Design Principles](#)
- [Female Friendly Sports Infrastructure Design Guidelines](#).

Contemporary aquatic and leisure facilities are community destinations or hubs offering a mix of facilities, diverse programming and experiences

The key factors of successful aquatic facilities that deliver an operational surplus or break-even position, as compared to a facility not performing as well, was that they respond to aquatic and leisure facilities trends by providing diverse participation opportunities and programmable components. This includes providing a range of contemporary 'wet' and 'dry' elements that appeal to broader market segments:

- Recreation, leisure and adventure
- Health, fitness and wellness
- Competitive and recreational swimming
- Aquatic education and learn to swim
- Therapy, and rehabilitation
- Food/beverage and merchandise services.

The five outdoor pools in Loddon Shire are missing key markets impacting participation and financial position. These are leisure adventure facilities and therapy users. They also don't meet industry standards for pool depths to support fitness and training and education users.

There is reduced financial capacity of Councils to fund future aquatic facility development

Providing equitable access to aquatic and leisure facilities (and other services like health, education, cultural, recreational and other community services) in rural and regional areas is a challenge, particularly in smaller townships. Particularly with the capital and operational costs of aquatic and leisure facilities having risen significantly over the last ten to 20 years, and even more so in recent times post the COVID-19 global pandemic.

These factors raise some key questions for Council:

- What is the financial capacity to provide capital funding to future aquatic facility projects in Loddon Shire?
- The current "management model" for aquatics in Loddon is effective, yet avoidably expensive. The current financial input of public money is unsustainable. The need to explore and evaluate other potential management models is critical and must occur over the next three year in order to preserve any chance of retaining the current number of aquatic facilities beyond 2028.

- The high cost associated with managing and operating aquatic facilities across the Shire (10% of Council's operating budget) and the benefit/impact to the community given the outdoor nature of the pools and the short season.
- How will we support our communities to access to aquatic facilities given their reliance on these places that offer a relief from the hot summer periods in Northern Victoria, social connection, a safe regulated space for people to learn to swim, and for health, fitness and play.

5. Supply Analysis

What recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities do we have?

This section identifies the key issues and opportunities impacting the current supply of recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities.

5.1 Current Supply

Loddon has a diverse range of open spaces, including sport and active recreation reserves, parks and playgrounds, swimming pools, tracks and trails, and natural places, including bushland reserves and waterways (rivers and lakes).

There are over 113 parcels of public open spaces within the municipality. There is a good distribution and supply of quality sport and recreation reserves, open spaces and aquatic facilities across the townships:

- The major towns of Boort, Bridgewater, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn have a central sport and recreation reserve, a playground, a swimming pool, a golf course, a public hall and walking/cycling tracks.
- The medium-sized townships of Mitiamo, Calivil, Dingee, Newbridge, Serpentine and Tarnagulla don't have as many public open spaces, but most have a central sport and recreation reserve, public hall and playground.
- Small towns generally have a public hall and park or village green.
- The sport and recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities are supported by a network of local walking tracks and regional trails that connect key destinations.

Sport and Recreation Reserves

There are nine major and 19 minor recreation reserves. Each major and medium-sized township has a central sport and recreation reserve that caters to various sports and places for active recreation. Local parks and gardens support these key open spaces within close proximity to where people live within rural townships but also service the rural district area surrounding the township area.

Sport and recreation reserves are managed and maintained by Reserve Committees of Management, comprised of representatives from user groups and local community. These volunteer committees are appointed directly by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) or by the Loddon Shire Council (as owner or the appointed Committee of Management under the *Crown Land Reserves Act 1978*), depending on the ownership of the land.

Key sport and recreation reserves are listed in the table below.

Table 17: Sport and recreation reserves

Sport and Recreation Reserve	Location	Description	Responsibility
Arnold Recreation Reserve	Arnold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One oval with cricket pitch. • Clubhouse. • Cricket practice net. 	Committee of Management/Club
Bears Lagoon Tennis Centre	Bears Lagoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The precinct is Crown Land. • The tennis facilities include five grass tennis courts (irrigated), pavilion, toilets, rebound wall, seating and playground. 	Committee of Management

Sport and Recreation Reserve	Location	Description	Responsibility
Boort Bowls, Croquet and Tennis Centre	Boort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Crown Land. The bowls facilities include one synthetic bowling green with 11 rinks with lights, pavilion (being redeveloped), storage shed, seats and shelters. The croquet facilities include a green with three courts and lights, a basic pavilion, toilets, seats and shelters. The tennis facilities include 14 lawn tennis courts and pavilion. 	Committee of Management
Boort Golf Club	Boort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18-hole golf course and club house. 	Committee of Management/Club
Boort Park	Boort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Council freehold land. Sports pavilion. One sports oval with turf cricket pitch and lights (irrigated) and coaches Cricket practice nets. Portable grandstand. One turf hockey pitch and hockey storage shed. Two netball courts (one with lights) and one warm up 1/3 court, netball shelters and storage shed. Harness racing track, stewards' towers, harness racing sheds. Playground. Boort Historical Society Machinery Shed. Boort Agricultural Show Sheds. 	Council
Bridgewater Bowls Club	Bridgewater on Loddon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is privately owned. Sports pavilion. Two bowling greens with 11 rinks and lights. Storage, water tank, shelters and seats. 	Club
Bridgewater Recreation Reserve	Bridgewater on Loddon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Crown Land. One sports oval with synthetic pitch and lights and coaches' boxes. Two netball/tennis courts with lights. Two tennis courts without lights. Cricket practice nets. Sports pavilion. Playground, water tank and scoreboard. Toilets are only open on days the reserve hosts an organised sporting event. 	Committee of Management
Calivil Recreation Reserve	Calivil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Crown Land. One sports oval with turf pitch and lights and coaches' boxes. Two netball courts with shelter Two tennis courts with lights. Cricket practice nets. Sports pavilion (shared). One synthetic bowling green with 8 rinks and lights. 18-hole black soil scrapes golf course. Golf and bowls clubhouse. Playground, water tank and scoreboard. 	Committee of Management

Sport and Recreation Reserve	Location	Description	Responsibility
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toilets are only open on days the reserve hosts an organised sporting event. 	
Dingee Recreation Reserve	Dingee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Crown Land. One bowling green with 8 rinks and lights. 8 lawn tennis courts with shelter and clubrooms and rebound wall. One sports oval with synthetic cricket pitch and lights and coaches' boxes. Cricket practice net. Sports pavilion. Playground, water tank, scoreboard, walking track. 	Committee of Management
Inglewood Bowls Club	Inglewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Council freehold land. Sports pavilion. One bowling green with 11 rinks and lights. Club toilets, storage, water tank, shelters and seats. 	Committee of Management
Inglewood Recreation Reserve	Inglewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Council freehold land. Sports pavilion. Six lawn tennis courts, shelter and pavilion. Public toilets, storage, water tank, shelters and seats. Cricket wicket, lights and coaches' boxes. Cricket practice nets (in poor condition, infrequent use by nearby clubs for informal training). Two netball courts and shelter. 	Committee of Management
Inglewood Golf Course	Inglewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18-hole golf course and pavilion. 	Committee of Management
Kingower Cricket and Recreation Reserve	Kingower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18-hole golf course and club room. 	Committee of Management/Club
Korong Vale Recreation Reserve	Korong Vale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Council freehold land. One sports oval. Cricket practice nets. Sports pavilion. Two netball courts and shelter. One bowling green with 8 rinks and lights. Four lawn tennis courts, shelter and pavilion. Playground. 	Committee of Management
Mitiamo Recreation Reserve	Mitiamo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Council freehold land. One sports oval with lights and coaches' boxes. Sports pavilion. Two netball courts with lights and shelter. Five lawn tennis courts, shelter and pavilion. Club toilets. Playground, storage, water tank, shelters and seats. 	Committee of Management
Mitiamo Golf Course	Mitiamo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18-hole golf course and pavilion. 	Committee of Management
Newbridge Recreation Reserve	Newbridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Crown Land. One sports oval with synthetic cricket pitch and lights and coaches' boxes. Sports pavilion. 	Committee of Management

Sport and Recreation Reserve	Location	Description	Responsibility
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two netball courts with lights and shelter. Four synthetic tennis courts, shelter and pavilion. Playground, camping area, shelters and seats. 	
Mitchell Park	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Crown Land. One sports oval with lights and coaches' boxes. Sports pavilion. Two netball courts and shelter. Playground, old machinery sheds, shelters and seats. Toilets are only open on days the reserve hosts an organised sporting event. 	Committee of Management
Pyramid Hill Bowls and Tennis Centre	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Crown Land. 15 lawn tennis courts and tennis pavilion. Two bowling greens with 16 rinks, lights and bowls pavilion. Seating and shelters. 	Committee of Management
Pyramid Hill Quarter Horse Club	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arena. Club room. Yards. 	Committee of Management/Club
Serpentine Recreation Reserve	Serpentine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Crown Land. One sports oval with turf cricket pitch and lights and coaches' boxes. Cricket training nets (unusable). Sports pavilion. Two netball courts and shelter. Community hall. Playground, storage, water tank, shelters and seats. Toilets are only open on days the reserve hosts an organised sporting event. 	Committee of Management
Serpentine Bowls and Tennis Centre	Serpentine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Council freehold land. Five lawn tennis courts and tennis shed. One bowling green with 8 rinks and lights. Sports pavilion. Water tank, seating and shelters. 	Committee of Management
Market Square Reserve	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Council freehold land. One sports oval. Cricket training nets. Sports pavilion. Two sheds used by Engine Club. One shed used by Men's Shed Program. 	Committee of Management
Donaldson Park Recreation Reserve	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The precinct is Council freehold land. One sports oval with lights and coaches' boxes. One grass hockey pitch. Sports pavilion. Two netball courts and shelter with lights. Two synthetic and 8 lawn tennis courts with lights and clubhouse. Two bowling greens with 12 rinks, lights and clubhouse. Harness racing track. Playground, water tank, shelters and seats. 	Committee of Management

Sport and Recreation Reserve	Location	Description	Responsibility
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toilets are only open on days the reserve hosts an organised sporting event. 	
Wedderburn Golf Club	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18-hole golf course and club house. 	Committee of Management/Club
Woodstock Recreation Reserve	Woodstock on Loddon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two synthetic tennis courts. Public hall. 	Committee of Management

Parks and Gardens

The central sport and recreation reserves are supported by local parks and gardens offering community places for play, social gathering, community events, relaxation and reflection. These parks and gardens feature play spaces, seating and picnic facilities and landscaped areas, including gardens and shade trees.

Key parks and gardens are listed in the table below.

Table 18: Parks and gardens

Parks and Gardens	Location	Description	Responsibility
Jubilee Park	Boort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground 	Council
Nolens Park	Boort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible toilets BBQ Table and seats Playground Lake Exercise equipment Water fountain 	Council
Rotary and Historical Parks	Boort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BBQ Table and seat 	Council
Sunnyside Court Playground	Boort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground 	Council
Sloans Park	Bridgewater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BBQ Table and seats Playground 	Council
Swimming and Fishing Piers	Bridgewater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toilets BBQ Swimming hole (not supervised/no lifeguards on duty) Tables and seats Water fountain 	Council
Progress Park	Dingee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground Toilets Tables and seats BBQ 	Council
J Sloan Park	Inglewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible toilets BBQ Table and seats Playground Skate ramp Water fountain Exercise equipment 	Council
Village Green	Kingower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rotunda BBQ 	Council
Borella Park	Korong Vale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground BBQ 	Council

Parks and Gardens	Location	Description	Responsibility
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shade sail • Table and seats 	
Progress Park	Newbridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking and cycling trail. 	Council
Kelly Park	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets • BBQ • Table and seats • Playground • Half basketball court and netball ring • Kangaroo chair • Exercise equipment 	Council
Lions Park East	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBQ • Playground 	Council
Pyramid Hill Reserve – The Hill	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets • BBQ • Table and seats • Walking track 	Council
T J Rudkins Reserve	Serpentine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets • BBQ • Table and seats • Water fountain 	Council
Tarnagulla Soldiers Memorial Park	Tarnagulla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets • BBQ • Table and seats • Playground 	Council
Cooper Park	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table and seats 	Council
Wedderburn Soldiers Memorial Park	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets • BBQ • Table and seats • Playground • Half basketball court • Kangaroo chair 	Council
Nardoo Linear Park	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking Track • Exercise equipment 	Council
Teds Garden	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kangaroo chair 	Council

Aquatic Facilities

Loddon Shire’s five outdoor pools are located at Boort, Inglewood, Mitiamo, Pyramid and Wedderburn. A leisure service management contractor manages the outdoor pools.

Aquatic facilities are listed in the table below.

Table 19: Aquatic facilities

Aquatic Facility	Location	Description	Responsibility
Boort Outdoor Pool	Boort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 m pool – solar heated • Toddlers pool • Infant wading pool • Basketball ring • Barbeque 	Leisure Services Contractor
Inglewood Outdoor Pool	Inglewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33m pool – solar heated • Infant wading pool • Basketball ring 	Leisure Services Contractor

Aquatic Facility	Location	Description	Responsibility
Mitiamo Outdoor Pool	Mitiamo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 m pool – solar heated • Infant wading pool 	Leisure Services Contractor
Pyramid Hill Outdoor Pool	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 m pool – solar heated • Toddlers pool • Infant wading pool • Barbeque 	Leisure Services Contractor
Wedderburn Outdoor Pool	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 m pool – solar heated • Infant wading pool • Basketball ring • Cricket nets • Barbeque 	Leisure Services Contractor

Recreation Trails

The sport and recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities are supported by a network of local walking tracks and regional trails that connect key destinations. A popular local trail is Nolens Park in Boort which hosts the local Parkrun.

Key recreation trails are listed in the following table.

Table 20: Recreation trails

Trail	Location	Description
Bridgewater River Track	Bridgewater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6km along banks of Loddon. Formed footpaths, gravel path and dirt road. • Trail head - Loddon River, Bridgewater (adjacent to hotel)
BullaBul Trail	Inglewood/ Bridgewater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13km trail links Inglewood and Bridgewater. Via bushland, dirt roads, and river track. Involves road crossing - local and VicRoad roads. • Trail head: Verdon St (old gaol), Inglewood West Side, Loddon River Bridgewater
Inglewood Reservoir Track	Inglewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2km loop through bush land and around reservoir. • Trail head: Inglewood Botanical Gardens
Laanecoorie River Trail	Laanecoorie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.5km loop from camp ground, along Loddon River to the weir. Return track is on sealed road. • Trail head: Laanecoorie Loddon River Recreation Reserve
Tarnagulla Cemetery Track	Tarnagulla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3km return from extension from township walk to cemetery. • Trail head: Wimmera HWY, Tarnagulla
Tarnagulla Reservoir Track	Tarnagulla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3km loop with shorter option available at recreation reserve. Gravel path, majority is dirt road. Some sealed road crossings. • Trail head: Poverty St, Tarnagulla
Tarnagulla Town Heritage	Tarnagulla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 5km taking in heritage sites of Tarnagulla. Paved paths, bush tracks, road reserves and dirt tracks. • Trail head: Tarnagulla
Queens Gully Trail	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.8km Loop. Starting at Wedderburn Reservoir Walk. Small section of single track, then follows dirt roads. • Trail head: Hospital St, Wedderburn
Wedderburn Reservoir Track	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1km Loop around Wedderburn Reservoir on trail. • Trail head: Hospital St, Wedderburn
Blue Mallee Trail	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8km loop. Trail signed with post and yellow arrows. Dirt and sealed road crossings. • Trail head: Hard Hill Reserve
Nardoo Track Wedderburn	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2km loop along Nardoo Creek and Chapel St. • Trail head: Wedderburn

Trail	Location	Description
Pon Bon Track	Serpentine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2km of trail through the Pon Bon. Trail begins at Travelers Rest. • Trail head: TJ Rudkins Reserve
Dingee Walking Tack	Dingee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500m formed path from Dingee to the Recreation Reserve • Trail around oval and through bushland at the reserve. • Trail head: Winzar Reserve • Trail head: Dingee Pavilion
Dunolly-Tarnagulla Cycle Tracks	Tarnagulla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44k Forest ride includes nature conversation reserve - loop from Dunolly to Tarnagulla. • Trail head: Dunolly Town Hall
Dunolly-Laanecoorie Cycle Track	Laanecoorie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44k Forest loop from Dunolly to Laanecoorie. • Trail head: Dunolly Town Hall
Pyramid Hill Trail	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2km Loop around Pyramid Hill base. • Trail head: Hill Reserve
Pyramid Hill Connecting Trail	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1k path connecting township to hill. Ends at swimming pool. • Trail head: Hill Reserve
Little Lake Boort Trail	Boort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4km path around Little Lake Boort. • 2.5km path circuit around Little Lake Boort. The trail hosts the local Parkrun. • Trail head: Nolens Park

Nature Conservation Reserves

Loddon Shire has spectacular bushland reserves and river corridors that offer opportunities for nature-based recreation.

Key nature conservation reserves are:

- **Kooyoora State Park** – The bushland reserve features Mount Kooyoora and Melville Caves. It is a great place to rock climb and abseil, boulder hop, camp, picnic and hike. This park is managed by Parks Victoria.
- **Terrick Terrick National Park** – The bushland reserve features Mount Terrick Terrick and rare remnant native grasslands. It is a place to camp and bushwalk. This park is managed by Parks Victoria.
- **Leaghur State Park** – The 2022-hectare bushland reserve is located on the Loddon River floodplain and features Victorian most significant areas of block box wetland and woodland. It is a place to picnic, camp and bushwalk. This park is managed by Parks Victoria.
- **Wanyarra Camping Grounds** – The camping grounds is located near the historic town of Tarnagulla. It is a popular recreation reserve for camping and picnics. This park is managed by Parks Victoria.
- **Pyramid Hill Summit Walk** – The bushland reserve features “The Hill” with popular walking trails that wind around the base, an adventurous track the extends across the “saddle” of the hill and links to the existing track from the Pyramid Hill township. It is a popular place to picnic and for bird watching.
- **Mount Hope Nature Conservation Reserve** – This bushland reserve features seven small granite hills. The park is a great place for hiking, rock climbing, boulder hopping and picnics.
- **Kow Swamp** – Kow Swamp wetlands is an aboriginal significant place with Indigenous ancestral remains found that date back at least 13,000 years. The swamp was also important to European settlement being a water source for sheep, cattle, dairy and grain farming. Today it is a popular recreation and fishing spot.

- **Boort Lakes and Wetlands** – Boort is a popular visitor destination and features the 400 ha Lake Boort used for swimming and water sports including fishing and water skiing. Lake Boort has the greatest number of scar trees in Australia. Boort also includes Little Lake Boort, an attractive recreation lake and caravan/camping spot and Woolshed Swamp and Yando Swamp that are known wildlife and bird watching spots.
- **Loddon River in Bridgewater** – The open water spot includes a popular swimming hole and a designated zone for water sports including fishing, water skiing/speed boats and paddling. The spot includes a park with picnic facilities and connects with a foreshore river trail.
- **Serpentine Creek and Loddon River** – There are popular canoe trails with all abilities canoe ramps, hidden beaches and gentle rapids on the Loddon River in Laanecoorie and Serpentine Creek in Durham Ox.

Regional Facilities

There are a range of regional sports facilities that service Loddon Shire located within Bendigo and Kerang. These include:

- **Tom Flood Centre (Velodrome)** – Cycling. The Centre supports track racing for the Bendigo and District Cycling Club. The club also ride road and gravel races.
- **Latrobe University Bendigo Athletics Centre** – Athletics. The Centre supports Athletics Bendigo which represents Little Athletics Victoria and Athletics Victoria in the Bendigo Region. There are four Athletics Victoria clubs in Bendigo including Bendigo Harriers, Bendigo University, Eaglehawk YMCA and South Bendigo Athletics clubs.
- **Bendigo East Aquatic Centre, Faith Leech Aquatic Centre, Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre and Kerang Outdoor Pool** – Swimming. These facilities have 50m heated pools and support Bendigo East Swimming Club, Bendigo Hawks Swimming Club, Kangaroo Flat Swimming Club, Kerang Swim Club. They support swim club meets and school carnival events.
- **Bendigo Table Tennis Centre** – Table Tennis. The regional table tennis centre has 12 tables permanently set up in a purpose-built stadium. The Centre supports the Bendigo and District Table Tennis Association.
- **Bendigo Badminton Centre** – Badminton. The regional badminton centre has 16 courts permanently set up in a purpose-built stadium. The Centre supports the Bendigo and Eaglehawk Badminton Association.
- **Red Energy Centre (Bendigo Indoor Sports and Entertainment Centre)** – Basketball, Netball and Volleyball. The centre also provides a regional netball centre for the Bendigo Netball Association. Whilst the centre provides for some Loddon Shire netball participants, most play in the local football and netball league competitions in Loddon Shire.
- **Bendigo Regional Tennis Centre** – Tennis. The regional tennis centre with 26 plexi-pave tennis courts. Tennis is included. Whilst the centre provides for some Loddon Shire tennis participants, most play in the local tennis association competitions in Loddon Shire.
- **Bendigo Regional Hockey Centre** – Hockey. The regional hockey centre with two international standard synthetic turf pitches. Hockey is included. Whilst the centre provides for some Loddon Shire hockey participants, most play in the local hockey association competitions in Loddon Shire.
- **Queen Elizabeth Oval (QEO)** – Australia Rules football and cricket. The QEO is the premier sports oval in Central Victoria. The oval has a capacity of 10,000 people and includes a grandstand and turf wicket pitches. The facility hosts finals and has the facilities to host Victorian Football League matches. Whilst the centre provides for some Loddon Shire Australian Rules football and cricket participants, most play in the local hockey association competitions in Loddon Shire.

- **Epson Huntly Recreation Reserve** – Soccer. The regional soccer facility features six soccer pitches and hosts the Bendigo Amateur Soccer League together with several local sports clubs, including the Bendigo City Football Club (NPL standard).

This means Loddon Shire does not need to provide competition fields for these sports, unless it services a local need i.e., local club training and competition venue or social competition. These venues host the regional associations and deliver athlete talent development pathways.

5.2 Planning Framework

To support best practice recreation and open space planning a planning framework has been developed that considers the roles different facilities, assets and spaces play in activating communities and the different places we live in. These different roles of recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities deliver a wide range of 'liveability' benefits. These include improved physical and mental health and wellbeing, providing a pathway from grass root to elite level sport, socialising and play, learn to swim, cooling off in hot weather, protecting and connecting with nature, attracting community and visitor activity that returns economic benefits and cultural connection.

Effective recreation facilities, open space and aquatic facilities planning requires a partnership with community and land managers (Committees of Management) across Local, State and Federal Governments. The planning should be integrated, holistic, and sustainable.

The Planning Framework classifies recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities by their primary functions and provides a classification system to apply service levels to guide the provision of recreation assets across the municipality.

State and Federal Government legislation, the planning scheme and reserve management plans will outline the design and management requirements of nature conservation reserves. These open space types are mostly managed by other land managers, including Parks Victoria. There is an opportunity for Council to advocate for nature-based recreation and adventure activities that will provide a unique experience and community with an important connection to nature.

The Planning Framework will guide the project scope during development of concept plans or detailed designs along with consideration of industry design standards and principles, universal design standards and crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) guidelines.

Please refer to **Appendix 1** for the detailed Loddon Recreation Planning Framework.

5.3 Key Findings of Supply Analysis

Loddon Shire has a good provision and diverse mix of sport and recreation reserve, open spaces and aquatic facilities.

There are nine major and 11 minor recreation reserves, five community swimming pools, one swimming hole (Bridgewater) and over 113 parcels of public open spaces within the municipality. The facilities are in good condition and attractive to use. They are managed by Council, contractors and Reserve Committees. Activation and reasonable access to sport facilities, programs and aquatic centres is a key focus of the project.

The central sport and recreation reserves facilitate participation in a wide range of sports including Australian Rules football, netball, cricket, hockey and tennis. These are supported by other sports facilities including lawn bowls greens and golf courses. A network of recreation trails offers walking and cycling opportunities within townships that connect activity centres with key destinations.

Loddon Shire features spectacular bushland reserves and river corridors that connect people to nature and culture, whilst also holding high biodiversity values. They offer opportunities for nature-based recreation including bushwalking, rock climbing and bouldering, fishing, canoeing, camping and picnicking. The bushland reserves in the Loddon Valley are managed by Parks Victoria, with some managed in partnership with the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation following the formalising of the Recognition and Settlement Agreement. There is an opportunity for Council to work with land managers and Traditional Owner groups to develop products and promote nature-based recreation opportunities.

The supply analysis has found a good provision and distribution of different types of sport and active recreation reserve, parks and gardens, recreation trails, aquatic facilities, local streetscapes and civic spaces and nature conservation reserves.

Within each major and medium-sized township there are centralised district sports reserves and parks and gardens that support social recreation, active recreation and play and a local walking trail.

These places respond to the rural township and locally to population settlements.

The sports reserves are in very good condition following significant investment by Council, the community and State and Federal Government in improving sports fields, lighting, courts and pavilions.

Five major townships have access to an outdoor swimming pool. These facilities are in average condition. The recent technical assessment of all pools has found all pools to be in an average but serviceable condition. They all require upgrades in the next 10 years to continue the existing benefit to community.

The local play spaces are very similar and a planned approach to upgrading and diversifying play experiences is needed at renewal. There has been recent investment in diversifying play spaces and providing active recreation facilities like fitness stations in townships. J Sloans Park in Inglewood has a shaded play space and fitness station area with picnic facilities.

Each township has a network of local and regional walking and cycling trails. There has been recent investment into walking trails, with an example being the Loddon River Trail in Bridgewater that provides a lit path from the caravan park to the town centre and onto the swimming hole.

There are national parks and regional parks located throughout the Loddon Valley, whilst waterways such as the Loddon River traverse through major townships. They help profile and shape the land and mean Loddon Shire residents and visitors to the Loddon Valley can access nature-based recreation activities that deliver liveability and tourism benefits to the region. There are opportunities to continue to encourage these activities and trail links that connect community with nature.

The local streetscapes and civic spaces in Loddon Shire townships are community spaces and offer opportunities for community events and activities, for people to lunch and to socialise and they encourage walkable communities. There is an opportunity to activate these community spaces through improving amenity and celebrating cultural heritage and identity. An example of where this is occurring is the Walk this Way project at Inglewood.

Councils are not the only providers of open space, sport and recreation facilities - A partnership approach with other land managers and providers is needed

The Council is not the only provider of open space and sport and recreation facilities in Loddon Shire. There are Reserve Committees that manage the central sport and active recreation reserves. Council contract manages the operation of the five outdoor pools to a leisure services management contractor.

Bowls clubs and golf clubs with courses located on private land or Crown Land are responsible for managing these facilities. These spaces are restricted open spaces for community use.

There are other land managers, including Parks Victoria and the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation, which manage regional nature conservation reserves including National Parks and Regional Parks.

There are regional sports facilities that service Loddon Shire located in Bendigo, Echuca and Kerang.

A partnership approach with these land managers is needed to deliver a complementary and regional network of sport and active recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services to the Loddon Shire.

6. Aquatic Service Review

The planning process includes a comprehensive service review of the Aquatic Facilities within the Loddon Shire. The review includes:

- Catchment and Competitor Review
- Performance Review
- Asset Condition Review and Renewal Plan.

6.1 Current Facility Provision

Council currently supports aquatic services through the provision of five aquatic facilities. The management of the five pools is currently contracted to Belgravia Leisure, with the contract having commenced in late 2021. The facilities and their components are detailed in the following table.

Table 21: Aquatic facilities

Aquatic Facility	Location	Description
Boort Outdoor Pool	Boort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 m pool – solar heated • Toddlers pool • Infant wading pool • Basketball ring • Barbeque
Inglewood Outdoor Pool	Inglewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33m pool – solar heated • Infant wading pool • Basketball ring
Mitiamo Outdoor Pool	Mitiamo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 m pool – solar heated • Infant wading pool
Pyramid Hill Outdoor Pool	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 m pool – solar heated • Toddlers pool • Infant wading pool • Barbeque
Wedderburn Outdoor Pool	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 m pool – solar heated • Infant wading pool • Basketball ring • Cricket nets • Barbeque

6.2 Catchment Review

Leisure and sporting facility trends and benchmarking generally indicate that facilities located in regional areas have a primary catchment radius of approximately 0-15 minutes travel distance and a secondary catchment radius of 15–30-minute travel distance.

In general, approximately 75% to 85% of users will reside within a 0-15 drive time of a facility with the remaining 15% to 25% coming from areas within the 15-30-minute drive time of the facility.

The size and shape of the catchment area will be influenced by a number of factors including the range and quality of facilities and services offered, natural and built barriers i.e., highways, travel times and the availability of competing facilities. In metropolitan Melbourne, it is not uncommon for facilities to share catchment areas, particularly the secondary catchment areas.

The following map shows the primary (0-15-minute travel time) and secondary (15-30-minute travel time) catchment areas of the aquatic facilities located within Loddon Shire.

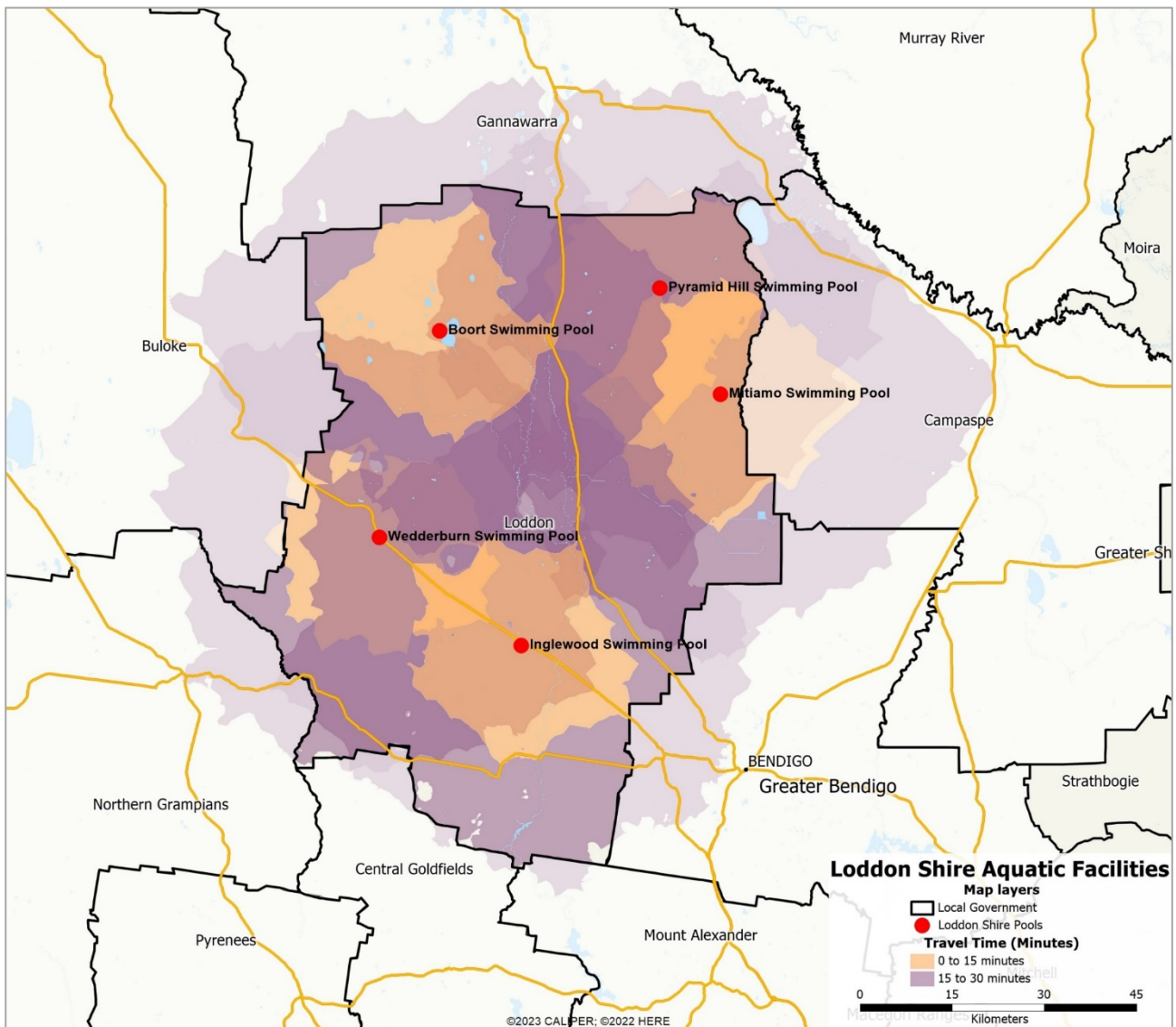


Figure 22: Loddon Shire Aquatic Facilities – 15 and 30-minute drive time catchment map

The below table shows the population catchment for the Loddon Shire Facilities according to catchment areas.

Table 22: Population of catchment areas

Facility	Primary Catchment 0–15-minute drive
Boort Outdoor Pool	1,157
Inglewood Outdoor Pool	1,848
Mitiamo Outdoor Pool	689
Pyramid Hill Outdoor Pool	972
Wedderburn Outdoor Pool	1,331

These mapping and population catchments indicate:

- There is an overlap of primary catchment zones between Pyramid Hill and Mitiamo Pools, and a significant secondary catchment overlap.
- Pyramid Hill has a secondary catchment overlap with Boort Pool.
- There is a small overlap of the primary catchment and a significant overlap of the secondary catchment areas between Wedderburn and Inglewood Pools (with a 20-minute drive time between the facilities).
- There is an overlap of secondary catchment areas between Wedderburn and Boort facilities.
- Mitiamo Pool has the smallest population within its primary catchment area of all the Loddon Shire facilities (689).
- Inglewood has the highest population within its primary catchment area of all the Loddon Shire facilities (1,848), followed by Wedderburn (1,331) and then Boort (1,157).

6.3 Competitor Review

This section provides a review of the competitors within the Loddon Shire and the surrounding LGA’s.

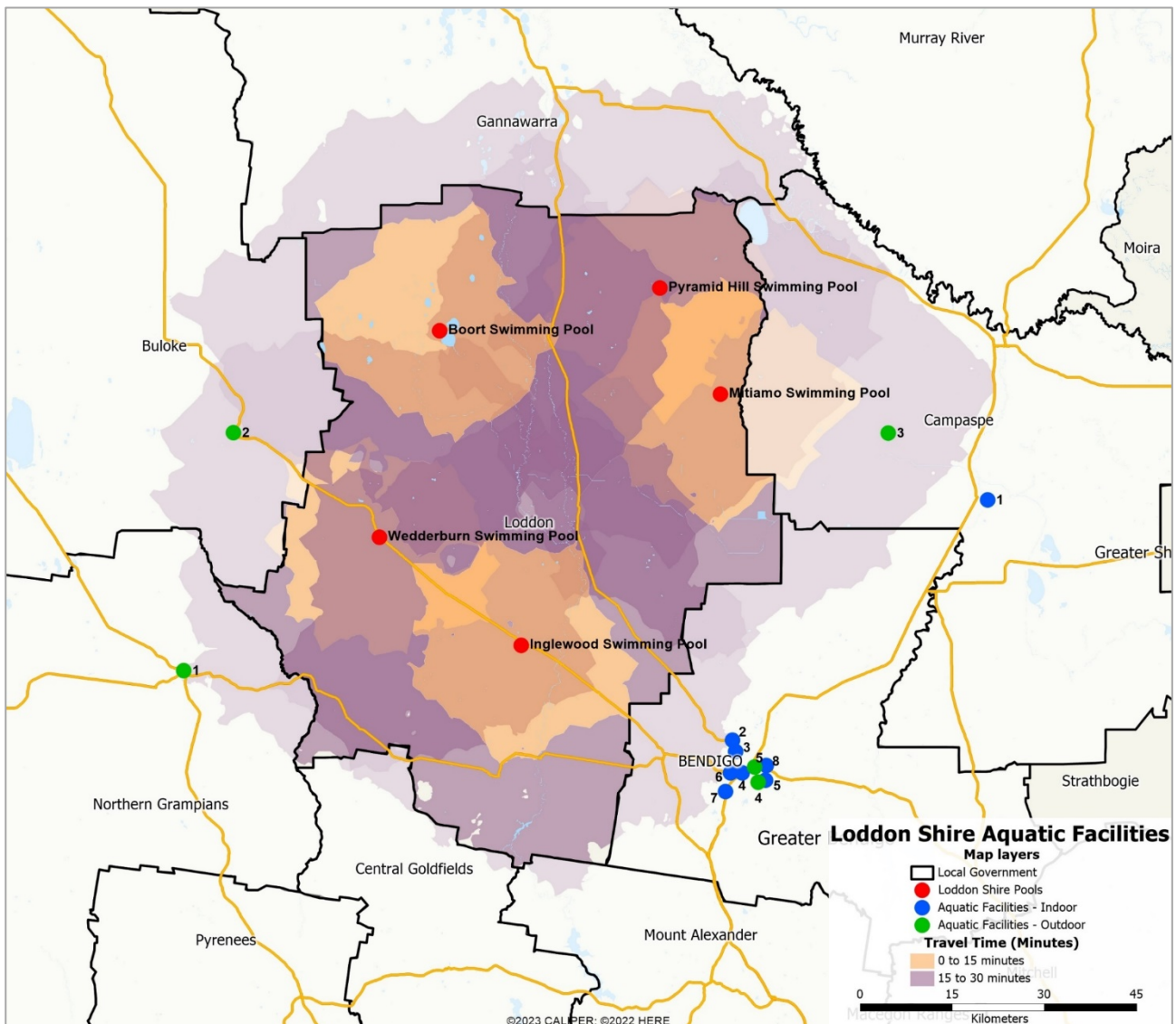


Figure 23: Aquatic Facility Competitors

The below table provides detail on the name and location of the facilities as shown in the above map.

Table 23: Aquatic Facility Competitors

	Aquatic Facilities - Indoor	Location		Aquatic Facilities - Outdoor	Location
1	Splash 'n' Learn to swim	Rochester	1	St Arnaud Swimming Pool	St Arnaud
2	Peter Krenz Leisure Centre	Bendigo	2	Charlton Swimming Pool	Charlton
3	Sloan Swim School	Bendigo	3	Lockington Pool	Burns St, Lockington
4	Paul Sadler Swimland Bendigo	Bendigo	4	Brennan Park Swimming Pool	Kennington, Bendigo
5	Harley Street Swim School	Strathdale, Bendigo	5	Bendigo East Aquatic Centre	East Bendigo
6	Swim Culture	Golden Square, Bendigo			
7	Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre	Kangaroo Flat, Bendigo			
8	Swimz Bendigo	East Bendigo			

A review of the competitors indicates:

- There are no competitors in the primary catchment areas for any of the Loddon Shire facilities.
- Charlton Swimming Pool and Lockington Pool are just outside of the secondary catchment areas for Wedderburn and Mitiamo respectively.
- All indoor aquatic facilities, both Council owned and private except for one located in Rochester, are located in and around Bendigo, it can be assumed any residents of Loddon who wish to participate in a Learn to Swim program year-round (when the outdoor pools are closed) are required to travel to Bendigo.

6.4 Attendance Review

The following details the attendance of the Loddon Shire aquatic facilities across the 2021-22 and 2022-23 seasons.

Table 24: Loddon Shire Aquatic Facilities Attendances

Facility	2021-22 Attendances	2022-23 Attendances
Boort Outdoor Pool	5,745	5,893
Inglewood Outdoor Pool	2,135	2,198
Mitiamo Outdoor Pool	1,854	1,650
Pyramid Hill Outdoor Pool	2,522	2,789
Wedderburn Outdoor Pool	2,672	2,736
Total Attendances	14,928	15,266

The graph below shows the attendances at the Loddon Shire aquatic facilities across 2021-22 and 2022-23 seasons.

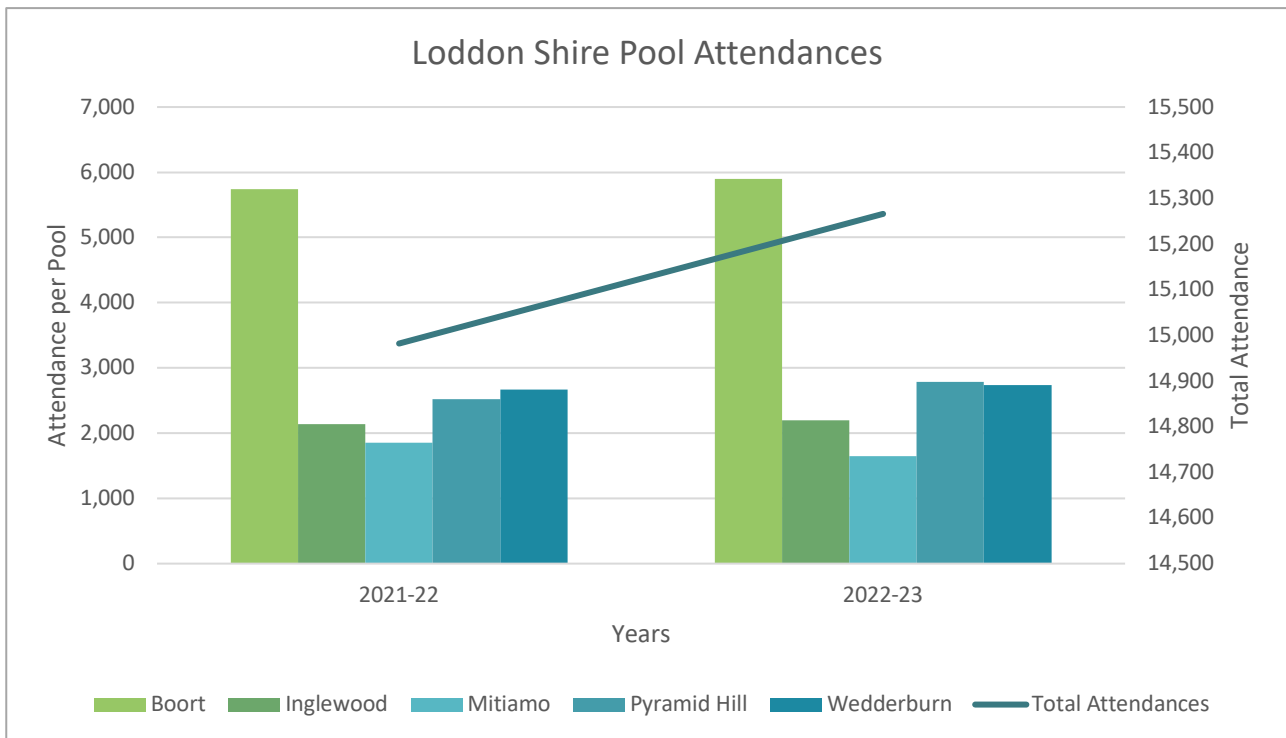


Figure 24: Loddon Shire Pool Attendances

The graph shows there was an increase in overall attendances between 2021-22 and 2022-23 of 338. This is an increase of 2.26% on the previous year.

An analysis of the attendances for each facility shows the following:

- **Boort Outdoor Pool** - There was a 2.57% increase in attendances from 2021-22 to 2022-23 seasons from 5,745 to 5,893, which equates to 148 visits.
- **Inglewood Outdoor Pool** - There was a 2.95% increase in attendances from 2021-22 to 2022-23 seasons from 2,135 to 2,198, which equates to 63 visits.
- **Mitiamo Outdoor Pool** - There was an 11% decrease in attendances from 2021-22 to 2022-23 seasons from 1,854 to 1,650, which equates to 204 visits.
- **Pyramid Hill Outdoor Pool** - There was a 10.59% increase in attendances from 2021-22 to 2022-23 seasons from 2,522 to 2,789, which equates to 267 visits.
- **Wedderburn Outdoor Pool** - There was a 2.39% increase in attendances from 2021-22 to 2022-23 seasons from 2,672 to 2,736, which equates to 64 visits.

6.4.1 Council Costs

The following table details the cost to Council to provide the Loddon Shire aquatic facilities. This data was provided by Council Officers.

Table 25: Loddon Shire Aquatic Facilities Costs to Council

Council Costs	2021-22	2022-23
Net Operating Performance	\$47,928	\$6,064
Contract Management Fee	-\$529,900*	-\$416,886
Utilities	-\$74,825	-\$78,223
Asset Maintenance	-\$95,488	-\$86,213
Council Salaries and associated costs	-\$117,068	-\$116,513
Miscellaneous	-\$7,499	-\$7,289
Pool Community Income	\$7,448	\$650
Total Council Subsidy	-\$769,404	-\$698,410
Attendances	14,315	15,266
Subsidy Per Visit	-\$52	-\$46

*Includes Contract Transition Fee of \$97,495

The graph below shows the cost to Council and attendances of the Loddon Shire aquatic facilities across the 2021-22 and 2022-23 seasons.

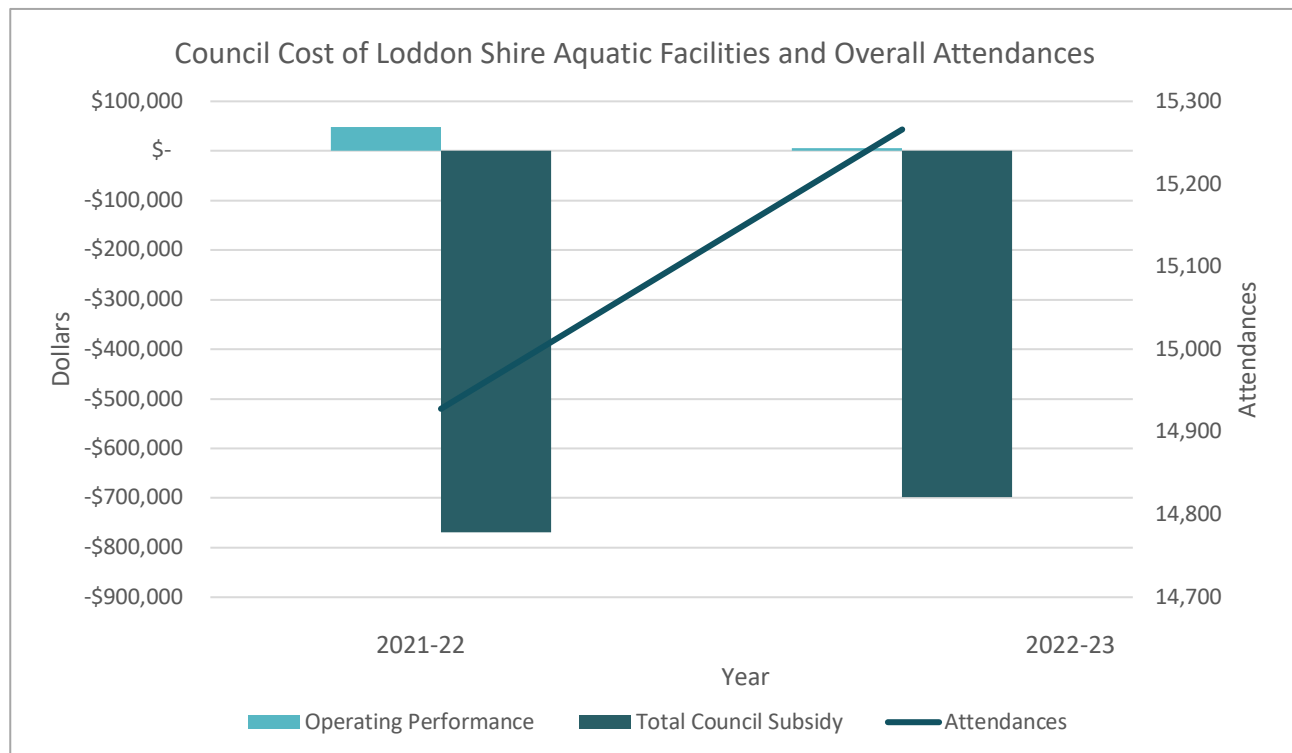


Figure 25: Loddon Shire Aquatic Facilities Costs to Council and Attendances 2022-23 and 2022-23

A review of the costs to Council indicates:

- The total Council subsidy decreased from 2021-22 to 2022-23 from \$769,404 to \$698,410. This, however, can be attributed to the Contract Transition Fee of \$97,495 included within the Contract Management Fee for 2021-22. If this was excluded from the calculations, the 2021-22 figure would be \$671,090.

- The highest cost to Council is the contract management fee for the external management company to operate the pools on Council’s behalf.
- Utilities were the only cost that increased from 2021-22, with surprisingly, all other costs to Council decreasing in 2022-23.
- Due to the low patronage numbers across the Loddon Shire aquatic facilities, the subsidy per visit average across the two seasons is \$47. This is an extremely high subsidy and well above the industry benchmark.

6.5 Asset Management Review

This section provides a high-level overview of a 10-year Asset Renewal Program and indicative associated costs for the Loddon Shire aquatic facilities. The information provided within this section comes from JWC Engineers, who conducted onsite inspections of each of the facilities and have provided a number of reports from 2022 to 2024 to Council Officers detailing current asset conditions and the below-proposed works.

6.5.1 Current Asset Conditions

All facilities are known or understood to be constructed circa 1960’s, or possibly into the 1970’s. The current conditions across the facilities are summarised below:

Table 26: Loddon Shire Aquatic Facilities Current Asset Condition

Asset	Condition
Main Pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The shells generally are in average condition structurally, commensurate with their age, but there are specific structural issues at all (except Mitiamo), some are legacy (uplift) and some current (corrosion): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Boort – extensive corrosion around main pool hob where cut for wet-deck conversion. Legacy uplift cracks in floor; major crack in corner of Program pool. – Inglewood – legacy shrinkage and uplift cracks in floor. – Wedderburn – some cracks in walls and floor but not extensive. Some corrosion in hob. – Pyramid Hill – extensive erosion and corrosion in the hob/gutter of both main and medium pools. Legacy uplift movement/cracks in main pool floor.
Legacy and uplift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically, after an uplift event there can be defined crack patterns in the floor, hydrostatic valves if fitted may ‘pop’ (but noting that the reliability of decades old valves should not be relied upon implicitly), differential settlement can occur, or individual floor slabs may move vertically. • All are evidence of the distress that the shell has suffered but evidence also shows that most pools can nonetheless remain operating for many years. • The key long-term issues are leakage through displaced joints, cracks or pipework, and the development of corrosion of reinforcing steel.
Depth Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily this comprises relatively new pole mounted signage around the pool concourse. • There is some legacy signage on hobs, but many letters/numerals are worn away and there is a mixture of imperial and metric depths.
Treatment Plant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All current water treatment plants are replacement upgrades of the original systems. Most appear to be circa 1990’s era. • Wedderburn’s treatment plant retains the original brick plant room which houses a few operational elements. This brick building is in poor condition with plans to demolish.
Chemical dosing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sodium hypochlorite and hydrochloric acid is used at all sites. This is conventional and used in many regional pools. All sites have modern automatic dosing control systems. Key notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Some nesting bund tanks surrounding the hypo tanks are not high enough.

Asset	Condition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Proper storage of acid containers needs to be upgraded at several sites. – All sites need an EPA complying spill containment slab for ‘hypo’ tanker parking. Conversion to calcium hypochlorite dosing could be an alternative and avoiding spill containment requirements, but it would necessitate further study. It is an option actively considered by other Council’s in this situation. It has a longer shelf life but is a more expensive consumable.
Backwash discharge to sewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All towns except for Mitiamo have reticulated sewer. Therefore, backwash from the four other sites should be connected to sewer and be formalised under a Trade Waste Agreement (TWA) with the sewer authority (Coliban Water).
Backwash Tanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn have old concrete tanks embedded fully or entirely into the ground. • The pump discharge systems from both should be investigated to ensure compliance with the TWA.
Separate Toddler pool filtration system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only Wedderburn and Inglewood have dedicated Toddler’s pool system (refer to individual reports). • At Boort the Toddlers Pool is combined with the Program pool onto one system and this is considered acceptable in this case. • Separate systems are recommended and preferable.
Disabled Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only Inglewood has dedicated access provisions (platform lift and hoist) into the main pool. • For the other pools, community benefits will need to be considered by Council in deciding on the scope and scale of any specific access system into pools.

6.5.2 Overall Asset Renewal Costs

The table below provides a 10-year overview of indicative costs associated with recommended works from the audits conducted by JWC Engineers.

Table 27: 10 Year Asset Renewal Plan Estimates

Facility	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Years 6-10	Cost over 10 years
Boort	\$53,560		\$150,797	\$68,656			\$273,013
Inglewood	\$46,350						\$46,350
Mitiamo				\$50,648	\$37,097		\$87,745
Pyramid Hill			\$49,173			\$439,412	\$488,585
Wedderburn		\$366,010	\$34,967				\$400,977
Annual Total	\$99,910	\$366,010	\$234,937	\$119,304	\$37,097	\$439,412	\$1,296,670

GST excluded.

Cost escalations included from year 2.

Allowances included in the above table: Prelim/margin 15%, locality allowance 3%, design contingency 5%, construction contingency 25%.

Detailed Individual Facility Works and Costs

The table on the next page details the proposed 10-year Asset Renewal Plan and indicative associated costs. The items listed include renewal and refurbishment items, those that have been found needed for the ongoing operations of the pool. These works do not include regular Council maintenance program items (e.g., pool painting and expansion joint reinstatement).

There are a number of items that have been identified for renewal but have been excluded from the above table. They are:

- **Boort Outdoor Pool – Disabled Change Facilities** – such facilities are required to match with the above listed DA access into the pools, but Council advised that they would be done under a separate project with separate funding.
- **'Backwash Tanks/TWA'** has been removed and is suggested to be addressed as a maintenance item. Tanks are provided and the remaining task is for Council to ensure an appropriate TWA is in place and that the discharge to sewer complies.
- **'Depth Signage'** has been removed and is suggested to be addressed as a maintenance item. Relativity new signs on posts are already in place. Old sign writing on the hobs needs to be re-painted or even painted over. [Note: depth signage requirements are addressed in RLSS GSPO and are based on a risk assessment for each pool, they are not prescribed requirements].
- **Hypo Tank Bunding** has been removed from original lists and is suggested to be addressed simply and cost effectively by limiting the FULL capacity of the tank to match the bund volume and bund height to meet crest locus criteria. The FULL capacity level could be enforced by relocating the overflow to this lower level.

Table 28: 10-Year Asset Renewal Estimates

Location	Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Years 7-10	Total
Boort	Disabled Access Ramp				\$36,016				\$36,016
	Hypo Spill Containment Bay	\$53,560							\$53,560
	Disabled Access hoist into main pool				\$32,640				\$32,640
	Hob Remedial Work			\$132,220					\$132,220
	Shade Structure Mast			\$13,113					\$13,113
	Intermediate Pool - Crack			\$5,464					\$5,464
Total		\$53,560		\$150,797	\$68,656				\$273,013
Inglewood	Hypo Spill Containment Bay	\$46,350							\$46,350
Total		\$46,350							\$46,350
Mitiamo	Disabled Access hoist into pool					\$37,097			\$37,097
	Hypo Spill Containment Bay				\$50,648				\$50,648
Total					\$50,648	\$37,097			\$87,745
Pyramid Hill	Disabled Access hoist into pool						\$38,210		\$38,210
	Main & Program. Hob Remedial/ Wet deck conversion						\$401,202		\$401,202
	Hypo Spill Containment Bay			\$49,173					\$49,173
Total				\$49,173			\$439,412		\$488,585
Wedderburn	Plant room replacement		\$306,600						\$306,600
	Hypo Spill Containment Bay		\$59,410						\$59,410
	Disabled Access hoist into pool			\$34,967					\$34,967
Total			\$366,010	\$34,967					\$400,977
Overall Total		\$99,910	\$366,010	\$234,937	\$119,304	\$37,097	\$439,412		\$1,296,670

6.6 Key Findings of Aquatic Service Review

A detailed review of the asset condition and operational performance of Loddon Shire's aquatic service found the asset condition and ongoing operation of the outdoor pools is a significant concern.

All pools operate with low patronage and now cost the Council \$47 per visit.

The aquatic service review identifies the Council subsidising the use of the aquatic facilities by \$47 per visit with an annual cost of \$700,000 and attracting 15,000 visits.

When compared to other outdoor pools in the region, Boort is operating at a moderately high visitation. Pyramid Hill, Wedderburn and Inglewood are operating at a low patronage. This is consistent with small township pools in the area. Mitiamo is very low. Mitiamo had the least number of attendances with 3,504, followed by Inglewood (4,333), Pyramid Hill (5,311) Wedderburn (5,408) and Boort has the most attendances with 11,638.

Aquatic facility management and operations are subject to increasing costs across the industry. The increasing cost of qualified staffing, chemical supply and delivery are major contributing factors for rural facilities. Loddon Shire Council has also recently considered a proposed increased management fee by the current operator, whilst undesirable, represents market rates for pool management and operations. Staff (lifeguards) and chemicals (water treatment) are the major factors in managing operational risks and if underfunded, the risk to the Council and community increase.

Loddon Shire seasonal (October to March) pool attendances have continued to decline and when considered against the increasing costs, the Council will need to consider the benefit versus the cost of providing an aquatic service in the future.

The Council recognises that the Loddon Shire community value having access to swimming pool facilities and despite declining attendances there is strong support for them. Unfortunately, the high cost of swimming pools is placing considerable pressure on Council's capacity to fund them amongst other competing community and infrastructure needs. A strategic approach to addressing this issue is critical.

Mitiamo and Pyramid Hill pools have overlapping catchments and Echuca and Bendigo indoor pools service Loddon Shire.

Boort is the main tourism centre, and Wedderburn is the main service centre of Loddon, which has the largest population catchments. Inglewood pool and facilities are in the best condition, and its location is central to communities in the south, including Bridgewater, Newbridge and Serpentine. This area is identified for future growth.

Most residents can access a pool within an approximately 20 to 30-minute drive. Two outdoor pool facilities are located within the secondary catchment areas for Wedderburn (Charlton Swimming Pool and St Arnaud Swimming Pool) and Mitiamo (Lockington Swimming Pool).

Loddon Shire pools are not the only pools servicing Loddon residents. Bendigo, Dunolly, and Echuca pools also service Loddon communities. As the facilities in Loddon Shire are all outdoor seasonal pools, it can be assumed that if residents wish to participate in aquatic programs, i.e., learn-to-swim lessons or swim year-round, they will drive to Bendigo or Echuca indoor aquatic facilities.

The overlap of primary and secondary catchment zones between Pyramid Hill and Mitiamo Pools is significant, with both facilities servicing the catchment populations. The close proximity to each other may impact the operational performance and sustainability of these facilities.

The overlap of Wedderburn and Inglewood Pools is also within the primary and secondary catchment zone (15-to-30-minute drive time). However, both have the highest primary catchment populations of 1,012 and 1,393 respectively.

\$1.3 million is needed over the next 10 years to maintain the current aquatic service.

The Structural Engineer (JWS Engineers) has provided a detailed Technical Assessment of the aquatic facilities and identified the asset management (renewal) requirements of the facilities in the next 10 years. The total cost of these works is approximately \$1.3 million over 10 years to maintain the current benefit.

This funding only maintains the assets and does not provide any additional benefit to the community or address dignified accessibility and depth concerns with pools. The pools do not meet current industry standards and are now over 50 years old.

The asset management costs do not include regular Council maintenance program items (e.g., pool painting and expansion joint reinstatement). These items are still required to be completed, and therefore, consideration must be made as to how these will be funded and included in future budget planning.

Pyramid Hill has the highest estimated renewal plan cost at a total of \$488,585. This is followed by Wedderburn (\$400,977), Boort (\$273,013), Mitiamo (87,745) and Inglewood has the lowest of (\$46,350).

The current "management model" for aquatics in Loddon is effective, yet unavoidably expensive. The current financial input of public money has become unsustainable. The need to explore and evaluate other potential partnership management models is critical and must occur over the next three years in order to preserve any chance of retaining the current number of aquatic facilities beyond 2028.

7. Stakeholder Engagement

What issues and opportunities were identified by the community?

The planning process included a comprehensive community engagement process including interviewing land managers and surveying community, sport, and recreation groups.

The engagement process involved:

- Community survey
- Sports club/association survey
- Community drop-in sessions
- Public submissions
- Stakeholder interviews.

The following provides a summary of the key issues, opportunities and constraints identified through the stakeholder engagement process. The data will be used to help guide the strategic directions and key recommendations for the Open Space, Recreation and Aquatic Strategy

7.1 Previous Engagement Findings

This section summarises the recent engagement findings from the Activating Open Space Strategy 2019-2024 and Swimming Pool Improvement Plan 2022.

Activating Open Space Strategy 2019-2024 Engagement Findings

The Activating Open Space Strategy 2019-2024 conducted an extensive consultation process to identify ideas for activating Loddon Shire's public open spaces. Across all consultation methods, 273 residents responded with their ideas.

There were various ways through which people from Wedderburn and Boort P-12 schools provided their feedback. 44 respondents participated in the consultation with young people. Additionally, three listening posts were set up at Wedderburn IGA Supermarket, Calivil Recreation Reserve and Inglewood Recreation Reserve, and 95 people responded to them. Seven people participated in the Seniors Forum, while the Townscape Services staff meeting received feedback from four respondents and the Technical Services staff meeting got feedback from one respondent. Lastly, 122 respondents shared their feedback through the Community Survey.

Residents who completed a survey identified the following ideas that would encourage them to utilise public open spaces more often:

- More events, e.g. movies in the park, festivals, markets, etc
- More or better walking/cycling paths and linkages
- More shade
- Outdoor gym equipment
- More seats and shelters
- More/better play equipment
- Picnic tables
- Drinking fountains
- Physical activity programs, e.g. outdoor tai chi, yoga, Zumba dance.

Swimming Pool Improvement Plan 2022 Engagement Findings

An engagement process was undertaken as part of the plan that included a survey of pool users and the general community.

A total of 87 pool user survey responses were received. Key responses were:

- 88% wanted extended opening hours.
- 81% would like more activities, particularly more inflatable days.
- 76% indicated they like more recreation/play equipment.
- 72% wanted more information about services and programs.
- Introduction of early morning lap swimming.
- Introduction of morning adult-only time and hosting water aerobics/strength training.
- Re-introduction of diving boards for children and young people.
- More shade.
- Upgrade change rooms, showers, toilets and kiosks.
- Install water play splash parks.

A total of 46 community survey responses were received. Key responses were:

- 70% of respondents frequented a Loddon Shire pool.
- Seven respondents said they would visit more often if an adult-only lap swimming or water aerobics/strength training class was offered.
- Six respondents wanted more events.
- Four respondents wanted extended hours.
- Several respondents wanted more information about services and programs.

7.2 Community Survey Findings

This section summarises the key findings from the community survey conducted online. This survey took place between 04 December 2023 to 09 April 2024. A total of **59 people** completed the survey.

7.2.1 Respondent Profile

The following information provides details on who responded to the survey.



The majority (59%) of respondents were female.



Age group that represents the highest percentage of the respondents is 35 to 49 years (42%) followed by 60 to 69 years (21%).



The predominant postcodes where respondents lived were Bridgewater on Loddon 3516 (9 respondents), Pyramid Hill 3575 (9 respondents), Boort 3537 (8 respondents) and Wedderburn 3518 (8 respondents).

Figure 26: Survey Respondent Characteristics

The following tables summarise the user survey respondents' sample for Loddon Shire.

Table 29: User Survey Respondent Sample

Category	Sub-group	Number	%
Gender	Women	35	59%
	Men	17	29%
	Non-binary	0	0
	Prefer not to specify	5	12%
Age Range	Under 17	0	0
	18 to 24 years	0	0
	25 to 34 years	8	14%
	35 to 49 years	24	42%
	50 to 59 years	9	16%
	60 to 69 years	12	21%
	70 to 84 years	3	7%
	85 and over	0	0

Table 30: User Survey Population Statistics

Suburb	Count
Boort	8
Bridgewater on Loddon	9
Wedderburn	8
Serpentine	3
Pyramid Hill	9
Newbridge	2
Calivil	2

A review of the survey respondents indicates that:

- More females (59%) than males (29%) responded to the survey.
- The age group that represents the highest percentage of respondents is 35 to 49 years (42%) followed by 60 to 69 years (21%).
- The predominant postcodes where respondents lived were Bridgewater on Loddon 3516 (9 respondents), Pyramid Hill 3575 (9 respondents), Boort 3537 (8 respondents) and Wedderburn 3518 (8 respondents).

7.2.2 Aquatic Facilities in Loddon Shire

This section focuses on the survey questions relating to the aquatic facilities in Loddon Shire, the usage and residents' feedback on the condition of the facilities as well as suggestions for future improvements.

Usage times

The following chart indicates the number of respondents using the aquatic facilities at various time slots.

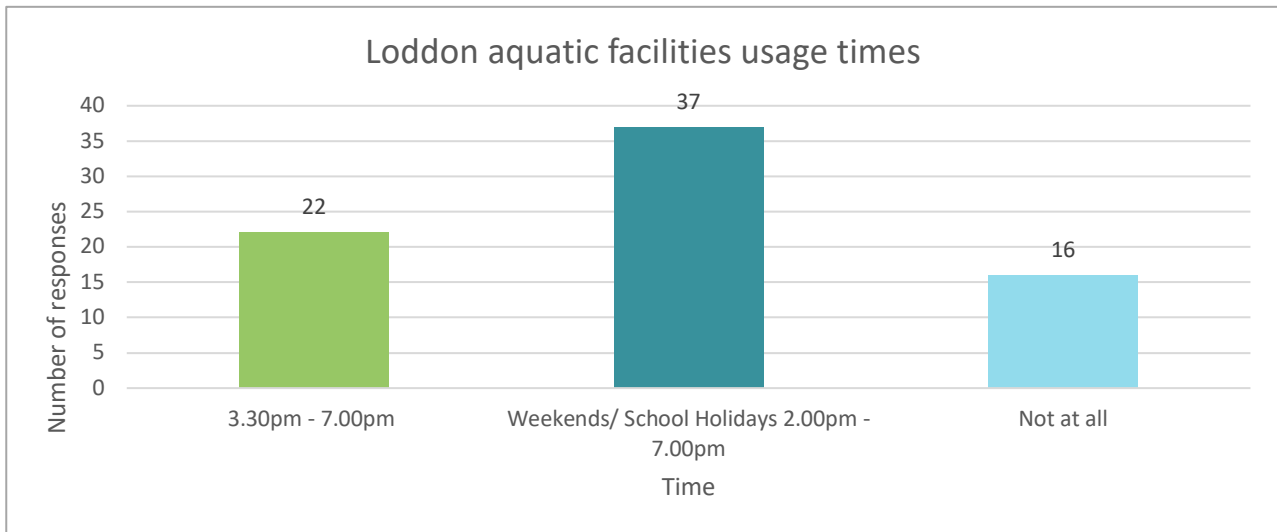


Figure 27: Loddon Aquatic Facilities usage times

The majority of pool use occurred during school holidays and on weekends (37 respondents). Approximately twenty-two respondents reported visiting an aquatic facility between 3.30 pm and 7.00 pm on weekdays.

Travel to aquatic facilities in Loddon Shire

The following table summarises how respondents travelled to the aquatic facilities and where they travelled from.

Table 31: Transport to aquatic facilities

Category	Sub-Group	Number	% of Respondents
Location of Origin	Home	46	77.9%
	Work	8	13.5%
	School	13	22%
	Other	4	6.7%
Mode of Transport	Bike	4	6.7%
	Car	44	74.5%
	Walk	12	20.3%
	Other	2	3.3%

Most survey respondents indicated that they travel to the pools from their home (77.9%), followed by school (22%) and work (13.5%).

The majority of respondents travelled by car (74.5%). Walking was also a popular method of travel (20.3%) indicating that the majority of residents are prepared to travel by car to access a facility.

Frequency of visitation to aquatic facility

The following graph indicates the frequency of visitation to the aquatic facilities in Loddon Shire.

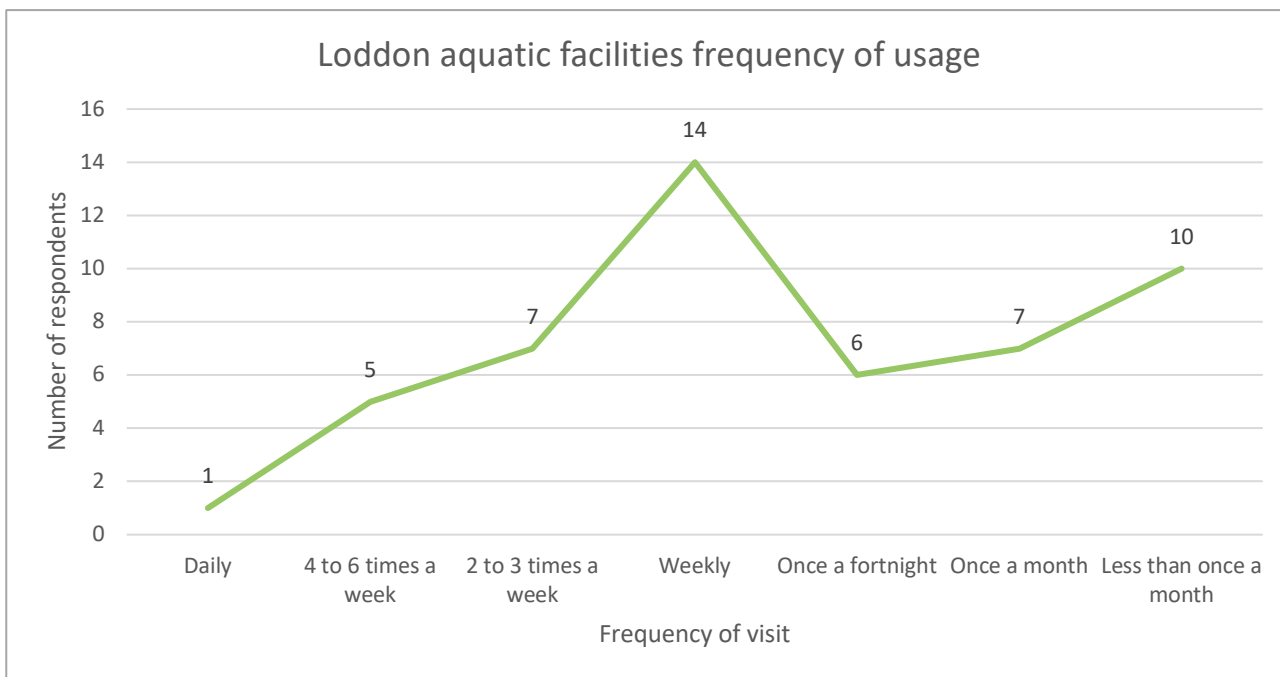


Figure 28: Loddon aquatic facilities frequency of usage

The results indicate that the respondents are regular users of aquatic facilities in Loddon Shire. The majority of the respondents used the pool once a week or more (27 respondents) with the most common being weekly visits (14 respondents). Ten respondents reported only using swimming pools once a month.

Reason to visit aquatic facilities in Loddon Shire

The following table indicates the reasons that residents chose to visit the aquatic facilities in Loddon Shire.

Table 32: Reasons to visit aquatic facilities

Main reasons to visit	Count	Percentage
Close to home	35	59.3%
To use outdoor pool	18	30.5%
Friends/family use it	15	25.4%
Close to work/school	12	20.3
Good facilities	9	15.2%
To attend aquatic program	3	5%
Low entry charges	2	3%
To attend swim club program	2	3%
To attend health and fitness program	3	5%
To attend leisure water/fun pools	3	5%
To attend learn to swim program	2	3%
Other (please specify)	7	11.8%

The survey results indicate that the most popular reason to visit the pool was proximity to home (59.3%) and to use an outdoor pool (30.5%) and the third most popular reason being to use the pool with friends and family (25.4%).

Reasons to not use aquatics facilities in Loddon Shire

The following table indicates the reasons that residents chose not to visit the aquatic facilities in Loddon Shire.

Table 33: Reasons not to visit aquatic facilities

Reasons to not visit an aquatic facility	Count	Percentage
Activity not available	7	16.2%
Go to river or open water	7	16.2%
Too busy	4	9.3%
Opening times don't suit	3	6.9%
No disabled access	3	6.9%
Don't know what is available	2	3.3%
Don't like swimming	2	3.3%
Not interested	2	3.3%
Prefer indoor pools	2	3.3%
Too old	2	3.3%
Work commitments	2	3.3%
Other	7	16.2%

Of the 43 respondents that indicated that they have not used an aquatic facility in the past, 16.2% indicated that the activity they were seeking was not available and 16.2% respondents preferred swimming in rivers or open water.

Aquatics facilities used outside of Loddon Shire

The following chart indicates what other facilities outside of the Loddon Shire that residents use.

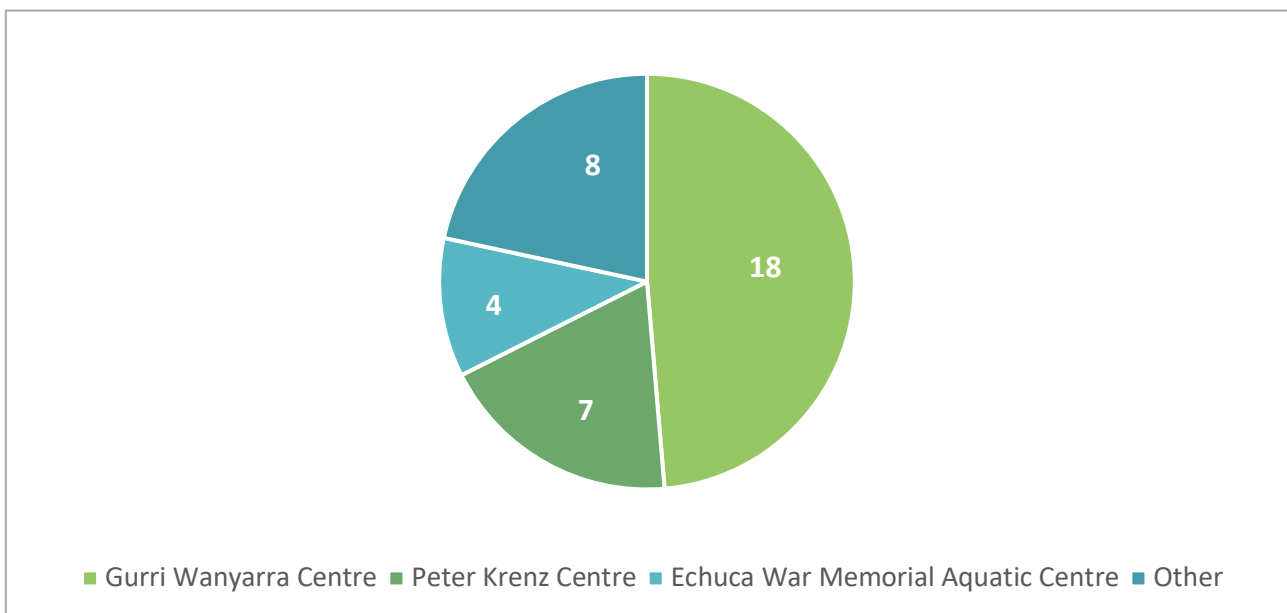


Figure 29: Visits to aquatic facilities outside Loddon Shire

Of the respondents who reported using an aquatics facility outside of Loddon Shire, the Gurri Wanyarra Centre, located in Bendigo (Kangaroo Flat), was the most popular with 18 respondents indicating they had visited the Centre, followed by the Peter Krenz Centre also located in Bendigo (Eaglehawk) and the Echuca War Memorial Aquatic Centre. Other pools used include the Dunolly Outdoor Pool and Kerang Outdoor Pool.

Main activities at visits to aquatic centre

The following activities were identified as the most popular among residents that make use of the pools.

Table 34: Activities undertaken at the pool

Activities	Count
Take child to pool	15
Recreation swimming/fun	14
Cool down from hot weather	12
Lap swim/fitness	11
Rehabilitation programs	8
Spectator	7
Group health and fitness classes	5

Main activities at the aquatic facilities include taking children to the pools (15 respondents), swimming for fun or recreation (14 respondents) and cooling down from hot weather (12 respondents).

Use of aquatic facilities in Loddon Shire

The following graph indicates the usage of the individual aquatic facilities in Loddon Shire. The criteria used was:

- Never Used
- Used Sometimes/Also Used
- Used Most.

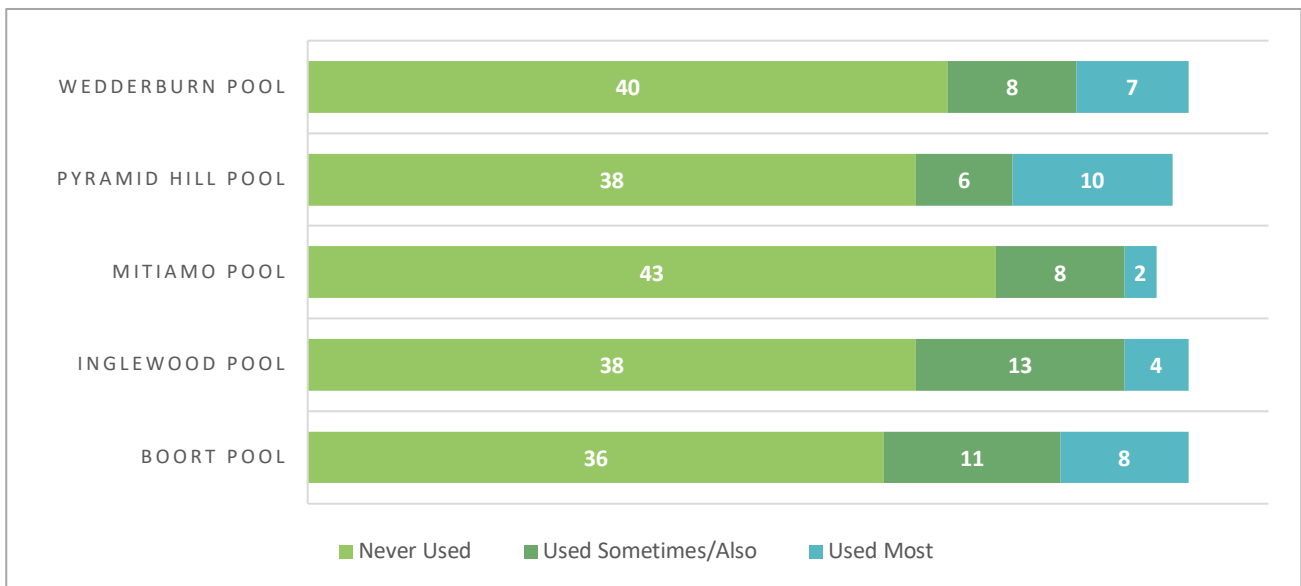


Figure 30: Usage of aquatics facilities in Loddon Shire

Pyramid Hill Pool was identified as the most used pool, followed by Boort Pool. Residents also used Inglewood Pool. Mitiamo Pool was the least used, followed by Wedderburn Pool

Rating of aquatic facilities in Loddon Shire

The respondents rated the aquatic facilities they used based on their level of satisfaction.

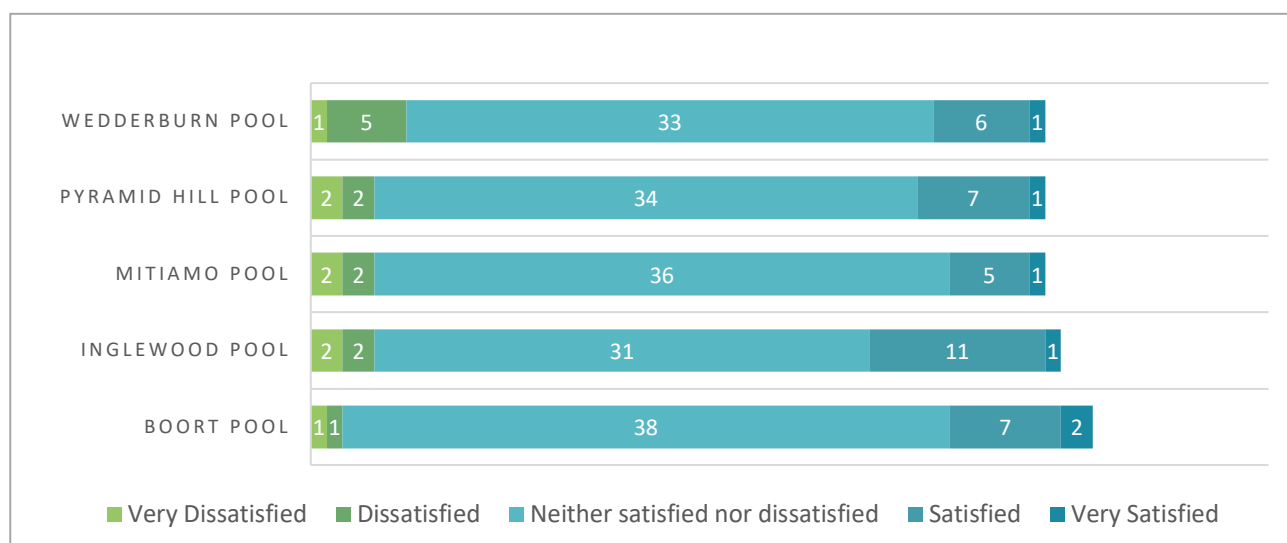


Figure 31: Rating of aquatic facilities in Loddon Shire

Inglewood Pool was rated the highest with 12 respondents indicating they were either “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the facility. Inglewood pool was followed by Boort pool with 9 votes of either “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied”. Wedderburn Pool had the most votes for either “Dissatisfied” or “Very Dissatisfied”.

Future visitation

Approximately 83.6% of the respondents indicated that they would make greater use of Loddon Shire aquatic centres in the future while 16.4% of the respondents indicated that would not make use or greater use in the future.

The following table indicates the key services or opportunities that would encourage greater use in the future.

Table 35: Improvement areas

Improvement areas	Count	Percentage
Health and fitness Centre	22	37.2%
Longer opening hours	20	33.8%
Warm water pool for therapy/rehabilitation	19	32.2%
More variety of activities/programs	14	23.7%
Health related programs	14	23.7
Larger/improved learn to swim pool	13	22%
Improved learn to swim programs	12	20%
Gym/weights facilities	9	15.2%
Cleaner more hygienic facilities	7	11.8%
Membership packages/discounts	6	10.1%
Other	22	37.2%

Improvement areas highlighted by respondents include enhancing the Health and Fitness Centre (37.2%), extending opening hours (33.8%), introducing a warm water pool for therapy/rehabilitation (32.2%), offering a greater variety of activities/programs (23.7%), and implementing health-related programs (23.7%).

Summary of feedback on aquatic facilities

- The main reasons for choosing aquatic facilities are proximity to home and the availability of outdoor pools, emphasising the importance of accessibility and outdoor recreational options for the community.
- The presence of friends and family using the facilities also plays a significant role in encouraging visitation.
- Activities such as taking children to the pool and recreational swimming are highly popular, indicating the family-oriented nature of aquatic facility use.
- A large number 83.6% of respondents plan to use the aquatic facilities more in the future, indicating a growing demand for aquatic programs and services.
- There is a clear demand for improving health and fitness centres, introducing warm water therapy pools, and enhancing learn-to-swim programs.
- Extending facility operating hours is as a key improvement area, highlighting the need for more flexible and accessible service timings.
- Diversifying activity and program offerings, including health-related programs, was identified as essential for catering to a broader range of community interests.
- The results underscore the importance of a community-centric approach in designing and maintaining aquatic facilities, emphasising accessibility, family-friendly activities, and social connections.
- Ensuring consistent facility quality across all locations is vital to meeting the diverse needs and expectations of the community.
- Anticipating and planning for increased facility use and addressing improvement areas proactively can help Loddon Shire meet the evolving demands of its residents effectively.

7.2.3 Sports and Active Recreation in Loddon Shire

This section focuses on the survey questions relating to sport and recreation activities and facilities in Loddon Shire, as well as suggestions for future improvements.

Participation in sports and recreation activities

Residents were asked about their participation frequency in organised and non-organised indoor and outdoor sports or recreational activities. They were asked to select between once a week, once a month, once every six months, once a year, less often than once a year and never.

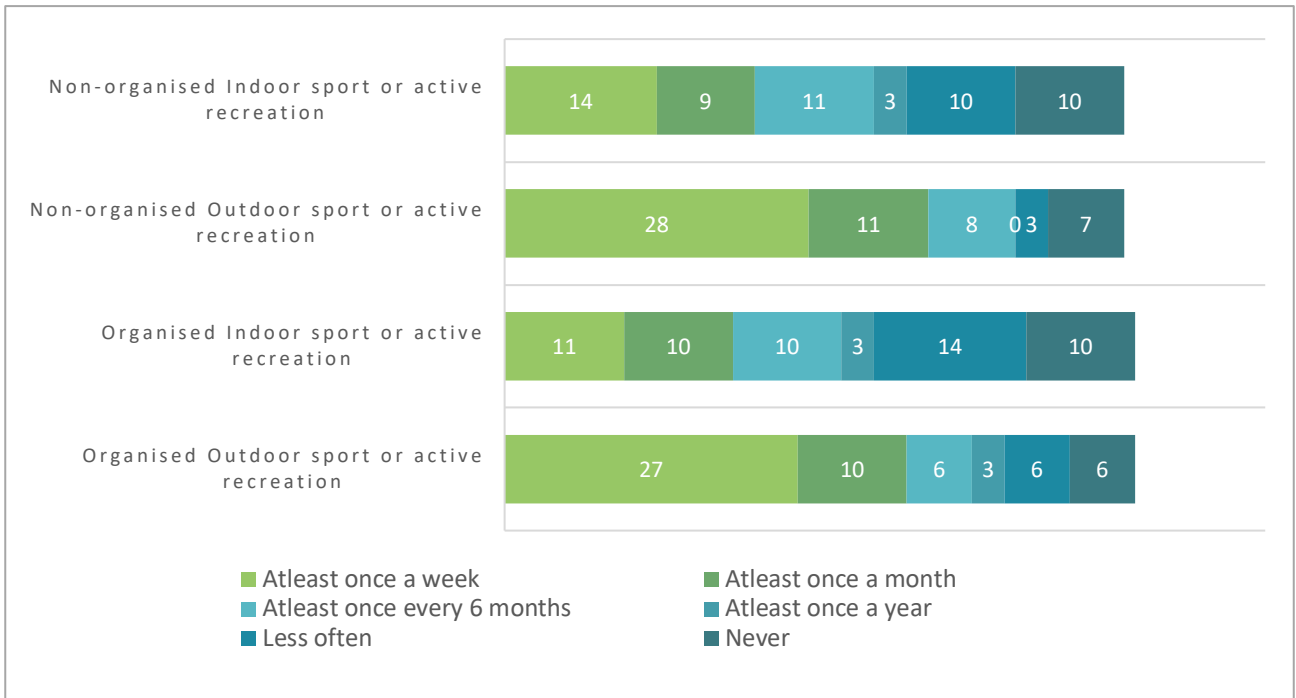


Figure 32: Participation frequency

The categories with the highest participation were seen in non-organised outdoor sport or active recreation, which includes sports such as walking and hiking (28 respondents) and organised outdoor sport or active recreation such as football and cricket (27 respondents).

Loddon Shire sports and active recreation membership

Approximately 71% of the respondents reported being a member of a sport club or association in Loddon Shire. Approximately 9% were not members of any club.

Of the respondents who reported being a member of a sport club, the following sports were the most popular:

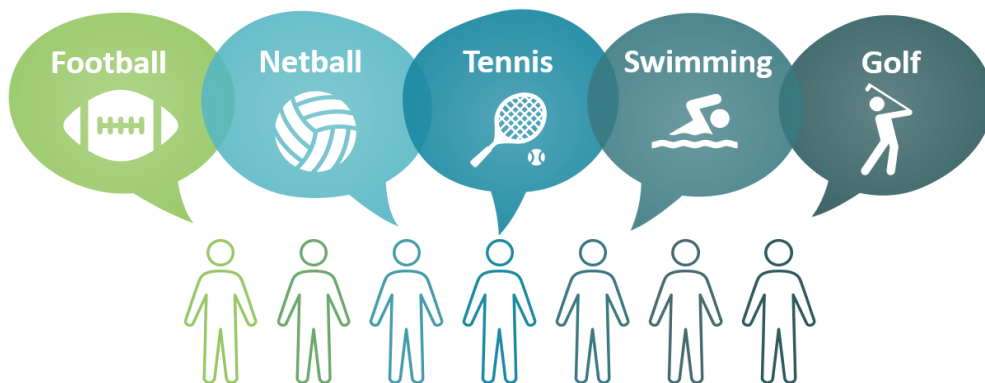


Figure 33: Most popular club-based participation

Satisfaction with current provision

Using a five-point rating system, survey respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the current sport and active recreation provision in Loddon Shire.

Table 36: Satisfaction with current provisions in Loddon Shire

Sport/Active recreation	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Outdoor sport fields	3	3	5	39	8
Sport courts	1	5	9	33	10
Sports greens	1	1	18	25	12
Golf courses	3	6	26	20	1
Riding sports facilities	11	24	20	2	0
Walking and riding tracks and trails	6	15	18	19	0
Fitness stations	8	13	17	18	2
Play spaces	9	17	17	14	1
Other active recreation facilities	9	20	26	2	0
Parks and gardens	9	11	19	17	2
Water sport facilities	3	11	13	26	4
Sport and active recreation activities for children	12	15	25	5	0
Sport and active recreation activities for young people	6	18	24	10	0
Sport and active recreation activities for adults	6	10	25	16	1
Sport and active recreation activities older adults	6	11	27	12	2
Other	6	6	18	2	0

Respondents who reported feeling “Dissatisfied” or “Very Dissatisfied” were asked to elaborate further. Common themes from the feedback include:

- Infrastructure and facilities:** Residents expressed concerns about the outdated and worn-out facilities in Loddon Shire. Specifically, the changing rooms at Boort Park need renovation to meet modern standards. Additionally, there is a strong demand for an indoor pool that would offer year-round access to aquatic activities. Many public areas lack shade, making them less appealing for community use. There are also calls for marked mountain bike trails and well-maintained skate parks.
- Sport and social recreation for young people:** The community has highlighted a significant gap in recreational spaces tailored to teenagers and young adults. There's a clear need for modular play areas, skateparks, and basketball courts. The absence of these facilities limits the recreational options available to young people, leading to calls for more diverse activities beyond traditional sports like netball and football. Additionally, residents have suggested climbing walls and outdoor performing or visual arts facilities to cater to a broader range of interests.
- Public engagement and awareness:** Residents pointed out the lack of regular fitness spaces available for local participation. The feedback also indicated that current sporting groups and activities are not adequately advertised, leading to low awareness among community members. This lack of promotion hinders community engagement and participation in local sports and recreational activities. There is also a call for more nature-focused spaces, such as wildlife sanctuaries and local food production areas.

- **Accessibility and inclusivity:** Accessibility is a common concern in Loddon Shire, with limited facilities catering to women in most sporting clubs. Additionally, there is a lack of facilities in the northern half of the Shire, making it challenging for residents in these areas to access recreational amenities. The community is calling for more inclusive facilities that cater to a broader range of interests beyond elite sports, ensuring that everyone can participate and benefit from recreational activities.
- **Maintenance and management:** Concerns about the maintenance and management of public spaces and facilities were raised by residents. Concerns were expressed about the poor quality of the maintenance and the heavy reliance on community volunteers to keep them operational. Residents are calling for Council-led initiatives to improve and maintain public facilities, ensuring they meet the needs and expectations of the community.
- **Recreation and leisure activities:** Residents highlighted the limited availability of recreational activities beyond traditional sports in Loddon Shire. There are calls for more diverse options, including walking and riding tracks, fitness stations, and canoe launches.

Importance of provision of sport and active recreation

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the following sport and active recreation provisions, selecting between non important, somewhat important and very important.

Table 37: Importance of sport and recreation provision

Sport/Active recreation	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Outdoor sport fields	6	15	34
Sport courts	7	16	32
Sports greens	9	22	24
Golf courses	14	21	20
Riding sports facilities	7	14	34
Walking and riding tracks and trails	1	10	44
Fitness stations	9	23	22
Play spaces	4	12	39
Other active recreation facilities	18	20	17
Parks and gardens	1	10	44
Water sport facilities	0	16	38
Sport and active recreation activities for children	5	20	33
Sport and active recreation activities for young people	2	20	33
Sport and active recreation activities for adults	2	18	35
Sport and active recreation activities older adults	4	15	36
Other	4	9	10

The survey results indicate that walking and riding tracks and trails (44%), parks and gardens (44%), and play spaces (39%) were top three activities, followed by golf courses (20%) and other active recreation facilities (17%).

Improvements to the current sport and active recreation provision suggested by respondents

Further improvements mentioned by the residents include:



Pool Facilities

Community seek access to an indoor heated swimming pool to provide year-round access for community members.



Parks and Outdoor Spaces

Residents are calling for improvements in local parks and trails and well-maintained spaces with green grass, shade, and recreational activities that are accessible without cost to participants.



Arts, Culture and Education

Residents express interest in incorporating arts and culture, including First Nations history and culture, into recreational activities.



Accessibility and Amenities

There's a need for more seating areas to accommodate older generations who walk for health reasons. Additionally, amenities such as open toilet facilities near playgrounds are lacking and need improvement.



Sustainability and Local Production

Residents are interested in building systems to produce local food, support fisheries, and establish wildlife sanctuaries to enhance community resilience and sustainability.

Figure 34: Suggested improvements to the current sport and active recreation provision

To what extent do the following things prevent you (or other members of your household) from participation in sport or active recreation in Loddon Shire?

Table 38: Reasons not to participate in sport or active recreation

Reasons	No impact	To some extent	To great extent
Lack of facilities within easy access of where I/we live	16	26	16
Lack of facilities within easy access of where I/we live	35	17	6
Venue joining or activity fees are too expensive	36	16	6
Club I/we would like to join has too many members	53	4	1
I don't feel safe participating in my area	52	4	2
Cost of travel to venues	30	19	9
Poor disability access to facilities I/we would like to use	41	9	8
No existing club in my/our preferred sport and active recreation activity	22	19	16
Sport, active recreation and social recreation facility is poor quality	28	21	9
Sport and active recreation and social recreation facility is not fit for purpose	31	19	8
Existing sport and active recreation and social recreation facilities are too crowded	52	5	1
I don't know what sport or active recreation and social recreation facilities or services are available	32	22	3
I don't feel welcome at the sport and active recreation and social recreation facility I/we would like to use	43	14	1
Sport and active recreation and social recreation facilities/activities are not available at hours that are suitable for me/us	28	23	7
Other	14	3	4

The main reasons not to use sport or active recreation provision in Loddon Shire include a lack of easily accessible facilities (16 respondents), the absence of clubs or organisations catering to specific sports or recreational activities (16 respondents), poor quality of facilities (great 9 respondents), and facilities lacking modern updates (8 respondents). These reasons indicate that accessibility, availability and quality are important in influencing individuals' decisions to engage in sports and recreational activities.

7.2.4 Future Spending Priorities

Understanding the community's expectations for Council spending is crucial for aligning resources with community needs and preferences. Loddon Shire residents were asked to share their views on the Council's future funding on sport and active recreation, open space and aquatic facilities and services.

Council spending

Participants were presented with options to choose whether they believed that the Council spending on sport and recreation should be increased, kept the same, decreased, or if they were uncertain.

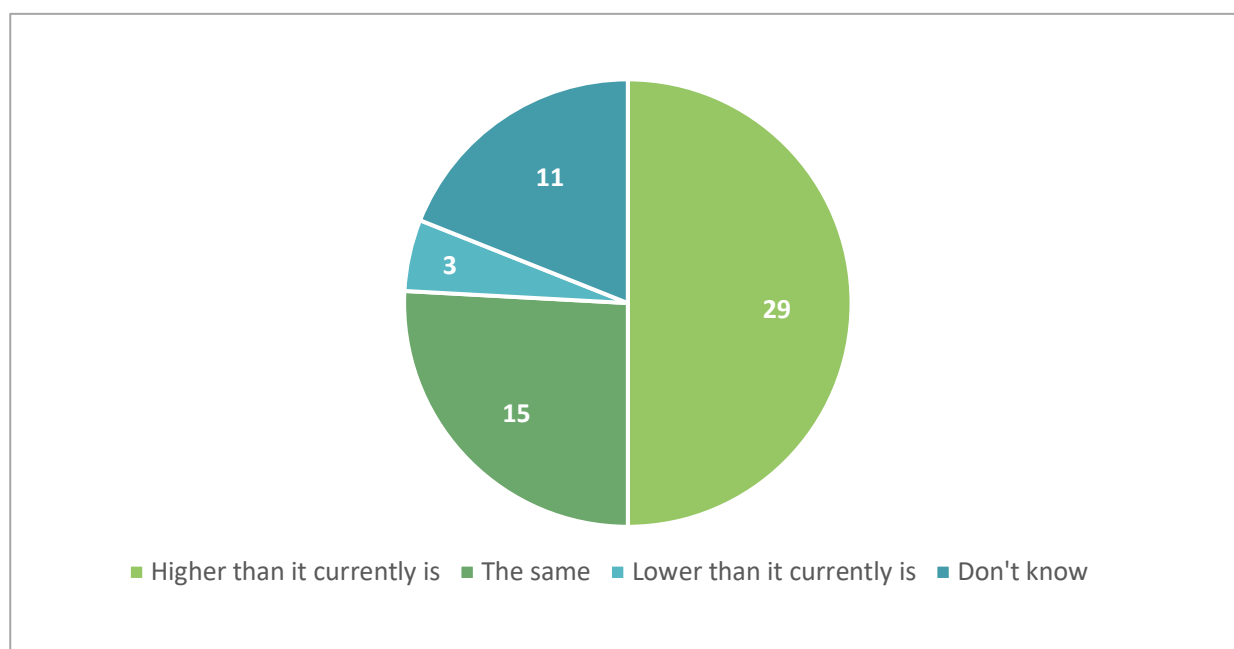


Figure 35: Future spending by Loddon Shire Council

Of the survey respondents:

- Twenty-nine residents or 49.1% of the respondents indicated that the Council spending should be higher than it currently is.
- Fifteen residents or 25.4% of the respondents indicated that the Council spending should remain the same.
- Eleven residents or 18.6% of the respondents indicated that the Council spending should decrease.
- Three residents or 5% of the respondents were uncertain.
- This suggests strong community support in Loddon Shire for increased Council spending on sports and active recreation, with nearly half of the respondents advocating for higher funding.

Community spending

When asked about community spending for better provision of sport in Loddon Shire, approximately 54.2% of the respondents agreed with the statement that **“they would accept fewer sport and active recreation, open space and aquatic facilities and services of high quality”**. However, 45.8% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they **“would accept paying higher rates to maintain the current level of sport and active recreation”**, open space and aquatic facilities and services.

Improvements to sport and recreation in Loddon Shire

Participants were allocated a theoretical \$100 to allocate towards the listed improvements in increments of \$20, \$15, \$10, and \$5. The allocations resulted in the following amounts being spent on each improvement.



Figure 36: Spending exercise

The activity resulted in the following priorities for funding:

- Improving and maintaining play spaces
- Improving and maintaining active recreation facilities
- improving and maintaining aquatic facilities
- Improving and maintaining community sport facilities.

The feedback suggests that residents prioritise investment in existing sport and recreation provisions, such as play spaces and aquatic facilities, over the development of new facilities. This indicated a preference to value the upkeep, maintenance, and improvement of existing facilities to ensure they meet the needs and preferences of the community.

7.2.5 Written Submissions

Community organisations were invited to submit written submissions indicating current and future needs and issues. The following provides a summary of the submission received from the Pyramid Hill Golf Course Committee.

Pyramid Hill Golf Course

- The Pyramid Hill Golf Club's submission emphasizes general satisfaction with the Shire's facilities but raises concerns about ongoing streetscape works affecting the community's wellbeing and the Council's reputation.
- The club stresses the interconnectedness of community elements and advocate for improved connections between the golf course and town to enhance community attraction and membership.
- The club values a range of sports and active recreation facilities, including outdoor fields, sports courts, aquatic facilities, walking trails, and play spaces, considering them essential for community vitality. Active participation in various activities, from golf to swimming, reflects the community's passion and involvement.
- The submission emphasises the need to maintain existing facilities, improve connectivity, and complete projects on time.
- Concerns were raised about the survey's question regarding service reductions or rate increases, with the club advocating for maintaining current services without compromising on quality.

Direct feedback submissions

Wedderburn pool needs more shade and new pool hooks in showers, new shower heads, better drainage in showers, and warmer pool temperature.

7.2.6 Community Drop in Sessions

Community Drop-In Sessions were held in Loddon on the following dates:

Wednesday 6 March

- Boort IGA 9.00am - 10.30am
- Pyramid Hill Supermarket 11.15am - 12.15om
- East Loddon P-12 - 1.00pm
- Bridgewater Bowls Club 5.00pm - 6.00pm.

Thursday 7 March

- Tarnagulla Soldiers Park 9.30am - 11.00am
- Wedderburn 24 Karat Cafe 12.00pm -1.30pm.

In total approximately 170 people attended the sessions. The profile of the attendants was as follows:

- 25% seniors
- 25% adults
- 50% children and young people.

The community drop-in sessions provided an opportunity for the residents to engage with the consultants and present their concerns and ideas for the future of the sport and active recreation in Loddon.

The summary of the feedback received during the community drop-in sessions indicate the following.

- Residents value the existing sports facilities and clubs, seeing them as essential community assets. Supporting these clubs, maintaining sports facilities, and organising competitions are crucial for both children and adults, presenting an opportunity to encourage greater usage of these facilities.
- Improving access and maintaining footpaths and trails is vital for seniors. Providing amenities like water stations, shade, and seating can improve their outdoor experience and encourage more physical activity.
- Children and young people can benefit from diverse play experiences, including water play, nature play in play spaces, and active recreation opportunities like pump tracks and junior bike skills tracks.
- The community highly values the local pools as safe places for learning to swim and cooling down, especially in rural areas with waterways, farming channels, and dams.
- Offering nature-based recreation activities such as mountain biking, bouldering, bushwalking, canoeing, and fishing can attract both residents and visitors to enjoy the natural bushland and waterways.
- Key periods for pool usage are before school for lap swimming and after school for family visits. Effective communication about pool opening times and organising community events can promote greater pool usage.
- Adults appreciate gyms, fitness stations, and fitness sessions as ways to maintain fitness and health.
- There is support for hosting more community events in open spaces, particularly those that encourage physical activity and active participation.
- Ongoing maintenance, improvements, and diversification of recreational facilities is important. Specific concerns include footpath improvements, trail maintenance, and facility upgrades to meet current needs and safety standards.
- Interest in active recreation facilities like bike skills tracks, nature-based and water play experiences. Residents suggested multipurpose recreational spaces, amenities, and community-focused events.

Storyboard results

As part of the Drop-In Sessions, a storyboard was presented with potential ideas for the future of sport and active recreation in Loddon. Residents were asked to vote for their top three priorities.

The following details the responses by the different age cohorts:

Adults and Seniors

LODDON RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND AQUATIC STRATEGY

What facilities and services do you want to see?

Choose Your Top 3

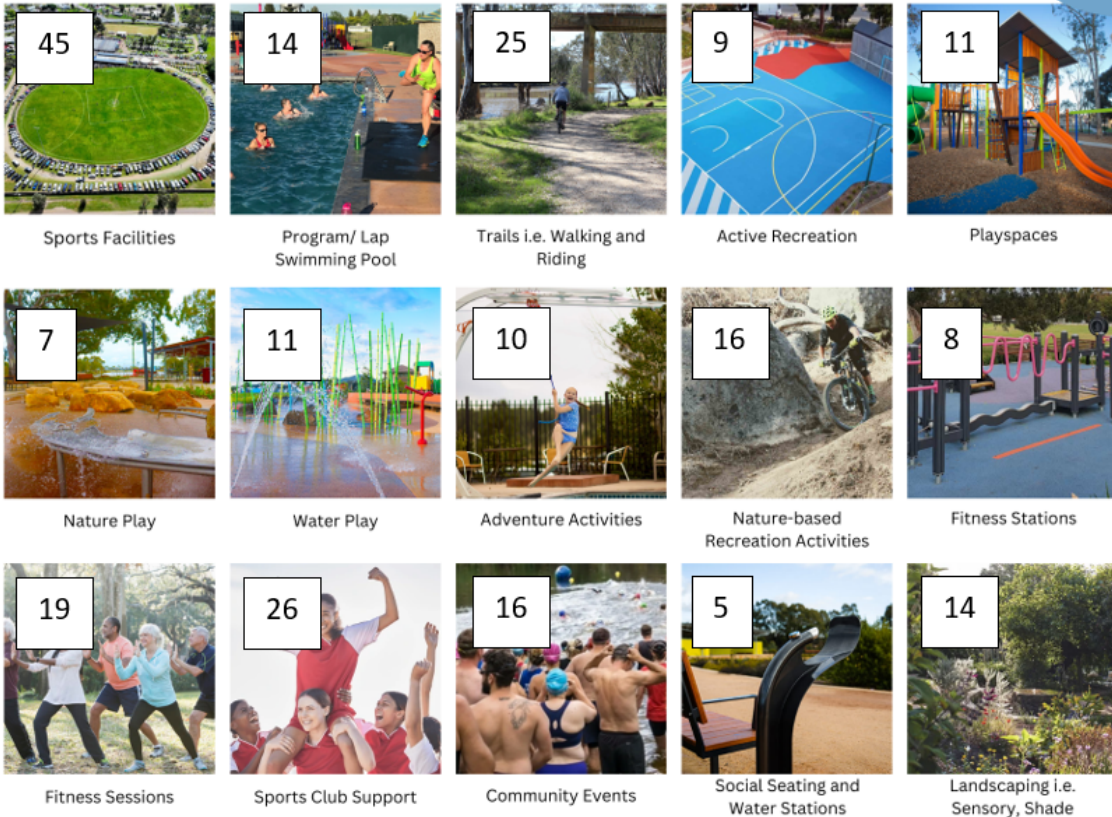


Figure 37: Storyboard results for Adults

The results indicate a high preference for outdoor sport facilities in the area followed by support for sports clubs and trails for walking and riding. Outdoor fitness stations, nature-based activities and community activities were popular as well. This indicates a high preference for accessible recreation activities in nature.

Children and Young People

LODDON RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND AQUATIC STRATEGY

What facilities and services do you want to see?

Choose Your Top 3

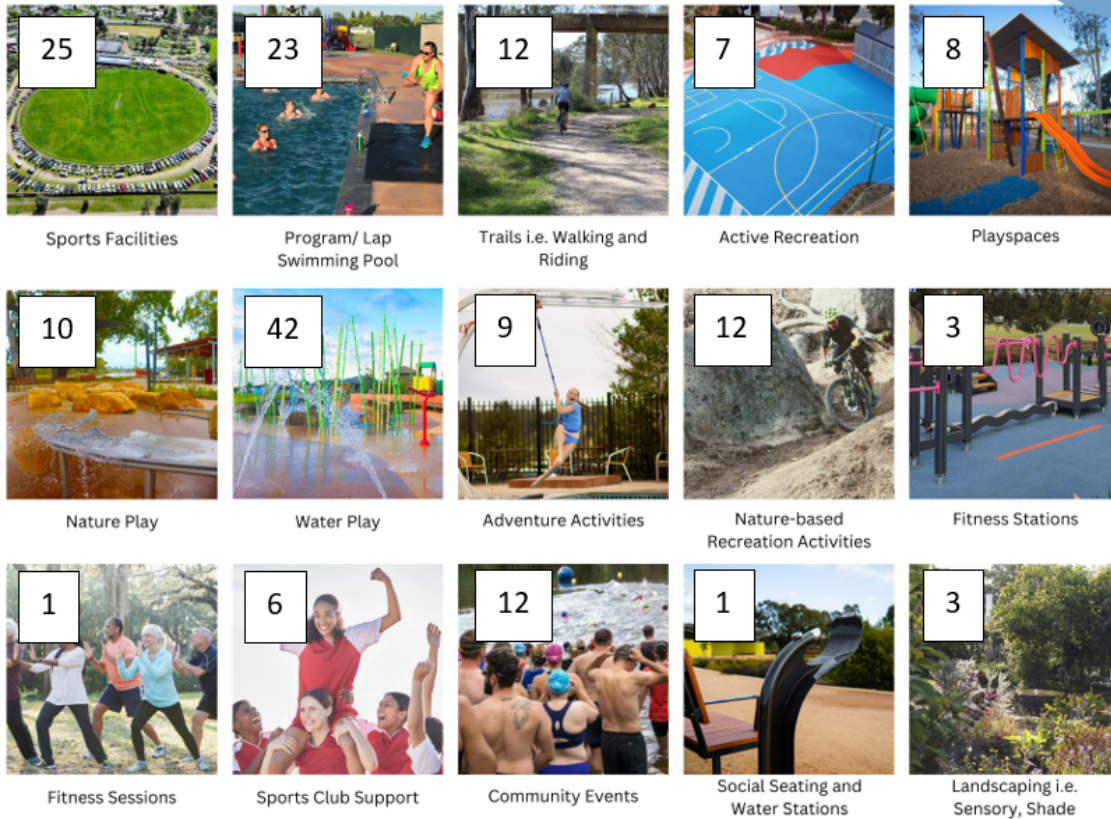


Figure 38: Storyboard results for children

Water play was the most popular activity among children followed by sport facilities and swimming pools. Nature play, trails for walking and riding, nature-based recreation activities and community events were voted highly as well.

Local community feedback

Residents provided the following feedback specific to different areas in Loddon Shire.

Boort (Attendants: 20 adults)

- Residents indicated support for active recreation such as Junior bike skills tracks and modular pump tracks.
- Water play was a popular suggestion which diversifies aquatic offerings for the community.
- Recreation hub project in Boort.
- Early years play - nature and adventure.
- Footpaths need improvements.
- Visitors appreciate the nature, the place, people and café.



Figure 39: Park in Boort

Pyramid Hill (Attendants: 1 child, 10 adults)

Open spaces:

- Play space identified as a high priority.
- Nature, adventure, and sensory play crucial for enhancing early years' recreation experiences.
- Community interest in introducing Parkrun events.
- Maintenance of trails is essential for promoting outdoor activities.
- Significant pool attendance observed with 75 kids on a hot weekend day.
- Echuca East Play space recognised for well-executed water play features.
- Community events like bike races contribute to local engagement.
- Safe path to Pyramid Hill Summit Trail is a priority.
- Pyramid Hill boasts healthy sports participation in football, netball, and golf.
- Signage and wayfinding improvements needed for Pyramid Hill Summit Trail.
- Shade provision required along footpaths and trails, especially in Main Street.
- Support for group gathering seating in communal areas.
- Bindi-eyes causing punctures; removal needed beyond spraying to address the issue.
- Diversification of sport opportunities desired; interest in joining a darts group.
- Need for a diverse range of active recreation opportunities within the town.



Figure 40: Pyramid Hill

Aquatics:

- Open swimming pool hours suggested during mornings (6-8am) and after school (3-5pm).
- Maintain pool to support VIC swim and swim lessons for three schools.
- Extended pool operating hours suggested to accommodate community needs.

East Loddon (Attendants: 50 children, 15 adults)

Calivil

- Continue servicing the pools.
- Need admin support for reserve committees and clubs.

Serpentine

- Improve access and activities on river and river frontage.
- Suggestions for Council to buy the paddock behind reserve and expand oval and area for multi-purpose gym and housing to attract families.

Mitiamo

- Pool concerns - unclear on when it is open/communication with public needs to improve.

Dingee

- Need for active recreation and play facilities.
- Oval maintenance lacking since cricket club disbanded due to low numbers.
- Tennis and Bowls share facility; both sports are active with junior and senior competitions.
- Reserve committee responsible for maintenance; seeking assistance for improvements.
- Community-based activities predominantly held after school hours.
- Trail requires maintenance to encourage increased usage.

Bridgewater (Attendants: 3 children, 35 adults)

- Lack of wayfinding to reserve.
- Unsafe crossing areas.
- Desire for an active recreation site for riding/skating.
- Improved access needed, current paths force pedestrians onto roads.
- Sports field requires drainage improvements.
- Courts nearing end-of-life; last renovated 22 years ago with visible cracking.
- Urgent need for maintenance and court renewal.
- Requirement for 4 playable courts which are feasible to implement.
- 20% energy reduction expected with LED light installation, but daytime use needs to be promoted.
- Interest in open water swimming lessons.
- Proposal for a rail trail from Bridgewater to Inglewood.
- Need for a designated riding circuit.
- Off-road trail for riding desired.
- Concerns over play space location; lacks toilet facilities.
- Support for repurposing disused green spaces.
- Advocacy for more fitness stations.
- Embrace Inglewood's model: invest in a standout site to create a recreational destination.
- Community interest in tractor pulling events.
- Struggles observed in summer sports participation.



Figure 41: Bridgewater on Loddon

Tarnagulla (Attendants: 20 children, 5 adults)

- The area near caravan park would make a good bike pump track.
- Yoga sessions would be beneficial for the community.

Laanecoorie

- Need play spaces in Laanecoorie as there are none at the moment.

Wedderburn (Attendants, 20 Adults)

- Need more diversity in play and active recreation and a destination play space.
- Skinners Flat waterhole needs improvement, particularly the public toilets. Great family place to use.
- Pool needs refurbishment of change room.
- Local play space swings need shade. The seating is located far from the equipment making it unsafe to supervise children.
- Fitness sessions at gym have good membership numbers.



Figure 42: War memorial at Soldiers Memorial Park, Wedderburn

Key themes from community drop-in sessions

The following provides a summary of the key themes from the community drop-in sessions:

- Residents highly value existing sports facilities and clubs as essential community assets. Active support is important for maintaining and improving these facilities to encourage increased usage.
- Improving access, footpaths, and trails is crucial, especially for seniors. Amenities like water stations, shade, and seating enhance outdoor experiences and encourage physical activity.
- Children and young people benefit from diverse play experiences, including water play and nature activities. There is high interest in activities like mountain biking, bouldering, bushwalking, and fishing to promote enjoyment of natural bushland and waterways.
- Local pools are valued as safe places for learning to swim and cooling down. Residents suggested effective communication about pool timings and community events to boost usage.
- Adults appreciate gyms, fitness stations, and fitness sessions for maintaining health and fitness.
- There is active support for hosting more community events in open spaces to encourage physical activity and participation.
- Ongoing maintenance, improvements, and diversification of recreational facilities is important. Specific concerns include footpath improvements, trail maintenance, and facility upgrades to meet current needs and safety standards.
- Interest in active recreation facilities like bike skills tracks, nature-based and water play experiences. Residents suggested multipurpose recreational spaces, amenities, and community-focused events.

7.3 Clubs and Associations Survey

A survey was distributed among local clubs and associations to gain understanding of their membership, participation, and their insight in the sport in Loddon. The survey received responses from 20 clubs and five associations. The following clubs and associations responded to the survey:

1. Kingower Cricket Club
2. Bridgewater Football Netball Club
3. Derby Tennis Club
4. Boort Lawn Tennis Club
5. Bridgewater Bowling Club
6. Inglewood Golf Club Inc
7. Bridgewater Cricket Club
8. Boort Football Club
9. Inglewood Cricket Club
10. Pyramid Hill Football Netball Club
11. Boort Lakeside Croquet Club
12. Inglewood Sports Centre
13. Inglewood Football Netball Club
14. Bridgewater Cricket Club
15. Active Farmers
16. Tarnagulla Recreation Parks Committee
17. Calivil Bowling Club
18. Pyramid Hill Bowling Club
19. Inglewood Riding Club Inc
20. Serpentine Bowling Club.

Clubs were asked to vote on the impact that some factors had on their membership and operations. They were given the choice to vote either “No Impact”, “Some Impact” and “Great Impact”. The graph on the following page shows the result on this vote.

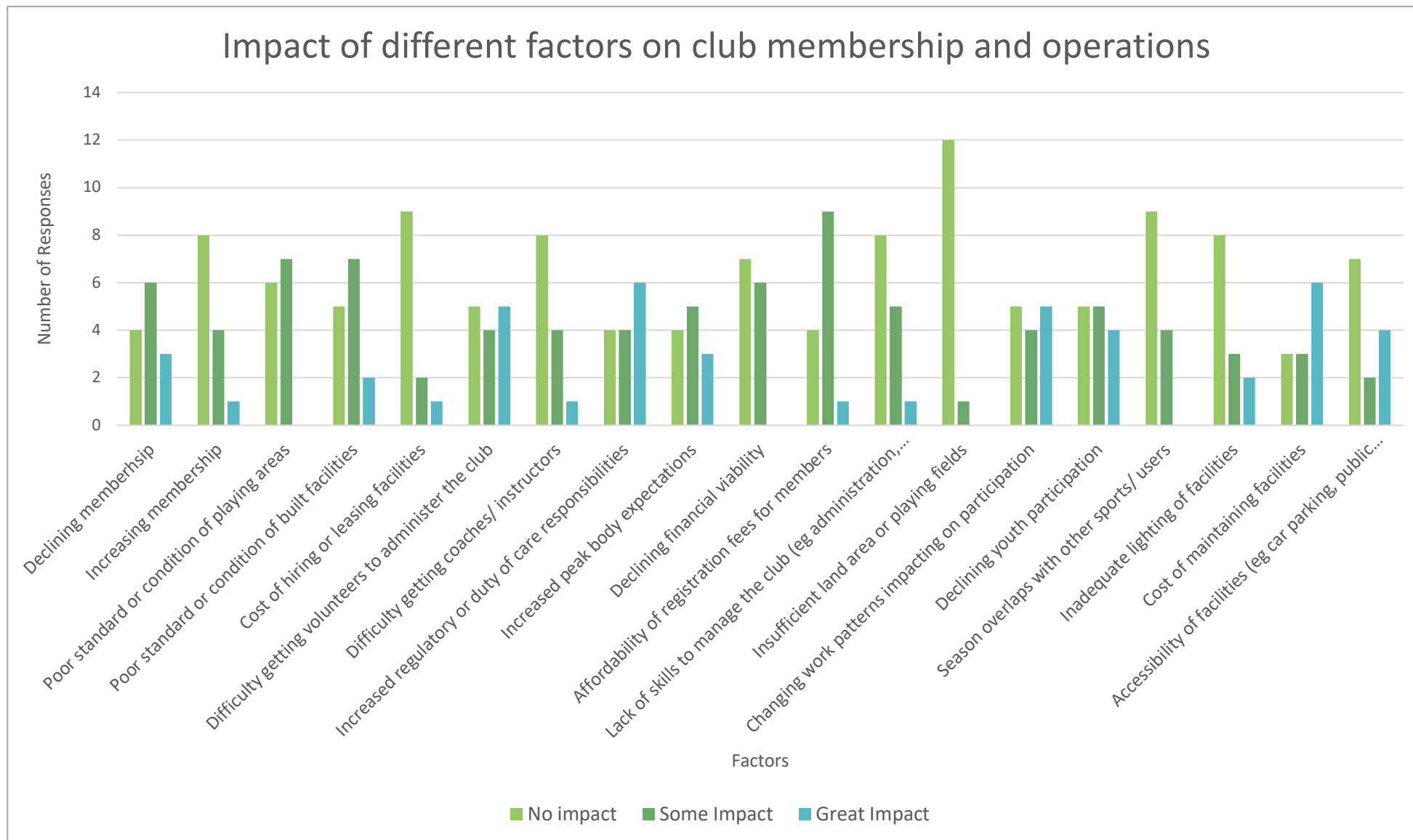


Figure 43: Impact of different factors on club membership and operations in Loddon Shire

An analysis of the graph and the survey responses, indicate the following points:

Membership concerns:

- Several clubs, such as Kingower Cricket Club, Boort Lawn Tennis Club, and Bridgewater Cricket Club, reported a great impact or some impact of declining membership.

Infrastructure and facilities:

- Some clubs, including Kingower Cricket Club, Boort Lawn Tennis Club, and Bridgewater Bowling Club, indicated poor standard or condition of playing areas as a concern.
- Poor standard or condition of built facilities is mentioned by Derby Tennis Club, Bridgewater Bowling Club, and Serpentine Bowling Club.
- Cost of maintaining facilities is a significant concern for clubs like Bridgewater Bowling Club, Inglewood sports centre, and Serpentine Bowling Club.
- Accessibility of facilities (e.g., car parking, public transport, bicycle) is highlighted by several clubs, such as Inglewood sports centre and Serpentine Bowling Club.

Financial and operational challenges:

- Difficulty in getting volunteers to administer the club was raised as an issue by Derby Tennis Club and Inglewood sports centre.
- Declining financial viability is a concern for Bridgewater Cricket Club, Active Farmers, and others.
- Cost of hiring or leasing facilities is also a concern for Derby Tennis Club and Serpentine Bowling Club.
- Affordability of registration fees for members is an important factor indicated by Boort Lawn Tennis Club and Active Farmers.

Human resources and expertise:

- Difficulty getting coaches/instructors is mentioned by Derby Tennis Club and Pyramid Hill Football Netball Club.
- Lack of skills to manage the club (e.g., administration, maintenance) are concerns noted by Derby Tennis Club, Bridgewater Cricket Club, and Inglewood sports centre.

Regulatory and participation issues:

- Increased regulatory or duty of care responsibilities is highlighted by Kingower Cricket Club and Inglewood sports centre.
- Boort Lawn Tennis Club and Serpentine Bowling Club raised concerns about declining youth participation.
- Changing work patterns impacting participation is a common observation.

Other concerns

- Kingower Cricket Club and Inglewood sports centre indicated increased peak body expectations.
- Season overlaps with other sports/users: Highlighted by Bridgewater Cricket Club and Inglewood Football Netball Club.
- Inadequate lighting of facilities was a concern raised by several clubs.

7.4 Key Findings for Stakeholder Engagement

The following provides a summary of the key issues and opportunities identified through the community engagement process:

Outdoor sporting facilities are highly valued, and the Reserve Committees and sporting clubs need support to maintained facilities and benefit to community

- **Outdoor sporting facilities are highly valued:** Residents highly value existing sports facilities and clubs as essential community assets. Active support is important for maintaining and improving these facilities to encourage increased usage.
- **Sports club challenges:** Clubs across Loddon Shire, including Kingower Cricket Club, Boort Lawn Tennis Club, and Bridgewater Cricket Club, face challenges with declining memberships, facility maintenance and in some regards deteriorating infrastructure. Supporting sport and recreation clubs in local communities was a key finding of the consultation process. It is also recognised by Council services that the partnership between Council, Reserve Committees and sporting clubs is critical to maintaining these recreation places for community.
- Financial constraints, operational challenges, difficulties in securing volunteers, and concerns over facility accessibility, management expertise, and regulatory burdens are significant issues affecting the sustainability and growth of sports and recreation clubs in the area. Additionally, there is a noted impact of changing work patterns and seasonal overlaps on participation.

The community enjoy the diverse recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities in Loddon and wish to use them more

- **Diverse facilities:** There is a strong demand for more diverse recreational spaces to cater for a broad range of interests.
- **Parks and play spaces are highly valued:** Residents highly value the township park and play space provided in each township.
- **Health and fitness stations and local programs encourage adults to be active:** Adults appreciate gyms, fitness stations, and fitness sessions for maintaining health and fitness.
- **Prioritising access to central open spaces in townships:** outdoor sport facilities and park with play space and active recreation opportunities is important with the community emphasising the proximity to home to access family-oriented sport and recreation activities encourages physical activity.
- **The community seeks an expanded aquatic program and service:** Local pools are valued as safe places for learning to swim and cooling down. Residents suggested effective communication about pool timings and community events to boost usage.

The community seeks extended operating hours and diversifying aquatic programs, events and activities to meet the needs of residents, underscoring a community-centric approach to aquatic facility design and maintenance. An indoor pool was also requested.

- Previous engagement as part of the Swimming Pool Improvement Plan 2022 identified:
 - Installing water play splash parks and play equipment, diving boards and hosting more inflatable days as ways that would encourage greater participation. Innovative adventure and play opportunities should be explored with community when considering future aquatic facilities improvements.
 - Hosting community events and introducing water aerobics, strength training, morning lap swims, etc. A range of programs and events that engage a cross-section of the community, including young and old and families should be explored with considering the future aquatic services.

Maintain recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities to encourage regular use

- **Facility upgrades and maintenance:** Ongoing maintenance, improvements, and diversification of recreational facilities is important. Specific concerns include footpath improvements, trail maintenance, and facility upgrades to meet current needs and safety standards. There is a need to enhance facility quality and maintenance.

Residents also emphasise the need for facility upgrades, including renovated changing rooms, shaded areas, and recreational amenities like mountain bike trails and skate parks, to improve the appeal and functionality of Loddon Shire's public spaces. These spaces need to be maintained to encourage regular use.

Accessible recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities will encourage participation

- **Accessibility to facilities and services:** Enhancing accessibility for seniors, diversifying play options for children and youth, promoting safe and inclusive swimming experiences, and providing a variety of recreational opportunities for adults and families are essential considerations. Improving access, footpaths, and trails is crucial, especially for seniors. Amenities like water stations, shade, and seating enhance outdoor experiences and encourage physical activity.

Additionally, the community seek more community events and support multipurpose recreational spaces. These suggestions were seen as vital for promoting physical activity and community participation.

- **Activate the recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities we have:** A range of ideas for increasing use of public open spaces have been suggested including places that are tailored for young people, increasing public engagement through better promotion of existing activities, improved accessibility across the Shire, walking and cycling paths, seating and shade, fitness and play equipment and physical activity programs.

There is active support for hosting more community events in open spaces to encourage physical activity and participation. There is growing interest in active recreation facilities like bike skills tracks, nature-based and water play experiences.

Residents suggested multipurpose recreational spaces, amenities, and community-focused events are key principles for the future recreation service.

- **Promote nature-based recreation activities:** The drop-in sessions found children and young people benefit from diverse play experiences, including water play and nature activities. There is high interest by adults in activities like mountain biking, bouldering, bushwalking, and fishing to promote enjoyment of natural bushland and waterways.
- **Key barriers:** Key barriers to engaging in sport and active recreation in Loddon Shire include limited accessibility, lack of specialised clubs or organisations, poor facility quality, and outdated amenities, underscoring the importance of addressing these issues to encourage participation.

Community want Council to prioritise high quality recreation, open space and aquatic facilities and services

- **Community accepts fewer facilities if facilities are of high quality:** While a significant portion of respondents are willing to pay higher rates to maintain current sport and recreation facilities, a slightly larger group would accept fewer but higher-quality facilities, indicating a preference for prioritising maintenance and enhancement of existing infrastructure over new developments.

The “how would you spend \$100 engagement activity” resulted in the following priorities for funding:

- Improving and maintaining play spaces
- Improving and maintaining active recreation facilities
- improving and maintaining aquatic facilities
- Improving and maintaining community sport facilities.

Facilities and equipment that promote adventure and play would encourage greater use of pools. Previous engagement as part of the Swimming Pool Improvement Plan 2022 identified installing water play splash parks and play equipment, diving boards and hosting more inflatable days as ways that would encourage greater participation. Innovative adventure and play opportunities should be explored with community when considering future aquatic facilities improvements.

8. Other Impacts on Open Space and Sport and Recreation Facilities

What other issues will impact open spaces, sport and recreation facilities?

This section summarises other issues impacting open spaces, sport and recreation facilities in Loddon.

8.1 Climate Change Impacts

Climate-Ready Victoria (State Government Agency) has prepared a report reviewing the impact of climate change on the Loddon Mallee region. The report found that the Loddon Mallee has been getting warmer and drier and in the future the region can expect:

- Temperatures to continue to increase year-round. In the Loddon Shire, the rate of increase is 1.2%-1.4% since the 1960's.
- Fewer frosts.
- More hot days and warm spells. The region was impacted by the Millenium Drought (1996 to 2009).
- More frequent and more intense downpours. The Millenium Drought was ended with two of the wettest years on record in 2010-11, including the January 2011 flood. Most recently, Loddon Shire was impacted by the October 2022 flood.
- Less rainfall in autumn, winter and spring. In the Loddon Shire, rainfall has fallen by 0 to 100mm since the 1950's.
- Harsher fire weather and longer fire seasons.
- Biodiversity is at risk. Hotter temperatures will reduce the habitat for unique plants and animals.
- The more vulnerable members of our community are especially at risk of climate change impacts. These groups include the elderly, children, rural communities, and those unwell and disadvantaged.

These climate change impacts will result in an increase in flooding, landslides and erosion, damage to infrastructure and ecosystems and an increase in the spread of pests and weeds. Our recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services may reduce facility revenues from program and event cancellations and increased maintenance and insurance costs. People's health may also be impacted including, heat exhaustion and asthma related to reduced air quality.

The recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services will need to adapt to these climate change pressures and will present challenges to how we use, design and manage spaces and places in the future. Promoting sustainable and climate-ready solutions and practices will mean the community can continue to engage in sport and recreation for health, social, cultural benefits and other benefits such as economic and environmental.

The design of spaces and places will need to adapt by featuring innovative environmentally sustainable design and water sensitive urban design solutions. Examples include energy efficient technologies like LED lighting, water efficient technologies like non-potable water infrastructure, increasing tree canopy and recycling and waste management practices. Managing participant access to spaces and places and play during extreme weather events will be required to maintain a safe environment to participate.

8.2 Environmental Impacts

In 2017, the World Health Organisation (WHO) released a “brief for action” on urban green spaces. The brief is based on evidence compiled on urban green space and is defined as all urban land covered by vegetation of any kinds and on private and public grounds. These include our open spaces, sport and recreation facilities and nature conservation reserves. The brief also refers to blue spaces, water bodies and corridors.

WHO calls on policy makers and practitioners to invest in urban green spaces to provide healthy and sustainable living environments in urban areas for the health of cities and people and in the face of increasing pressures of urbanisation. These include increasing pressure from expanding populations, limited resources and growing impacts of climate change including pollution and loss of biodiversity.

WHO wants to maximise the benefits of urban green spaces through adequate planning, design and evaluation. The brief for action includes a best practice approach to urban green space planning and supports the development of a sport and recreation and open space plans.

WHO explains that urban green spaces are a feature of healthy settlements, and the evidence shows that “green spaces benefit cities and urban quality of life”. They deliver:

- Positive health, social and environmental outcomes.
- Upgrade the social and environmental quality of disadvantaged and deprived areas.
- Make a city more liveable and enjoyable.
- Contribute to the positive image of a city’s branding or identity.

8.3 A Child’s Right to Play

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child announced on 1 February 2013 in Geneva the formal adoption of the General Comment that outlines the importance of Article 31 within the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

Article 31:

21.States Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

22.States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

The stated objectives of the General Comment are:

- To enhance understanding of the importance of Article 31 for children’s wellbeing and development, and for the realisation of other rights in the Convention.
- To provide interpretation to States parties regarding the provisions, and consequent obligations, associated with Article 31.
- To provide guidance on the legislative, judicial, administrative, social and educational measures necessary to ensure its implementation for all children without discrimination and on the basis of equality of opportunity.

Having the freedom and equal opportunity to play, recreation, rest, leisure and involvement in cultural and artistic life are all important elements to a happy, healthy and active childhood. They are all fundamental rights of children, and the UN calls on policy makers and practitioners across the world to turn these rights into action.

The Strategy is an opportunity to develop sport and recreation facilities and spaces that are 'child friendly' and encourage equal opportunity for children to play sport and recreation and enjoy an active childhood.

8.4 Fair Access to Play

There is a sustainable gap in both the participation of women and girls in sport and recreation and an identified gender imbalance in leadership positions across all levels of the Victorian sporting and recreation industry:

- Only 9% of women and girls' participation in sport across all ages compared to 17% of men and boys (AusPlay, 2021).
- Only 21% of girls aged 0-14 years participate in organised sport and active recreation outside of school hours three times a week (AusPlay, 2021).
- There has been a decline of 22,000 women and girls' participation after COVID-19 where men and boys' participation rose by over 20,500 participants in 2021 compared to 2019 (VicHealth Sports Participation in Victoria 2015-2021).
- 29% of executive positions and 33% of board positions were held by women in State Sporting Associations (Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation 2015).
- Some 28% of women have considered leaving their club due to inequitable treatment (State of Play Survey 2022-2023, Change Our Game).
- Women are 2.5 times more likely to report feeling unwelcome at their sporting club compared to men.
- Of people who played community sport, women were less likely than men to agree that club facilities were shared equally.
- Many Victorian women and girls don't have access to the best courts or grounds, have facilities of lesser standard, or are relegated to less convenient competition and training times.

Local Governments have an obligation to gender equality, not only under State Government legislation but also under Commonwealth legislation. The State and Commonwealth Government legislation includes:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic).
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic).
- Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic).
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cwth).

The Commission for Gender Equity in the Public Sector was established after the *Gender Equity Bill 2019 (Vic)* passed in February 2020. The Commission supports the Public Sector Gender Equity Commissioner in overseeing the implementation of the Gender Equity Act 2020 and promoting gender equity in the public sector workforce and the broader Victorian community.

Local Government Authorities are required to complete Gender Impact Assessments and submit these to the Commission for Gender Equity. The Commission reports on progress made towards delivering on the *Gender Equity Act 2020*.

The Victorian Government initiated an Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation which resulted in key monumental changes in the sector. The changes included establishing a Victorian Office of Women in Sport, followed by the Female Friendly Sport Infrastructure Guidelines (2017) and funding program and then the Change Our Game Initiative. These resources were developed to support LGAs to engage better and provide for women and girls in sports.

Following the Inquiry and Change Our Game funding program the Victorian Government in 2022 released the Fair Access Policy Roadmap. The Fair Access Policy 'RoadMap' includes the following six principles.

1. Community sports infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcoming, safe, and inclusive.
2. Women and girls can fully participate in all aspects of community sport and active recreation, including, as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator.
3. Women and girls will have equitable access to and use of community sport infrastructure.
4. Women and girls should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles.
5. Encourage and support all user groups who access and use community sport infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement gender-equitable access and use practices.
6. Prioritise access, use and support all user groups who demonstrate and ongoing commitment to gender equitable access and use of allocated community sport infrastructure.



The following graphic shows the indicative relationship between Loddon Shire’s Fair Access Policy with the Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic Strategy and State Government’s gender equity legislation and policy and Local Government strategies.

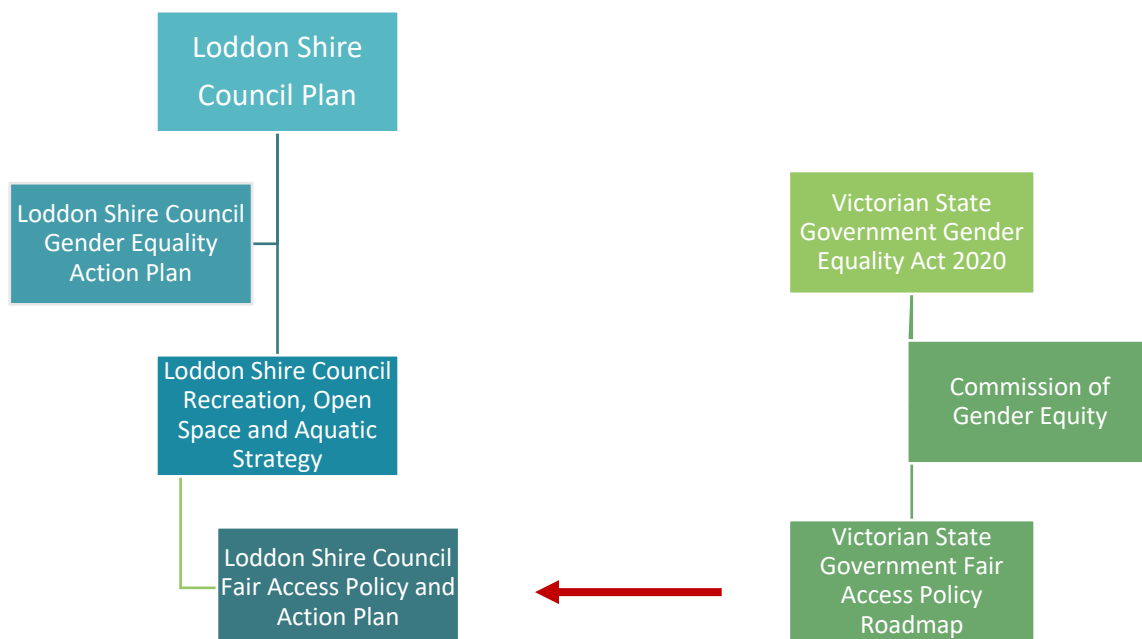


Figure 44: Relationship between Loddon Shire’s Fair Access Policy with Council and State Government Policies and Strategies

8.5 Funding Major Sports Infrastructure Challenge

With ongoing Government economic constraints and limited capital and operational budgets, many new sports facilities may have to be joint venture arrangements between private and public sectors and sports clubs.

The reduction in commitment to curriculum-based school sports in State Government schools will have impacts on the local availability of school sports facilities while also discouraging public sector investment in new facilities at these sites.

Due to restricted rate and other revenue bases, local councils may have to encourage greater private investment in leisure facilities and services. This may be achieved by a mix of rate concessions, payback loans, management rights in return for investment, provision of land and planning concessions.

Facility provision is changing from single purpose to multi-purpose. However, there is also an emphasis on ensuring facilities are designed to meet the specific needs of the key user groups i.e., correct runoff and facility standards.

A great deal of infrastructure expenditure is now being directed to the development of larger public and private complexes providing aquatic, health, fitness and indoor sports facilities because of the higher utilisation which can be achieved. There is less emphasis on the development of traditional single purpose outdoor sports facilities.

The planning process for new facilities has improved significantly with the conduct of effective feasibility studies being the norm. These studies have generally included management/marketing financial plans with demand projections based on sophisticated survey data.

There has been considerable improvement in the management of leisure facilities, with increased expectations of managers to produce better financial outcomes and generate higher attendance. Public sector facility managers now need higher skill levels, face broader roles, need access to better training and professional networks and improved financial reporting systems.

As competition increases there will be an increased emphasis on programming and target marketing based on adopting consumer driven strategies and performance evaluation techniques. This indicates a greater resourcing of local area planning, knowing who “are your customers” and how to attract them.

8.6 Key Findings of Other Issues

Loddon Shire Council needs to adapt facilities and services to respond to climate change

Loddon Shire is becoming a hotter and drier place which will result in climate change pressures such as an increase in flooding, erosion, damage to infrastructure and ecosystems, increasing facility maintenance and insurance costs. People’s health may also be impacted including heat exhaustion and asthma related to reduced air quality.

Promoting sustainable and climate-ready solutions and practices in Loddon Shire’s recreation, open spaces, aquatic facilities and services will mean the community can continue to engage in physical activity and connect to nature for health, social, cultural benefits and other benefits such as economic and environmental.

Local Government must provide equitable access to recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services

Having the freedom and equal opportunity for play, recreation, rest, leisure and involvement in cultural and artistic life are all important elements to a happy, healthy and active childhood. They are a fundamental UN human rights of child. A key principle to the future design of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities are that they are 'child friendly' and encourage equal opportunity for children to play.

Local Government is legally obliged to provide equitable access to recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services, under State and Federal Government legislation:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic).
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic).
- Gender Equity Act 2020 (Vic).
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cwth).

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap guides councils in the development of fair access policies. This Strategy will need to consider the approaches and measures to delivering the six principles outlined in the roadmap.

The cost of Council's facilities and services are increasing within significant increases in revenue

Local councils are operating in a tight fiscal environment, with restricted rate and other revenue bases. Innovative approaches to funding open spaces, sport and recreation facilities and services will be required including encouraging greater private investment. Optimising the use of facility provision by changing from single purpose to multi-use will be a key design and operational principle together with operating a sustainable business model that consider a mix of community and commercial spaces.

9. Strategic Directions

Sport and active recreation, open space and aquatic facilities and services are integral to achieving the visions of Loddon Shire Council and are recognised as key ingredients to achieving community health and wellbeing in Loddon and are an important part of the social fabric and character of our agricultural/farming communities. They provide opportunities to be active and are highly valued by the Loddon communities, delivering social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits.

The **Recreation, Open Space and Aquatic Strategy** responds to the *Loddon Council Plan 2021-2025* directions to ‘Plan for Future Facilities and Infrastructure that Meet Community Needs’ and ‘Maintain Sports and Recreation and Open Public Spaces to enable and Promote Access and Participation’.

The Strategy supersedes the Recreation Strategy 2014 and is an overarching strategy that consolidates strategic priorities identified in the:

- Activating Open Space Strategy 2019-2014
- Swimming Pool Improvements Plan 2018-2022
- Recreation Reserve Master Plans.

The Strategy aligns with Sport and Recreation Victoria’s *Active Victoria (Strategic Framework)* and the *Loddon Mallee Regional Growth Plan*.

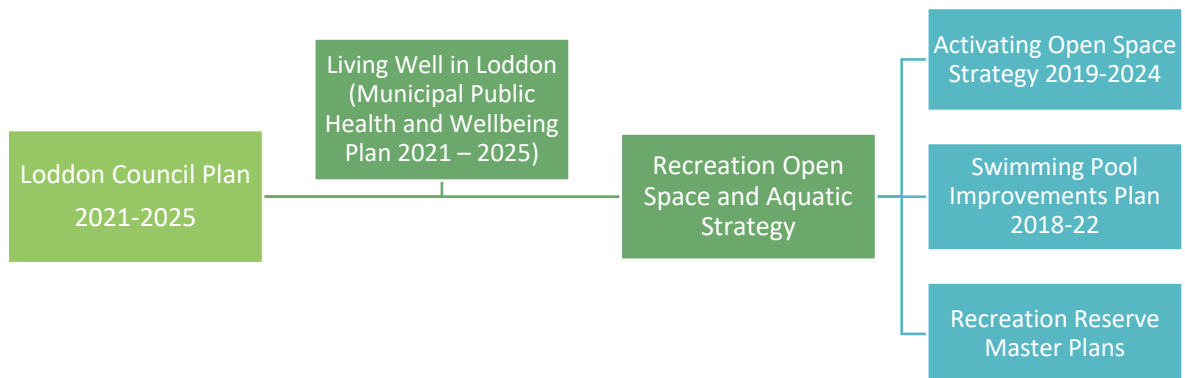


Figure 45: Strategy Alignment

9.1 Key Issues and Opportunities

What have we learnt?

Loddon Shire has a diverse network of sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services. They are wonderful places to be active and present an opportunity to improve community health and wellbeing.

Loddon Shire has a diverse range of open spaces, including sport and active recreation reserves, parks and playgrounds, swimming pools, tracks and trails, and natural places, including bushland reserves and waterways (rivers and lakes). These places are important in supporting rural farming communities.

There are over 113 parcels of public open spaces within the municipality, including nine major and 11 minor recreation reserves and five aquatic facilities. These are provided on Council and Crown Land and managed by Council, contractors and Reserve Committees.

There is a good distribution and supply of quality sport and recreation reserves, open spaces and aquatic facilities across the townships:

- The major towns of Boort, Bridgewater, Inglewood, Pyramid Hill and Wedderburn have a central sport and recreation reserve, a playground, a swimming pool, a golf course, a public hall and walking/cycling tracks.
- The medium-sized townships of Mitiamo, Calivil, Dingee, Newbridge, Serpentine and Tarnagulla don't have as many public open spaces. Still, most have a central sport and recreation reserve, public hall and playground.
- Small towns generally have a public hall and park or village green.
- The sport and recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities are supported by a network of local walking tracks and regional trails that connect key destinations. A popular local trail is Nolens Park in Boort which hosts the local Park Run.
- Loddon Shire has spectacular bushland reserves and river corridors that offer opportunities for nature-based recreation. Key nature conservation reserves include Kooyoora State Park, Leaghur State Park, Pyramid Hill Summit Walk, Mount Hope Nature Conservation Reserve, Boort Lakes and Wetlands and Loddon River.
- The Loddon Shire community also access regional sport and aquatic facilities within Bendigo and Kerang including the Red Energy Centre, Latrobe University Bendigo Athletics Centre, Bendigo Regional Tennis Centre, Bendigo Badminton Centre, Bendigo Regional Hockey Centre, Gurri Wanyarra Wellbeing Centre and Kerang Outdoor Pool.

The facilities are in good condition and attractive to use. Activation and equitable access to sport and active recreation, open spaces aquatic facilities, programs and services is a key focus of the project.

Loddon Shire is facing a health crisis, and we need creative ways to reverse this trend.

There are high rates of dental health problems, smoking, and pre-obesity/obesity in the Loddon Shire's rural communities. The impact of two flooding events and the COVID-19 pandemic has also seen a decline in participation and an impact on social connectedness as residents endured isolation from family, friends and community.

The Strategy's priority is to deliver strategies to "**activate people**" with the aim to reversing the alarming health statistic that sees three-quarters of adults in the Loddon Shire being overweight or obese.

Let's together explore ways to encourage how we can activate our community because it is important to improving community health and wellbeing in our rural communities.

We need to adapt and design sports and active recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities and services to meet the needs of our changing community.

Loddon Shire has an older population than the rest of regional Victoria, with a median age of 52 years. There are also higher rates of disability. The facilities and programs must be accessible and consider social engagement, fitness, and therapeutic activities.

There are relatively younger populations in Serpentine, Eddington, and Pyramid Hill. These communities will continue to seek sports competitions and active recreation activities.

Loddon Shire has people with diverse and rich cultural backgrounds. Townships like Boort and Pyramid Hill have a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and people born overseas. Inclusive and culturally sensitive participation opportunities will be important to encourage participation from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Many people are on low median incomes, and some of the Loddon Shire communities are considered disadvantaged. Affordable participation opportunities will be important to encourage all of Loddon Shire to lead active lifestyles.

Other key findings include:

- Sports clubs have been struggling to attract participants in Loddon Shire. A further two clubs (bowls clubs) have disbanded in the last 12 months. Junior teams are struggling with participation and volunteerism is in decline.
- In general, competition structures still operate a traditional format of play. New modified formats could be encouraged more in Loddon Shire, but local sports clubs and associations need support from peak sporting bodies to facilitate this.
- The recent Active Living Census survey shows the importance of active recreation in Loddon Shire with over 80% of residents utilising open spaces weekly with walking, play, and swimming being amongst the most popular types of active recreation in Loddon. Unstructured sports that can be played at flexible times and support a person's lifestyle, health and wellbeing are now being preferred.
- The modelling shows no demand for additional sports facilities in Loddon Shire and that a key focus of this Strategy is on activating sport and active recreation facilities rather than needing to improve the capacity of existing facilities or build new facilities.

Loddon Shire Council has invested in improving sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities. However, the asset renewal funding gap is widening. A strategic and sustainable approach is now needed.

Loddon Shire Council has improved the sport and active recreation facilities, open spaces, aquatic facilities over the last 10 years. This includes upgraded sports fields, courts, lighting and pavilions. The Council has also invested in developing walking and cycling trails and streetscape improvements within township areas.

These improvements were identified through a series of master plans and have helped deliver on the *Loddon Council Plan 2021-2025* directions to 'Plan for Future Facilities and Infrastructure That Meet Community Needs' and 'Maintain Sports and Recreation and Open Public Spaces to enable and Promote Access and Participation'.

The increasing costs of infrastructure and services is escalating, and the asset renewal funding gap is widening. The Asset Plan 2022 projects a funding shortfall to meet the current asset replacement and maintenance requirements in the next 10 years. Asset values are currently unknown for sport, recreational and aquatic facilities, community facilities, parks, open spaces and streetscapes.

Loddon Shire Council has the lowest rate base and the community is one of the most disadvantaged in Victoria. The Council is reliant on external grants to not only improve infrastructure but also to operate recreation, open space and aquatic facilities. External funders require a strategic approach to be undertaken by the Council if they are to invest in the future.

The Council will need to consider the long-term financial capacity to renew assets. This Strategy considers what a sustainable sport and active recreation, open space and aquatic service can be provided.

Loddon Shire pools operate low patronage and now cost the Council \$47 per visit.

The aquatic service review identifies that the aquatic centres are attracting approximately 15,000 visits per annum. Council is subsidising the use of the aquatic facilities by approximately \$47 per visit with an annual subsidy cost of \$700,000. This is very high and well above the industry benchmark.

When compared to other outdoor pools in the region, Boort has the highest visitation. Pyramid Hill, Wedderburn and Inglewood (just) are operating at a low patronage. This is consistent with small township pools in the area. Mitiamo is very low.

Loddon Shire seasonal (November to March) pool attendances have continued to decline and when considered against the increasing costs, the Council will need to consider the benefits against the cost of providing an aquatic service in the future.

Aquatic facility management and operations are subject to increasing costs across the industry. The increasing cost of qualified staffing, chemical supply and utilities are major contributing factors for rural facilities. Loddon Shire Council has also recently considered a proposed increased management fee by the current operator, whilst undesirable, these rates represent current market rates for pool management and operations. Staff (lifeguards) and chemicals (water treatment) are the major factors in managing operational risks and if underfunded, the risk to the Council and community increase.

The Council recognises that the Loddon Shire community value having access to swimming pool facilities and despite declining attendances there is strong support for them. Unfortunately, the high cost of swimming pools is placing considerable pressure on Council's capacity to fund them amongst other competing community and infrastructure needs. A strategic approach to addressing this issue is critical.

*Mitiamo and Pyramid Hill pools have significant overlapping catchments
and Echuca and Bendigo indoor pools service Loddon Shire.*

Within the Shire, Boort is the main tourism centre and Wedderburn the main service centre of Loddon with the largest population catchments. Inglewood pool and facilities are in the best condition and is central to communities in the south including Bridgewater, Newbridge and Serpentine. This area is identified for future growth.

Most residents can access a pool within an approximately 20 to 30-minute drive. Two outdoor pool facilities are located within the secondary catchment areas for Wedderburn (Charlton Swimming Pool and St Arnaud Swimming Pool) and Mitiamo (Lockington Swimming Pool).

Shire pools are not the only pools servicing Loddon residents. Bendigo, Dunolly, Kerang and Echuca pools also service Loddon communities. As the facilities in Loddon Shire are all outdoor seasonal pools, it can be assumed that if residents wish to participate in aquatic programs i.e. learn to swim lessons or swim year-round, they will drive to Bendigo or Echuca indoor aquatic facilities.

\$1.3 million is needed over the next 10 years to maintain the current aquatic service.

The Structural Engineer (JWS Engineers) undertook a detailed Technical Assessment of the aquatic facilities and identified the asset management (renewal) requirements of the facilities over the next 10 years. The total cost to maintain the current benefit, with no additional services, is approximately \$1.3 million over 10 the year period.

The Pools do not meet current industry standards and are now over 50 years old. This funding only maintains the assets and does not provide any additional benefit to the community; or address dignified accessibility and depth concerns with pools.

The identified asset management costs do not include the regular Council maintenance program items (e.g., pool painting and expansion joint reinstatement). These items are still required to be completed, and therefore, consideration must be made as to how these will be funded and included in future budget planning.

What did we hear?

Outdoor sporting facilities are highly valued, and the Reserve Committees and sporting clubs need support to maintain facilities and benefit the community.

Outdoor sporting facilities are highly valued: Residents highly value existing sports facilities and clubs as essential community assets. Active support is important for maintaining and improving these facilities to encourage increased usage.

Sports club challenges: Clubs across Loddon Shire face challenges with declining memberships, facility maintenance and in some regards deteriorating infrastructure. Supporting sport and recreation clubs in local communities was a key finding of the consultation process. It is also recognised by Council services that the partnership between Council, Reserve Committees and sporting clubs is critical to maintaining these recreation places for community.

Financial constraints, operational challenges, difficulties in securing volunteers, and concerns over facility accessibility, management expertise, and regulatory burdens are significant issues affecting the sustainability and growth of sports and recreation clubs in the area. Additionally, there is a noted impact of changing work patterns and seasonal overlaps on participation.

The community enjoys the diverse recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities in Loddon and wish to use them more.

Diverse facilities: There is a strong demand for more diverse recreational spaces to cater for a broad range of interests.

The high value placed on parks and gardens and riding tracks and walking trails emphasises the importance of investing in green spaces and active recreation infrastructure to promote community health and wellbeing. Respondents particularly identified a high value for the township park and play space provided in each township.

Health and fitness stations and local programs encourage adults to be active: Adults appreciate gyms, fitness stations, and fitness sessions for maintaining health and fitness.

Prioritising access to central open spaces in townships: outdoor sport facilities and park with play space and active recreation opportunities is important with the community emphasising the proximity to home to access family-oriented sport and recreation activities encourages physical activity.

Community seeks an expanded aquatic program and service: Local pools are valued as safe places for learning to swim and cooling down. The community suggested effective communication about pool timings and seek extended operating hours and diversifying aquatic programs, events and activities to meet the needs of residents and boost usage. Ideas include:

- Diversifying water play experiences: Installing water play splash parks and play equipment, diving boards and hosting more inflatable days as ways that would encourage greater participation. Innovative adventure and play opportunities should be explored with community when considering future aquatic facilities improvements.
- More programming and events: Hosting community events and introducing water aerobics, strength training, morning lap swims, etc. A range of programs and events that engage a cross-section of the community, including young and old and families should be explored with considering the future aquatic services.

Maintain recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities to encourage regular use.

Facility upgrades and maintenance: Ongoing maintenance, improvements, and diversification of recreational facilities is important. Specific concerns include footpath improvements, trail maintenance, and facility upgrades to meet current needs and safety standards. There is a need to enhance facility quality and maintenance.

Residents also emphasise the need for facility upgrades, including renovated changing rooms, shaded areas, and recreational amenities like mountain bike trails and skate parks, to improve the appeal and functionality of Loddon Shire's public spaces. These spaces need to be maintained to encourage regular use.

High value placed on the maintenance and improvement of play spaces: This finding highlights the community's recognition of the importance of maintaining existing play spaces to ensure their continued usability for the residents.

Consistent theme of adequately maintaining and activating the current assets over building new ones: This finding indicates a preference for maximising the utility of existing facilities before investing in new infrastructure through maintenance and improvement of current assets in Loddon Shire.

Accessible recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities will encourage participation.

Accessibility to facilities and services: Enhancing accessibility for seniors, diversifying play options for children and youth, promoting safe and inclusive swimming experiences, and providing a variety of recreational opportunities for adults and families are essential considerations. Improving access, footpaths, and trails is crucial, especially for seniors. Amenities like water stations, shade, and seating enhance outdoor experiences and encourage physical activity.

Additionally, the community seek more community events and support multipurpose recreational spaces. These suggestions were seen as vital for promoting physical activity and community participation.

Activate the recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities we have: A range of ideas for increasing use of public open spaces have been suggested, including places that are tailored for young people, increasing public engagement through better promotion of existing activities, improved accessibility across the Shire, walking and cycling paths, seating and shade, fitness and play equipment and physical activity programs. There is active support for hosting more community events in open spaces to encourage physical activity and participation. There is growing interest in active recreation facilities like bike skills tracks, nature-based and water play experiences.

Residents suggested multi-purpose recreational spaces, amenities, and community-focused events are key principles for the future recreation service.

Promote nature-based recreation activities: The drop-in sessions found children and young people benefit from diverse play experiences, including water play and nature activities. There is high interest by adults in activities like mountain biking, bouldering, bushwalking, and fishing to promote enjoyment of natural bushland and waterways.

Key barriers: Key barriers to engaging in sport and active recreation in Loddon Shire include limited accessibility, lack of specialised clubs or organisations, poor facility quality, and outdated amenities, underscoring the importance of addressing these issues to encourage participation.

The community wants Council to prioritise high quality recreation, open space and aquatic facilities and services.

Community accepts fewer facilities if facilities are of high quality: While a significant portion of respondents are willing to pay higher rates to maintain current sport and recreation facilities, a slightly larger group would accept fewer but higher-quality facilities, indicating a preference for prioritising maintenance and enhancement of existing infrastructure over new developments.

The “how would you spend \$100 engagement activity” resulted in the following priorities for funding:

- Improving and maintaining play spaces
- Improving and maintaining active recreation facilities
- improving and maintaining aquatic facilities
- Improving and maintaining community sport facilities.

The burdening "cost vs benefit" of five aquatic locations: There needs to be a careful evaluation of investment in aquatic facilities to ensure they align with community needs and provide significant value relative to their cost.

The community desire to see Council spending increase in sport and active recreation suggests a need for prioritising budget allocations towards provision of sport and active recreation in Loddon Shire to promote physical activity, social engagement, and community cohesion.

9.2 Vision

Loddon’s diverse, accessible and sustainable recreation, open space and aquatic facilities will activate and connect communities.

9.3 Strategic Directions

The following strategic objectives and actions are designed to achieve this vision.

Objectives



Activate recreation, open space and aquatic facilities

How?

- Partner with Reserve Committees and facilitate greater programming of sports reserves for community activities i.e. fitness classes, walking groups, etc.
- Deliver innovative approaches and encourage a diversity of activities, programming and events at aquatic facilities to increase visitation.
- Partner with community in hosting nature-based recreation events.
- Explore opportunities for nature-based recreation and tourism activities with Land Managers.

- Design community spaces in the main streets of townships that are welcoming and interesting to move through, that connect communities, encourage active lifestyles, are walkable, reflect local art and celebrate culture and heritage.

Promote recreation, open space and aquatic facilities

How?

- Promote recreation as key ingredient of country lifestyle.
- Partner with Bendigo Tourism and develop the Loddon Valley webpage with content promoting family and lifestyle sport and active recreation and a connection to nature.

Diversify recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities so they encourage greater participation

How?

- Take a strategic approach to the improvement of recreation assets and apply the Loddon Recreation Planning Framework.
- When assets are due for renewal, identify opportunities to diversify recreation opportunities.
- Prioritise improvements that address fair play, universal access and multipurpose objectives.
- Develop a recreation project rolling program to undertake initial designs to enhance the ability to attract external funding to support diversification of existing recreation assets.

Maintain quality recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities

How?

- Apply a consistent standard to design and maintenance of recreation, open space and aquatic facilities that responds to the planning framework (levels of service).
- Develop an Asset Management Plan for recreation assets and provide annual funding allocation to implement Plan. This will include the recent aquatic facility asset management plan.
- Regularly monitor and review the Asset Management Plan.
- As part of Council's annual budget process provide funding for maintenance of parks, play spaces, active recreation and tracks and trails.
- Seek external funding opportunities to support any planned upgrade or renewal of recreation, open spaces and aquatic assets.
- As part of Council's annual budget process provide funding for asset management (renewal) of aquatic facilities as detailed in the JWS Engineers Technical Assessment to maintain the assets.
- Conduct close analysis and feasibility studies of individual pool locations. Upon catastrophic plan and/or pool failure, Council investigates, with the community, future aquatic options.

Deliver a sustainable service

How?

- Support partnership with Reserve Committees in managing and maintaining sports reserves.
- Support the development of sustainable clubs and organisations by partnering with peak bodies responsible for skilling and supporting volunteers; and promoting the Sports Community website that provides the resources, training and knowledge to volunteers and clubs on how to make their role easier.
- Investigate options to consolidate if recreation facilities are duplicated. Partner with peak sporting bodies to conduct strategic reviews.

- Recognise and protect high-value natural environments and landscapes in the planning scheme and when planning open spaces.
- Integrate environmentally sustainable design and water-sensitive urban design features in capital works projects and encourage tenants to develop sustainable facility management practices.
- Investigate management models and partnering opportunities for aquatic facilities e.g., Community partnership models and regional management models with partnering councils. This includes what the possible transition of management models could look like.

9.4 Site Specific Recommendations

Site specific recommendations have been prioritised in an implementation plan. The Loddon Recreation Planning Framework (Appendix 1) will guide the delivery of recommendations in this section. Projects will be subject to available funding to support implementation, will be prioritised with other projects in Council’s capital works program and may rely on the availability of external funding.

- Short – 0-3 years
- Medium – 4-7 years
- Aspirational
- Ongoing.

The implementation plan will be reviewed every two years. This review process will consider the outcomes of planning and funding processes and ensure that any emerging community and industry trends/demands, as well as external funding opportunities and Council funding capacity, are assessed and priority projects remain relevant throughout its 10-year timeline.

The Council will continue to work with sports clubs on the development of proposals that can be considered at this review point.

Table 39: Implementation Plan

Site	Location	Recommendation	Priority	Responsibility/ Support
Sport and Recreation Reserve				
Arnold Cricket Ground	Arnold	• Maintain	Ongoing	Committee of Management/Club
Bears Lagoon Tennis Centre	Bears Lagoon	• Maintain	Ongoing	Committee of Management
Boort Bowls Club	Boort	• Maintain	Ongoing	Committee of Management
Boort Croquet Club	Boort	• Maintain	Ongoing	Committee of Management
		• Implement actions identified for this site in the Boort Foreshore Recreation Plan	Short	Committee of Management/Council
Boort Tennis Club	Boort	• Maintain	Ongoing	Committee of Management
		• Implement actions identified for this site in the Boort Foreshore Recreation Plan	Short	Committee of Management/Council
Boort Park	Boort	• Maintain	Ongoing	Committee of Management

Site	Location	Recommendation	Priority	Responsibility/ Support
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review design of current pavilion and consider netball and umpire change rooms provision 	Short	Committee of Management/Council
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocation of timekeeper's box 	Short	Committee of Management/Council
Bridgewater Bowls Club	Bridgewater on Loddon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review playing surface and lighting options and consider future use of second green 	Aspirational	Committee of Management/Council
Bridgewater Recreation Reserve	Bridgewater on Loddon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider improved toilet facilities for patron use 	Medium	Committee of Management/Council
Calivil Recreation Reserve	Calivil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management/Clubs
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate alternative use for old golf course - consider a walking track 	Short	Committee of Management
Dingee Recreation Reserve	Dingee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review location of local level play space location (see Parks and Playgrounds section) 	Short	Council
Inglewood Bowls Club	Inglewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review playing surface and lighting options and consider shared site opportunities 	Aspirational	Committee of Management/Council
Inglewood Community Sports Centre	Inglewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and implement Master Plan 	Medium	Committee of Management/Council
Inglewood Golf Course	Inglewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management
Kingower Cricket Club	Kingower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management/Club
Korong Vale Recreation Reserve	Korong Vale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider future of reserve 	Short	Committee of Management/Council
Mitiamo Recreation Reserve	Mitiamo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review reserve change rooms against current standards and develop a site management plan (including feasibility study) 	Short	Committee of Management/Council
Mitiamo Golf Course	Mitiamo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management
Newbridge Recreation Reserve	Newbridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management
Mitchell Park	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management

Site	Location	Recommendation	Priority	Responsibility/ Support
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review design of current pavilion and consider netball and umpire change rooms provision 	Medium	Committee of Management/Council
Pyramid Hill Bowls Club	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review playing surface and lighting options 	Aspirational	Committee of Management/Club/Council
Pyramid Hill Golf Club	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management/Club
Pyramid Hill Quarter Horse Club	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management/Club
Pyramid Hill Tennis Centre	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management
Serpentine Recreation Reserve	Serpentine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management/Clubs
Serpentine Bowls and Tennis Centre	Serpentine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management/Clubs
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider opportunities to enhance shared facility use 	Short	Committee of Management/Clubs
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review bowls playing surface and lighting options 	Aspirational	Committee of Management/Council
Market Square Reserve	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management/Club
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider shared site opportunities 	Aspirational	Committee of Management/Club
Donaldson Park Recreation Reserve	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management/Clubs
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider oval playing surface options to increase shared space opportunities - e.g. cricket wicket 	Aspirational	Committee of Management/Council
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Bowls playing surface and lighting options 	Aspirational	Committee of Management/Club/Council
Skinners Flat Reserve	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve Dam Wall/Spillway Issues 	Short	Council
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Master Plan (after dam resolution complete) 	Medium	Council
Wedderburn Golf Club	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management/Club
Woodstock Recreation Reserve	Woodstock on Loddon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Committee of Management
Parks and Playgrounds				
Jubilee Park	Boort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review playground using the Loddon Recreation Planning Framework 	Medium	
Little Lake Boort Recreation Precinct/Nolens Park/Rotary Park	Boort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Implement actions identified for this site in the Boort Foreshore Recreation Plan 	Medium	Council

Site	Location	Recommendation	Priority	Responsibility/ Support
		(separate to Tennis and Croquet actions)		
Sunnyside Court Playground	Boort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove equipment and sell block 	Short	Council
Sloans Park	Bridgewater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Consider future of site using the Loddon Recreation Planning Framework 	Short	Council
Bridgewater Foreshore	Bridgewater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
Progress Park	Dingee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Review provision of local level playground using the Loddon Recreation Planning Framework 	Ongoing Medium	Council
J Sloan Park	Inglewood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Review skate park design to incorporate current pump/skate/bike track trends to enhance activation 	Ongoing Aspirational	Council
Village Green	Kingower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
Borella Park	Korong Vale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Consider improvements to seating and shade 	Ongoing Medium	Council
RJ Phelan Park	Mitiamo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Review provision of local level playground using the Loddon Recreation Planning Framework 	Ongoing Medium	Council
Progress Park	Newbridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
Kelly Park/ Lions Park East	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Review provision of township playgrounds using the Loddon Recreation Planning Framework and develop a playground management plan. 	Ongoing Medium	Council
Pyramid Hill Reserve - The Hill	Pyramid Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
TJ Rudkins Reserve	Serpentine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
Tarnagulla Soldiers Memorial Park	Tarnagulla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
Tarnagulla Park	Tarnagulla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain Consider removal of cricket nets and bike track 	Ongoing Medium	Council
Cooper Park	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
Wedderburn Soldiers Memorial Park	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
Nardoo Linear Path/equipment	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
Teds Garden	Wedderburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
Aquatic Facility				
Outdoor Pools	Boort/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and monitor 	Ongoing	Council/

Site	Location	Recommendation	Priority	Responsibility/ Support
	Inglewood/ Mitiamo/ Pyramid Hill/ Wedderburn			Leisure Services Contractor
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate space to enhance patronage 	Ongoing	Leisure Services Contractor/Council
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct feasibility study, including exploring alternative operating models 	Short	Council
Bridgewater Swimming Hole	Bridgewater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
Trails				
Loddon Trail Network	Various - refer Inventory in Table 20.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit condition and compliance with standards 	Short	Council
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review provision of trails using the Loddon Recreation Planning Framework and develop a trails management plan. 	Medium	Council
Canoe Trails				
Serpentine Canoe Trail	Serpentine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
Laanecoorie Canoe Trail	Laanecoorie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain 	Ongoing	Council
Durham Ox Canoe Trail	Durham Ox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain 	Ongoing	Council

9.5 Recreation Service

The Strategy has identified a shift for Loddon Shire's Recreation Services from one that has partnered with community and State and Federal Government to deliver infrastructure improvements to one that focuses on activating the existing recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities.

Proposed Community Wellbeing Directorate actions:

- Partner with the Reserves Committee of Management to facilitate local programs and events for active sports reserves.
- Partner with State and Local Sporting Associations to facilitate modified playing formats that encourage more people to participate in sport and host club development programs.
- Establish a club support role within existing resources that seeks feedback on club needs and links resources to respond to governance and management issues and initiatives. This includes supporting clubs in delivering fair access to facilities and programming.
- Represent the user groups in the planning and design of infrastructure projects. Prepare funding applications in partnership with the community.
- Participate in the development of asset management plans for recreation, open space and aquatic facilities. This will require organising asset audits and management of asset maintenance schedules.

- Planning for the renewal of recreation, open space, and aquatic facilities, apply the planning framework, consider duplicated services, and engage the community in planning processes.
- Promote the recreation, open spaces and aquatic facilities in Loddon Shire, through developing content and developing the Loddon Valley tourism webpage.
- Facilitate nature-based recreation programs and events in Loddon Shire nature parks and waterways. Partner with land managers, outdoor recreation groups and event promoters.
- Identify, and share with Council, clubs and committees, an understanding of recreation trends and opportunities to enhance or expand the recreation options to increase activation and participation.
- Identify, and work proactively with Clubs, opportunities for future shared usage of facilities.

10. Warranties and Disclaimers

The information contained in this report is provided in good faith. While Otium Planning Group has applied their experience to the task, they have relied upon information supplied to them by other persons and organisations.

We have not conducted an audit of the information provided by others but have accepted it in good faith. Some of the information may have been provided 'commercial in confidence', and these venues or sources of information are not specifically identified. Readers should be aware that the preparation of this report may have necessitated projections of the future that are inherently uncertain and that our opinion is based on the underlying representations, assumptions and projections detailed in this report.

Otium Planning Group's advice does not extend to, or imply professional expertise in the disciplines of economics, quantity surveying, engineering or architecture. External advice in one or more of these disciplines may have been sought, where necessary to address the requirements of the project objectives. There will be differences between projected and actual results because events and circumstances frequently do not occur as expected, and those differences may be material. We do not express an opinion as to whether actual results will approximate projected results, nor can we confirm, underwrite, or guarantee the projections' achievability as it is impossible to substantiate assumptions based on future events.

This report does not constitute advice, investment advice, or opinion and must not be relied on for funding or investment decisions. Independent advice should be obtained in relation to investment decisions.

Accordingly, neither Otium Planning Group, nor any member or employee of Otium Planning Group, undertakes responsibility arising in any way whatsoever to any persons other than the client in respect of this report, for any errors or omissions herein, arising through negligence or otherwise however caused.

Appendix 1: Loddon Recreation Planning Framework

To pursue an appropriate and sustainable distribution of recreation facilities and open spaces throughout the municipality, the Loddon Recreation Planning Framework has been developed. This is based on the current situation, aligns with the township classification in the Social Infrastructure Strategy, and can be reviewed should circumstances change in future.

This table also provides a guide for future provision, in terms of what could or should realistically be provided in towns of various sizes to encourage active participation. The information in this table has been specifically developed for Loddon Shire, taking into consideration:

- Provision and benchmarking of facilities in similar-sized towns in rural Victoria.
- The types of activities that currently occur (or may feasibly occur in the future given feedback from local residents and examining nation-wide participation trends).
- Population distribution.
- Existing facility provision within the catchment (including neighbouring towns and municipalities).

The assessment of recreation and open space infrastructure provision levels will be subject to the following principles:

- Some townships may already exceed the infrastructure level identified for a town of its size. In this situation, Council will continue to provide the existing level of service, until such time as the asset is due for renewal where Council, at its discretion, may choose not to replace the infrastructure.
- Where infrastructure exceeds the level identified for a township, and the infrastructure will not be replaced in future, Council will cease insuring the asset.
- Some townships may not currently have the level of infrastructure as detailed in the table. The levels noted apply to townships where existing infrastructure exists. A feasibility study, demonstrating demand, need and sustainability will be required to initiate new infrastructure development. These projects will be subject to available funding and will be prioritised against other projects.
- Association or competition sport conducted in a township may create an override of the minimum provision levels. For example, two netball courts may be required in a community participating in a football/netball league competition. Council commits to retaining the existing level of service to recreation facilities whilst they continue to participate in competition sports.
- Community groups or other organisations, such as schools, may choose to construct and maintain additional facilities at their own cost. Where communities wish to develop infrastructure outside the level suggested in this guide, and where there is an expectation that Council will take on responsibility for the infrastructure, it is a requirement that the initiatives are subjected to a fully informed feasibility study (which demonstrates demand, need and sustainability) and whole of life costs are clearly understood. Council approval must be provided for construction or renewal of assets on a Council owned or managed site.
- In cases where clubs are considering amalgamation, going into recess, or dissolution, Council will assist user groups in planning for the future use of their facilities. If amalgamation occurs, Council will support the parties in consolidating their facilities within a 4-year timeframe. The management and maintenance of dual locations is generally discouraged and will not be supported beyond the initial four years.

The following table classifies recreation facilities, open spaces and aquatic facilities by their primary functions and provides a classification system to apply service levels to guide the provision of recreation assets across the municipality.

Table 40: Loddon Recreation Planning Framework

Primary Functions	Large Towns	Small Towns	Localities
<p>Sports field and change/social facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This may be over-ridden by association or competition sport demands. Service level standards subject to review should competition sport cease at venue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irrigated sports field provided. A fit for purpose change/social facility will be provided with the expectation of multi-use functionality, and guided by relevant requirements including building regulations, DDA compliance and other guidelines such as AFL Cricket Victoria, preferred facility guidelines. Where secondary ovals are used for individual sports, consideration should be given to planning for future consolidation to one precinct to reduce facility duplication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports field provided – irrigated where competition sport is active and has playing surface standards. Where competitive sport is played, a fit for purpose change/social facility will be provided with the expectation of multi-use functionality, and guided by relevant requirements including building regulations, DDA compliance and other guidelines such as AFL, Cricket Victoria, preferred facility guidelines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain existing sports fields. Change/social facilities retained until such time as the infrastructure is due for renewal. Review to be undertaken to determine if Council, at its discretion, may choose not to replace the infrastructure.
<p>Hard courts and change facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This may be over-ridden by association or competition sport demands. Service level standards subject to review should competition sport cease at venue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two courts provided. Preference to be line marked for multipurpose use, with minimum of netball and tennis. Fit for purpose change facilities provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One court may be provided, with preference to be marked for multipurpose use, with minimum of netball and tennis. Where competition netball is played, two courts will be provided, with access to fit for purpose change facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain existing hard courts and any associated infrastructure until such time as due for renewal. Review to be undertaken to determine if Council, at its discretion, may choose not to replace the infrastructure.
<p>Lawn Tennis Courts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This may be over-ridden by association or competition sport demands. Service level standards subject to review should competition sport cease at venue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain existing lawn court numbers and associated infrastructure where competition and membership numbers support use. A “Tennis Victoria HIT Assessment” will be undertaken to inform any proposed growth or reduction in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where competition tennis is played, up to six courts may be available for local competition, social use and practice. No additional grass courts will be provided. Existing hard courts may 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain existing tennis court and any associated infrastructure until such time as due for renewal. Review to be undertaken to determine if Council, at its discretion, may choose not to replace the infrastructure.

Primary Functions	Large Towns	Small Towns	Localities
	<p>court or light numbers at Loddon tennis venues prior to any change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore alternative court surface options where required. • A combination of grass and hard courts may be provided. 	<p>be marked for multi-purpose use at the discretion of Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting will not be supplied. 	
<p>Bowling Green</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may be over-ridden by association or competition sport demands. • Service level standards subject to review should competition sport cease at venue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One bowling green. • Retain sites with two greens and associated infrastructure whilst competition requirement. • May have a synthetic surface, subject to business case and funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally not provided. • Where competition bowls is played, one bowling green and associated infrastructure. May have a synthetic surface, subject to business case and funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not provided.
<p>Croquet Green</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may be over-ridden by association or competition sport demands. • Service level standards subject to review should competition sport cease at venue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain existing Croquet green and associated infrastructure whilst competition sport is active. • New Croquet greens are subject to feasibility study, identification of shared surface opportunities, and funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not provided.
<p>Golf Course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may be over-ridden by association or competition sport demands. • Service level standards subject to review should competition sport cease at venue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One golf course and associated infrastructure whilst competition sport is active. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally not provided. • Retain existing while competition sport active. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not provided.
<p>Equine sport facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may be over-ridden by association or competition sport demands. • Service level standards subject to review should competition sport cease at venue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An equine sport facility and associated infrastructure may be provided. • Retain existing facilities whilst events are active. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally not provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally not provided.

Primary Functions	Large Towns	Small Towns	Localities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New facilities are subject to a feasibility study and available funding. 		
Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One main park with one or two BBQs, shade, picnic facilities and accessible public toilets within reasonable distance. Likely to be minimum of 0.5 hectare – where space permits. • Secondary park, smaller in size. A public toilet may not be available. • For townships with 750+ population a tertiary park may be provided. Smaller in size. May have one BBQ, shade and picnic facilities. Public toilet may not be available. • Waste Services may be provided to these spaces at the discretion of Council. • Any of these sites may be associated with a recreation precinct or a linear area (such as a foreshore development). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One local level park provided to a basic level. • Seating and shade provided. • May have access to public toilets. • May have a BBQ. • If public toilets and/or a BBQ are provided at a recreation precinct in the township, they will not be duplicated in the park (and vice versa). • Waste Services may be provided to these spaces at the discretion of Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly one small park area provided to a basic level. • May have some seating and shade. • Toilets and BBQs and waste services are generally not provided. • Retain any existing infrastructure until such time as due for renewal. Review to be undertaken to determine if Council, at its discretion, may choose not to replace the infrastructure.
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One main playground, located at the main park area (as above) including play equipment relative to the space, the community size and profile. Current playground standards and design trends will be considered. • May include a nature or themed play space. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A local level playground will be provided within an existing park or recreation precinct. • A limited offering of equipment will be provided. At least one all abilities item to be included. • Current playground standards and design trends will be considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain existing playgrounds and any associated infrastructure until such time as due for renewal. Review to be undertaken to determine if Council, at its discretion, may choose not to replace the infrastructure.

Primary Functions	Large Towns	Small Towns	Localities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground will offer equipment suitable for a variety of children’s ages and abilities. • Secondary (local level) playground provided. May be at a secondary park or recreation precinct, or another location specific to the needs of the community. A limited offering of equipment will be provided. At least one all abilities item to be included. • For townships with 750+ population a tertiary (local level) playground may be provided. May be at a secondary/tertiary park or recreation precinct, or another location specific to the needs of the community. • A limited offering of equipment will be provided. At least one all abilities item to be included. 		
Footpaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council aspires to having constructed footpaths on at least one side of each sealed street in large townships. • Subject to funding and prioritisation. • Where practicable, seating to be provided on main pedestrian routes or key locations at regular intervals (500m apart). • Priority to be given to footpaths linking shopping precincts and community facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpaths, on one side of the road only, may be considered for key identified pedestrian routes, or to improve pedestrian safety. • Subject to funding and prioritisation. • Seating may be provided on main pedestrian routes (500m apart). • Priority to be given to footpaths linking recreation, shopping & community precincts. • Footpath surface to be determined on a case-by-case basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not provided.

Primary Functions	Large Towns	Small Towns	Localities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration given to paths that link existing footpaths. • Select footpath routes to be enhanced with activation resources (such as decals), subject to funding. • Footpath surface to be determined on a case-by-case basis. 		
Walking/cycling trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or two off road recreational trail that provides opportunities for walking and/or cycling, preferably near a creek, river, bushland or recreation precinct. • Likely to be 5km in length, but in some circumstances may be longer to complete a select route or link to another trail or facility. • Trail to feature appropriate signage. • Seating or other facilities could be made available at the trail head or in select locations en-route (to be determined based on trail-specific needs). • Trails that can reasonably meet current standards to be retained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One off road recreational trail or space that provides opportunities for walking and/or cycling. • May be near a creek, river or bushland and could be within a local recreation precinct. • Likely to be up to 2km in length, but in some circumstances may be longer to complete a select route or link to another space or facility. • Seating and other facilities may be provided at trail heads, but unlikely to be en-route. • Trails that can reasonably meet current standards to be retained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly one-off road recreational trail that provides opportunities for walking and/or cycling where the location has been identified as a priority site to attract visitors to the area. • Likely to be near a significant natural attraction. • Length determined on a case-by-case basis. • Seating and other facilities may be provided at trail heads or in select locations en-route (to be determined based on trail-specific needs). • Trails that can reasonably meet current standards to be retained.
Swimming pools/sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One 25m – 50m outdoor pool with a toddler pool provided. • Where there is no existing outdoor pool an alternative swimming/water play site will be available. • Consideration should be given to improving all abilities access to existing pools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Township will have access to a 25m – 50m outdoor pool and toddler pool within approximately 30-minute drive. (noting this may be in neighbouring municipality). • Existing pool sites will be subject to a review to determine most appropriate operating model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Township will have access to a 25m – 50m outdoor pool and toddler pool within approximately 30-minute drive (noting this may be in neighbouring municipality).

Primary Functions	Large Towns	Small Towns	Localities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing pool sites will be subject to a review to determine most appropriate operating model. Upon catastrophic plant and/or pool failure, Council investigates, with the community, future aquatic option. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon catastrophic plant and/or pool failure, Council investigates, with the community, future aquatic options. 	
Pump tracks/bike skills area Space that is suitable for bikes, scooters, skateboards & rollerblades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pump track/bike skills area provided in a suitable location, preferably in an existing recreation precinct. New pump track/bike skills are subject to feasibility study and available funding. Size and surface type of pump track/bike skills will be relative to the type of track use, size of community and community profile. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally not provided. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not provided.
Lakes/creeks/rivers Council owned or managed infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing fishing or recreation platforms to be retained. Existing boat ramps and canoe launchers to be retained. Development of additional fishing or recreation platforms, boat ramps or canoe launchers subject to feasibility study and funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing fishing or recreation platforms to be retained. Existing boat ramps and canoe launchers to be retained. Development of additional fishing or recreation platforms, boat ramps or canoe launchers subject to feasibility study and funding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing fishing or recreation platforms to be retained. Existing boat ramps and canoe launchers to be retained. Development of additional fishing or recreation platforms, boat ramps or canoe launchers will only be considered where the location has been identified as a priority site to attract visitors to the area. Subject to feasibility study and funding.
Outdoor fitness equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One outdoor fitness station with the type and number of items relative to the size of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be provided with a small outdoor fitness station containing a maximum of four equipment items. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not provided.

Primary Functions	Large Towns	Small Towns	Localities
	<p>community and the community profile.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New or extended stations will be subject to feasibility study and available funding. • Outdoor fitness station to be located in an existing recreation precinct or playground. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to a feasibility study and available funding. • Outdoor fitness station to be located in an existing recreation precinct or playground. 	
<p>Active recreation facilities Physical activities that are non-organised/formal activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of activations for informal recreation may be developed subject to community profile, prioritisation and funding. • Active recreation opportunities should be co-located with an existing recreation, open space or community precinct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of activations for informal recreation may be developed, subject to community profile, prioritisation and funding. • Active recreation opportunities should be co-located with an existing recreation, open space or community precinct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not provided.

Table 41: Social Infrastructure Strategy township classification:

Category/Classification	Towns
Large Towns	<p>Boort Bridgewater Inglewood Pyramid Hill Wedderburn</p>
Small Towns	<p>Calivil Dingee Eddington Korong Vale Laanecoorie Mitiamo Newbridge Serpentine Tarnagulla</p>
Localities	All townships/communities under 100 people

Appendix 2: Case Studies

Donaldson Park Pavilion

Wedderburn's Donaldson Park includes a new multi-sport and community-focused pavilion, construction of a carpark, solar installation with batteries, pavement works and landscaping. Stage 2 works are being designed to be delivered at a later stage and will include a new play space for all abilities, landscaping and internal paths. The project is being delivered by Loddon Shire in partnership with the Reserve Committee and user groups, the Inglewood and Districts Community Enterprise Limited and State and Federal Government.

Donaldson Park is a key sport, recreation and community space for Wedderburn, and is home to the town's football, netball, hockey and harness racing clubs.



Figure 46: Donaldson Park Pavilion, Wedderburn

Loddon Valley Football and Netball League Finals

The Loddon Valley Football and Netball League (LVNFL) finals are significant regional events that provide social and economic benefits to Loddon townships, businesses and communities.

The LVFNL finals series include six finals hosting three football games and seven netball games. Each final is shared across Loddon townships.

In 2023, the finals series attendance was estimated to be within 8,500 to 10,000 players, officials and spectators and was hosted at Bridgewater, Newbridge, Serpentine, Pyramid Hill, Calivil and Inglewood.



Figure 47: Football match at Inglewood Community Sports Centre

Australian Masters Water Skiing Championships 2024

The Australian Masters Ski Comp was held from 26 to 28 January 2024. There is little local community involvement, but it is a prestigious event to host.

Established in November 1960, the Bridgewater Water Ski Club is situated on the Loddon River in the heart of the charming town of Bridgewater.

The Australian Masters Skiing Championships was run over three days in January on the Loddon River at the Bridgewater Water Ski Club. The event featured the country's best water skiing, slalom, trick and jump competitors. There were events for age groups from under 10 to over 65, as well as our top national open men and women skiers.



Figure 48: Waterskiing at Bridgewater

Boort Parkrun and Little Boort Foreshore Upgrade

Parkrun is hosted in Boort at Nolen’s Park. The free, fun, and friendly weekly 5km community running event attracts over 50 runners. The Parkrun is run along the upgraded Little Boort Foreshore Trail.



Figure 49: Parkrun at Nolens Park, Boort

Active Farmers

Active Farmers host weekly fitness classes at the Bridgewater Recreation Reserve and host an annual Run for Resilience event. The Run for Resilience is a half marathon course run along the Inglewood to Bridgewater Trail. The event attracts 400 participants aged between 5 and 93 years.



Figure 50: Run for Resilience Event at Bridgewater Recreation Reserve

Bridgewater Swimming Hole and Foreshore Project

Bridgewater Swimming Hole on the Loddon River is a popular destination for families to swim in the summer months, especially during the Christmas/New Year and Easter holiday periods when there is a high influx of visitors camping in Loddon caravan parks and bushland areas.

The swimming hole is now connected to the township and caravan park by the new Bridgewater Foreshore Trail.



Figure 51: Bridgewater Swimming Hole

Inglewood Change Room and Park Upgrade

The major upgrade of the building at the outdoor pool at Inglewood Recreation Reserve now provides shared change rooms where they are used as pool change rooms in the summer and netball change rooms in the summer. The upgrade also included improvements to the park with landscaping and a new play space and fitness station.



Figure 52: Inglewood Recreation Reserve

Recreation Reserve Lighting Upgrades at Serpentine, Mitiamo and Calivil

The Recreation Reserve floodlighting upgrade project includes lighting towers and LED lighting and associated works for playing areas. These projects have significantly improved the safety of football and netball training at the reserve.



Figure 53: Serpentine Recreation Reserve

Newbridge Recreation Reserve Re-Establishment Project

Delivery of the Newbridge Sporting Pavilion, new netball and tennis courts and other ancillary recreation and camping reserve restoration works was one of the largest flood recovery projects delivered by Loddon Shire in partnership with the Reserve Committee and user groups, local businesses and State Government.

The facilities accommodate multiple sporting and recreation activities and clubs, community events and visitors camping on the Loddon River at the reserve. In the future if Council were to develop a combined netball and tennis facility the opportunity to consider multi-purpose courts using an approved playing surface by Netball Victoria and Tennis Victoria could be investigated.



Figure 54: Newbridge Recreation Reserve