



WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL



Master Plan

Stephenson Park

Council's 2030 Vision

In 2008 the Wellington Shire Council was involved in producing a community vision, Wellington 2030, which guides the development of the Shire. A web site and background paper were produced which highlighted the challenges that Wellington faced into the future.

People were invited to respond via a survey attached to the background paper. Over 1,000 responses were received. Surveys were returned from a wide variety of age groups and locations across Wellington. Public meetings were held across the Shire in addition to workshops within schools and forums for stakeholders in the environment, infrastructure, community and economic spheres.

Based on feedback received and through close community consultation, Council developed a written document entitled 'Wellington's 2030 Strategic Vision' - supporting nine themes reflecting the main areas of interest that the community identified through the consultation process. These themes include; Natural Environment, Economy, Transport and Roads, Population, Development, Wellbeing and Safety, Culture, Liveability and Council.

The development of sporting infrastructure throughout Wellington will give consideration to the following aspects as identified in the 2030 plan:

- Market Wellington as a quality lifestyle and tourism destination
- Support communities to attain a sustainable level of local infrastructure reflecting the needs of communities
- Support community initiatives that promote participation and working together
- Work in partnerships to promote and facilitate healthy lifestyles
- Develop our network of walking and cycling paths
- Improve the quality and accessibility of our open space and community facilities
- Develop our sport and recreation infrastructure

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In 2012 the Wellington Shire Council initiated the preparation of the Stephenson Park Master Plan. This master plan is designed to address the need for facility improvements, and identifies the key infrastructure priorities for the Reserve.

The master plan identifies a wide-range of infrastructure priorities, including aspirational projects and goals of the user groups that will require future investigation to ensure that these projects are feasible. This strategic approach to facility planning will assist all stakeholders to guide the long term planning and development at Stephenson Park.

1.2 Demographics

Stephenson Park is located in the heart of Sale, 215km east of Melbourne – in the Wellington Shire, Gippsland. According to the 2011 census, the town has a population of 13,186 people.

Sale has a SEIFA Disadvantage Index of 973, which ranks it number 174 in level of disadvantage among the 644 substantially populated postcode areas of Victoria – placing it among the most disadvantaged 27% of postcode areas in the state.

1.3 Study Purpose

This report presents the Wellington Shire Council's master development and management plans for the Reserve, and therefore will be used to guide decision making and strategic development for the period 2010 – 2020. The master development and management plans will provide a number of benefits, including -

- Complete facility management/development plans for the next 10 years, in line with Council's policy framework and Recreation facility management & development.
- Establishing a set of recommended actions and infrastructure priorities, based on identifying where resources should be allocated in order to improve the Reserve's facilities.
- Reflecting the current and future community needs and which provide a long term integrated direction and strategy for the Reserves to guide all decision making processes by the committee of management.
- Providing a guide for growth in participation and increased involvement by the wider community
- Providing a clear and useful resource for venue managers seeking potential partnering arrangements and funding sources such as Council and corporate sponsors.

2 Facility Hierarchy Overview

The concept of facility hierarchy is based on the acknowledgment that there needs to be a level of strategic compromise between infrastructure demand and supply within Wellington. All sport and recreation facilities throughout the Shire have been categorised accordingly based upon a mix of the following components:

- Capacity and quality of the facility's infrastructure
- Surrounding population levels
- Level of primary use of the facility

There are four levels within the facility hierarchy schedule, these are outlined below.

2.1 – Level 1 Regional Facilities

Level 1 facilities are of a Regional significance and capable of hosting state and/or national events. These facilities will be professionally managed, with Council contributing to all maintenance costs to ensure high standard of service. Council will determine appropriate user group fees to ensure sufficient cost recuperation.

2.2 – Level 2 District Facilities

Level 2 facilities are of important district or shire significance. These facilities may be managed directly by council or by committee of management, with Council contributing towards maintenance costs to ensure an appropriate standard of service.

2.3 – Level 3 Significant Local Facilities

Level 3 facilities are local venues that have multiple users which compete in district or regional competitions. These facilities are managed via a committee of management with Council contributing towards ongoing maintenance costs.

2.4 – Level 4 Local Facilities

Level 4 facilities provide for casual recreation and lower level or junior competition with limited number of user groups and usage. These facilities are locally managed via a committee of management, with cost of management and maintenance responsibility of the local management, funded by way of local managers charging fees to users.

* Stephenson Park Reserve is considered to be a Level 2 – District significance venue.

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Stephenson Park Infrastructure Overview



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Reserve Usage

4.1 Advisory Committee

The Stephenson Park Recreation Reserve is owned by the Wellington Shire Council, and is managed via an Advisory Committee of Management.

Council directly maintains the Reserve and its surrounds, and provides annual maintenance allocations to subsidise the ongoing maintenance of the Reserve's Turf Cricket Wicket and the Sale Tennis Club - which are not maintained by Council.

4.2 Regular User Groups

The main users of the Reserve are outlined below, along with 2011 membership numbers:

- Sale City Football Netball Club, 353 members, as part of the North Gippsland Football Netball League
- Sale City Football Club - Auskick, 140 registered participants, as part of the AFL Auskick Program
- Sale City Cricket Club, 40 senior members and 100 junior members, as part of the Sale Maffra Cricket Association
- Sale Baseball Club, 70 members, as part of the Latrobe Valley Baseball Association
- Sale & District Touch Association, 140 registered members, participating all year round.
- Sale Hockey Club, 90 registered participants across six grades
- Sale Tennis Club, 280 members, as part of the Wellington Tennis Association
- Sale Umpires Association with approx. 148 participants
- Sale Croquet Club and relevant local competition
- Wellington Softball Association, approx. 30 members

4.3 Alternate User Groups

- Local residents use the Reserve for physical activity and casual recreation
- The Reserve's social and clubrooms are often used to service broader community events such as meetings, functions and private events.
- The North Gippsland Football Netball League and Sale-Maffra Cricket Association often schedule finals matches at the Reserve, exemplifying the overall quality of the venue.
- Various school groups book/use the facilities at Stephenson Park on a regular basis

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Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Reserve serves as a home ground for a diverse range of sporting clubs and organisations. - In general, the facilities are of a high standard and are well maintained. - High standard of playing surface on the main oval attracts additional participation. - Excellent location next to Lakes/ Botanic Gardens, and with easy vehicle and pedestrian access. - The recycled water from the Lake Guthridge Water Reuse Program is a fantastic initiative and benefits all users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of lighting on the Rotary Reserve results in the surface being often under-utilised. Lighting in general throughout the Reserve could be upgraded. - Rotary Reserve playing surface is uneven and requires an upgrade. - Roads throughout the Reserve are unsealed and lack appropriate signage and speed limits. Drainage around the main gate and around the main oval is inadequate. - No unisex change rooms at the Reserve - Lack of shade, amenity and public seating throughout the Reserve serves as a major shortfall in attracting additional casual use.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of masterplan provides strategic context for prioritised infrastructure developments / assist in attracting funding from funding providers. - Access from Guthridge Parade could be improved by relocating the ticket box to the centre of the entrance so that vehicular traffic always keeps to the left. - Provision of lighting on Rotary Reserve could enhance overall participation levels at Stephenson Park. - The sealing of car parks and driveways could provide a more durable surface and reduce long term maintenance issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk of participant injuries due to uneven playing surfaces, and underutilisation due to the lack of lighting – i.e. Rotary Reserve. - Apathy of some user groups towards the day to day management of the facility, such as litter management, venue cleaning, etc. - Overuse of sports turf on main oval leading to a degraded playing surface. Also, lack of available down time for required major maintenance functions. - Inadequate drainage on the main oval can sometimes reduce overall level of use. - Tree roots are invading the tennis court playing surface in some areas, thus posing long-term implications to replace/resurface.

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Infrastructure Priorities

6.1 The Plans

The charts and plans on the following pages illustrate the venue's priority actions and record the recommended works for the Stephenson Park Recreation Reserve and, where appropriate, the indicative cost associated with such works. The table on pages 9-13 presents strategic, long term masterplans to guide the future development of the Reserve and the allocation of Council and other funding resources. The detailed design and positioning of many of these items will require consultations with external agencies, user groups and Council and, in some instances, approval from external agencies or Council. In other instances, the extent of works undertaken will be determined by the budgets available and as such, staged initiatives may need to be investigated. The master plans are not designed to include operational and minor maintenance issues which are part of the annual or day-to-day responsibilities of the Committees of Management. These include items such as internal air conditioning and lighting, building maintenance, painting etc.

6.2 Planning Principles

The **key principles** which have been used to guide the development of the master plans are:

- Retention of existing amenities and enhancement of existing uses
- Improved participation/usage
- Improved accessibility
- Improved safety and traffic management
- Improved environmental management and sustainability, and
- Improved amenity so that more casual use is attracted
- Upgraded or provide disability access to all buildings and structures, in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

6.3 Recommended Actions (High Priorities)

Priority	Recommended Actions	Description & Recommended Works	Indicative Cost Estimates	Proposed Funding Stream
6.3.1	Sale Tennis Club – Court Redevelopment	<p>The existing Sale Tennis Court complex contains 18 tennis courts in seven separate enclosures. The courts at the Sale Tennis Club are in decent condition; however they are non-compliant due to inadequate run-offs. Several courts have significant drainage issues and will require repair within the next 1-5 years. This project involves converting all 14 red porous courts to international standard clay courts (subject to feasibility study) enabling them to host ATP tour tournaments. This has been endorsed by Tennis Australia and this complex redevelopment fits in with Tennis Australia's long term plan for improved player development in Victoria. Completion of this project would see the Sale Tennis Club established as one of two regional tennis centres within Gippsland. The redevelopment would also fill a significant gap in the provision of international-standard clay playing surfaces within Victoria. Currently there are only three of these in Australia, and none located within Victoria. Both Tennis Australia and Tennis Victoria have identified the Sale Tennis Club as forming a regional partnership with the peak bodies, with the proposed infrastructure aligning with Tennis Australia's Regional Centre criteria outlined in the Tennis Australia Facility Management and Development Blue print strategy (2011). A feasibility study should be undertaken in 2012/13 to determine the project's scope and viability.</p>	\$2 million Approx.	<p>Sport & Recreation Victoria Community Facilities Funding Program (CFFP)</p> <p>Funding for a Feasibility Study would be accessible under CFFP (Planning)</p>

6.3 Recommended Actions (High Priorities – CONTINUED)

Priority	Recommended Actions	Description & Recommended Works	Indicative Cost Estimates	Proposed Funding Stream
6.3.2	Site Power Upgrade and Main Oval Lighting Upgrade	Upgrade incoming site mains power supply, with new C/T meter panel and main switch board located at main oval entrance. New external MSB shall include lighting control for main oval and netball court, and the supply breaker to existing club rooms. Project also includes installation of 28 new 2KW flood light fittings on 6 new 25 meter high galvanised poles, inclusive of pole footings and concrete reinforcement cages – bringing the main oval playing surface up to 150 lux level. Cables and conduits will be supplied and installed to 6 poles from new MSB and cables inside poles from local control gear up to light fittings on cross arms. There will also be capacity to leverage from the proposed lighting infrastructure upgrade, and install 3 phase power supply and sub board to existing netball court from the new external Main Switch Board.	\$362,000 Quoted – Balec Electrical. (Obtained June, 2013)	Sport & Recreation Victoria Country Football & Netball Program
6.3.3	Traffic Management Redevelopment – Main entrance, Parking and Road Upgrades.	The main Guthridge Parade Entrance requires upgrading. At present, the ticket box is located on the right hand side of the road, resulting in traffic entering via the right hand side of the entrance. This causes a bottle-neck at peak periods when people are entering and exiting the Reserve. It is also recommended that the road around the main oval, car park behind the clubrooms/ baseball diamond, and the road and car park adjacent the tennis club be levelled and sealed to improve drainage and overall traffic management effectiveness, and improved access for multiple user groups in peak periods.	To Be Determined	Sport & Recreation Victoria Community Facilities Funding Program

6.4 Recommended Actions (Medium Priorities)

Priority	Recommended Actions	Description & Recommended Works	Indicative Cost Estimates	Proposed Funding Stream
6.4.1	Rotary Reserve Lighting Development	Additional lighting is required on the Rotary Reserve to increase participation and allow for improved programmed usage of the area during winter. This would provide for greater flexibility to other users, and provide an alternate playing surface to reduce the traffic volume on the main oval at peak periods. Additional usage would be programmed to ensure surface quality is maintained to a reasonable standard.	To Be Determined subject to soil testing.	Sport & Recreation Victoria
6.4.2	Rotary Reserve Playing Surface Upgrade	The playing surface is uneven in certain areas and requires some work in regards to filling the existing low spots, and general levelling across the field. This project would benefit a large volume of users at Stephenson Park, allowing for increased scheduling flexibility and enhanced usage of an alternative playing surface. Additional usage would be programmed to ensure surface quality is maintained.	To Be Determined	To Be Determined
6.4.3	Main Oval Drainage	The existing main oval drainage could be enhanced, as the boundary and some sections of the playing surface have a tendency to become flooded during winter. The configuration, grading and run-off of the roadways around the main oval results in all excess run-off water draining onto the oval. This has the capacity to cause flooding. This also has a range of implications on the quality and accessibility of the playing surface, particularly in high traffic areas such as goal squares and at the foot of the tarmac where the players run onto the oval from the change rooms end.	To Be Determined	Sport & Recreation Victoria Country Football & Netball Program

6.4 Recommended Actions (Medium Priorities - CONTINUED)

Priority	Recommended Actions	Description & Recommended Works	Indicative Cost Estimates	Proposed Funding Stream
6.4.4	Bunker/Storage Redevelopment	Develop a new bunker on the west-side of the playing surface to align with the coach's box. This will also serve as a more effective and safer alternative for storage.	To Be Determined	Clubs/Committee
6.4.5	Changerooms and Amenities Redevelopment - Unisex Accessible.	Given the emergence in mixed-gender sports and officiating, there is a strong push from Sport & Recreation Victoria and the VCFL to support change room redevelopments which promote universal access and provide for unisex facilities. For District level competition, there is an emerging preference for a minimum of four cubicle showers (similar to those provided in Caravan Parks) to enhance mixed gender and multi-use. Further planning is required to determine project scope.	To Be Determined	Sport & Rec Victoria Community Facilities Funding Program
6.4.6	Shade Structure Development	There is no formal provision of seating and shade on the Baseball field and/or Rotary Reserve. This serves as a significant shortfall given the large volume of user groups which regularly use these playing fields. In addition to exploring the need for built structures, tree-planting could also be considered as a viable alternative. Recommendation - as part of the overall scope of works, investigate extensive tree planting at appropriate locations for shade/amenity. The Sale Tennis Club also plan to increase shade structures and spectator facilities at the tennis courts. Funding for projects of this nature would tie in well with the Wellington Shire Council's - Community Assistance Grants Scheme.	To Be Determined	Wellington Shire Council Community Assistance Grants Program

6.5 Recommended Actions (Low Priorities)

Priority	Recommended Actions	Description & Recommended Works	Indicative Cost Estimates	Proposed Funding Stream
6.5.1	Baseball Field Upgrades	Baseball carpet sealing and an upgraded playing surface on the Baseball Diamond. At present, the surface is adequate – however this will require upgrading in the future. As part of this project, lighting around the baseball diamond should also be investigated – with potential upgrades desired.	To Be Determined	Sport & Rec Victoria CFFP - Minors
6.5.2	Sale Tennis Club Refurbish Clubhouse	The Sale Tennis Club has long-term plans to redevelop and refit the interior and exterior of the existing clubhouse and kiosk. Concept designs and indicative cost estimates have not been established.	To Be Determined	Sport & Rec Victoria, and Tennis Australia
6.5.3	Goal Post Netting	The construction of goal-post netting is an emerging trend at country football grounds in Victoria. Netting provides a barrier behind the goals to enhance vehicle and pedestrian safety, and enhance the overall experience for participants.	To Be Determined	Clubs/Committee
6.5.4	Sale Tennis Club Hard Court Redevelopment	This project involves upgrading the existing hard courts at the Sale Tennis Club to an international size Plexicushion surface and ties in with the Club's long-term planning. This type of surface is used as the Australian Open Grand Slam surface. Potential to investigate a possible netball court relocation to multi-utilise the tennis courts/lighting.	To Be Determined	Sport & Rec Victoria, and Tennis Australia

All infrastructure priorities and projects identified in this section have arisen from consultation with the Stephenson Park's Advisory Committee and representatives from the tenant user groups.

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Capital Funding

7.1 Funding Ratios

Council is committed to the development of sporting infrastructure and endeavours to improve the planning and support for proposed developments at a community level. Funding is a critical component of all infrastructure planning and development. Funding is normally a combination of the following:

Venue / User Group Funding – Venue/User Groups are normally required to contribute to project funding. Contribution rates can vary depending on project and conditions of grant/s being sourced.

Other Government (i.e. Federal, State) – The primary source of support funding for Sporting Infrastructure Development is from the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD).

The following funding mix is proposed for DPCD or other government funded projects:

- 20% Venue/User Groups
- 40% Council
- 40% other government or funding sources

Projects that attract no state government funding would attract a 60% Council and 40% Venue/User Groups funding ratio. These local contributions would not be relevant to the venue or user group's level of income.

7.2 Project Prioritisation

The Scoring Assessment Matrix is a quantified assessment tool which has been developed to assess and rate individual infrastructure priorities to determine a project's overall ranking within Council's Sporting Infrastructure Capital Program.

This process has been developed to enable Council to rate a specific project with consideration given to a variety of factors and variables, such as:

- Project Validation
- Venue Usage, and
- Planning Principles used to support the project (i.e. master plan)

The Scoring Assessment Matrix enables projects of a similar nature to be objectively compared with one another, thus forming the basis of Council's Sporting Infrastructure Capital Program. Used in an effective and consistent manner, the S.A.M process will benefit both Council and facility users/managers in the management of sporting infrastructure through the objective and consistent prioritisation of sport infrastructure.