



Banyule City Council

Recreation Strategy

2008-2013



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1 INTRODUCTION

Banyule City Council is an inner northern municipality approximately 10km from the Melbourne Central Business District. Recognised for its open spaces and plentiful parklands along the Yarra and Plenty River valley, the council spans an area of 63 square kilometres from Ivanhoe in the south to Eltham North, and from Heidelberg West to Montmorency in the east.

The City has a population of more than 117,000 with 36% aged between 25-49 years. Although the total population is expected to marginally increase (by 1.1%) from 2006 - 2016, the greatest change will occur in the ageing population with a 28.6% increase in 70+ years.

The City of Banyule is currently undergoing a period of change in relation to its population profile and density; firstly, the average age of residents will continue to increase, and secondly, higher density housing will be facilitated particularly in three specific activity centres within the municipality (Ivanhoe, Greensborough & Heidelberg). These changes and the fact the current recreation strategy was developed and adopted over five years ago have lead to the Council's need to review and update the strategy.

As a result, Council commissioned its Leisure, Recreation & Cultural Services Department to develop the new Banyule Recreation Strategy in August 2006. In addition Council appointed Australian Social & Recreation Research (ASR) to assist with the community consultation process, and to conduct a Community Facilities Audit. This revised Recreation Policy and Strategy assesses the current recreational needs and services within the community in addition to identifying new directions and priorities for future recreation provision, and key recommendations from each of these processes have been included in this document.

1.1 Aims

The Strategy's aims are to identify the following:

1. Community recreation needs.
2. The appropriateness and capacity of existing recreation facilities, services and opportunities to meet identified needs.

3. Demographic projections and their effects on future service provision.
4. Recreation trends.
5. The relationship with other key Council policies and strategies.

1.2 Objectives

The Strategy's objectives are:

1. To assess and clearly articulate the current circumstances in relation to community demographics and the current supply of recreation services, facilities and opportunities to the community.
2. To identify any gaps or shortfalls in this supply.
3. To identify appropriate strategies for Council to address identified community recreation needs.
4. To identify appropriate strategies to address the needs of groups in the community that are currently under represented in existing mainstream community recreation activities, or whose needs aren't currently being addressed.
5. To assess the potential impact of demographic projections and broad recreational trends on the Banyule community and identify appropriate responses for Council.

1.3 Outputs

1. A Recreation Policy
2. A strategy which provides a broad direction for Council in relation to its response to community recreation needs. The strategy should maximise participation rates in recreation activities over the next ten years through:
 - i. Council's own facilities and services.
 - ii. strengthening and supporting community recreational groups and clubs.
 - iii. encouraging community and private sector organisations to provide appropriate recreation services and facilities in Banyule.
 - iv. the development of a ten year plan for the provision of recreation facilities.
3. A list of priorities and emerging issues and themes.
4. An Action Plan.

1.4 The Planning & Consultation Process

The planning process used in the preparation of this Strategy included the following:

1. Analysis of the current and projected demographic profiles of residents.

2. Analysis of the current recreation trends within the state and municipality.
3. Audit and review of existing recreation facilities and services.
4. A literature review of existing and proposed Council strategies and policies
5. Consultation through survey and workshops with the community, sporting & recreation clubs/groups, secondary & primary schools, peak sporting sodies, Council departments and officers, neighbouring local governments and state government organisations.

1.5 Recreation Strategy Context

There are various ways of defining the term “recreation.” In this Strategy “recreation” is defined as:

‘any activity an individual chooses to pursue of their own free will during their discretionary time.’

This includes activities pursued on an individual basis, as well as group activities. The activities can be passive or active, competitive or non-competitive, and can be pursued in the home or outside the home. A number of these chosen recreation activities will be inherent in the range of programs and services provided by Council and other providers. It is imperative that this strategy also embraces non-traditional activities and identifies barriers restricting residents from participating in meaningful recreation.

Whilst this recreation policy and strategy has been developed with consideration of existing key Council strategic documents, it also has the potential to impact on and influence other relevant Council policies and strategies. (See Section 4 –Relevant Policies & Strategies).

1.6 Acknowledgements

Banyule City Council would like to acknowledge the contribution of key authors Allison Beckwith, Lucia Brennan, Jeff Parkes and James Collins, as well as the staff of the Leisure & Culture Department, Council Officers, Australian Social & Recreation Research and members of the Council’s community for their ongoing input into the preparation of the Recreation Strategy. In addition, representatives from sporting and recreation organisations, in particular the Community Reference Group, who provided advice and information where required, and the involvement of those residents, recreation clubs and schools who participated in various surveys.

2

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The City of Banyule currently has an estimated population of 117,930, up from an estimated 117,901 in 1996. The total population is projected to increase to 119,985 in 2016.

The most significant demographic change will occur with an increase of 19.6% in the population aged between 50-69 years and a 28.6% increase in those aged 70 and above. This will result in 37.5% of the population being over the age of 50 in comparison to the current 30.9%. In addition, there is projected to be a decrease in children and youths under 17 years. An 18.6% decrease in children aged between 5-11 years and a 16.2% decrease in youths who are between 12-17 years is expected to occur.

Some of the implications of these changes include:

- A reduced demand for formalised and structured sporting activities, and an increase in demand for unstructured passive pursuits such as walking, golf, and the use of parklands. In addition, a greater focus on safety and accessibility in relation to passive activities will be required.
- There may be an unrecognised and unmet demand for sporting activities that are popular in the countries of origin of residents born outside Australia. This could include sporting activities such as soccer, basketball, table tennis, badminton. Banyule's current supply of facilities for these sports may not be adequate to meet future demand.
- There is a need to retain a capacity to subsidise or reduce the cost of organised sporting activities to ensure that the cost of participation remains affordable for low income families and children.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for further analysis.

3

EXISTING RECREATION PROVISION

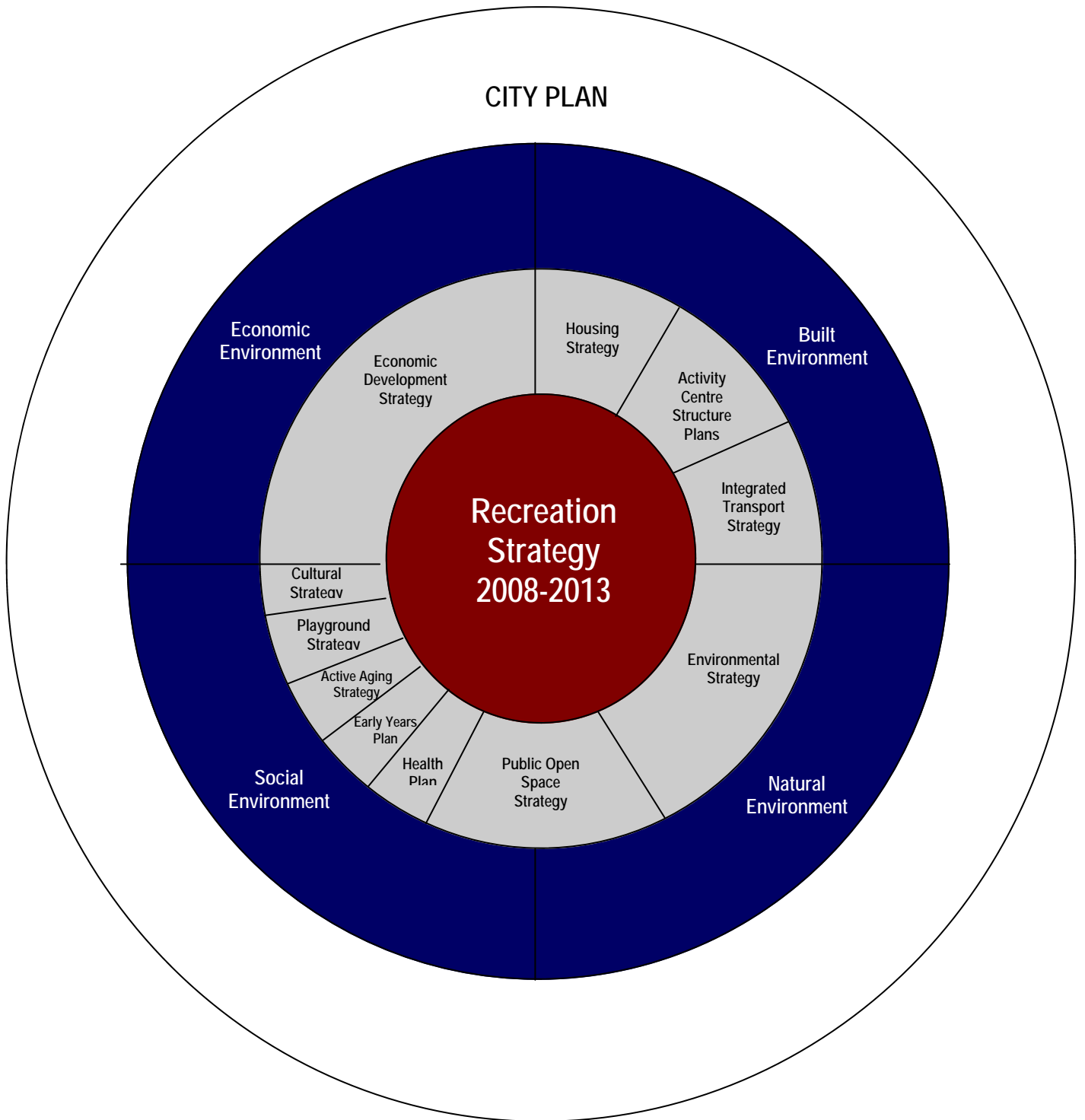
The City of Banyule offers a range of recreation facilities and services for its residents and visitors. These include a variety of sport & recreation reserves, Council operated recreation facilities, community based facilities, private facilities & fitness providers, parks & open space, and arts & cultural service facilities. Each of these target particular population cohorts, and they are heavily utilised by the local community. For example:

- In the last 12 months, an estimated 1.57 million attendances were recorded at Council owned or managed leisure facilities including Ivanhoe Aquatic & Fitness Centre, Olympic Leisure Centre, Banksia Basketball Stadium, Banyule Netball Stadium, Macleod Recreation & Fitness Centre (YMCA) and Watsonia Indoor Pool.
- The largest club membership growth (+125%) during the period 2002 – 2006 occurred in soccer. In addition football, cricket, athletics, lawn bowls and baseball experienced growth between 6-25%, while there was a small decline in the number of club members in tennis.
- There is currently a high utilisation of Council-managed sports fields for junior and senior sport, a level which has continued to grow in the past two years.
- There is currently a high utilisation of community halls with 3958 bookings in 2006, a level which has grown in the past two years. The bookings were predominantly for community groups (63.9%), with the remainder (36.1%) being for private users.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for further analysis.

4

RELEVANT POLICIES & STRATEGIES



The Recreation Strategy will be guided by four of the main themes of the City Plan: Economic Environment, Built Environment, Social Environment and Natural Environment. These themes have strong relationships with many other key Council policies and strategies. Some of these documents overlap with and potentially influence recreation provision in Banyule. Conversely the Recreation Strategy potentially will be an influence on a range of these areas of Council policy and strategy. It is important therefore that the Recreation Policy and Strategy not be isolated from other key Council policies and strategies and that the relationships and potential influences be both acknowledged and built into the document in a practical way.

5.2 Literature Review

A review of current Council plans and policies was completed to identify key issues and recommendations which may influence the Recreation Strategy. The documents reviewed were:

- The City Plan.
- Public Open Space Strategy.
- Integrated Transport Strategy.
- Housing Strategy.
- Activity Centre Structure Plans.
- Health Plan.
- Environment Strategy.
- Draft Playground Strategy.
- Banyule Early Years Plan.
- Economic Development Strategy.
- Parks.
- Active Ageing Policy & Strategy Plan.
- Connected Culture – Cultural Strategy.

The information from this literature review is summarised in Appendix 3.

5

RECREATION & PARTICIPATION TRENDS

Research into recreation and sport participation trends indicates:

- *Ageing population*; will progressively place pressure on passive recreation facilities. Facilities will need to improve access and link with public transport and other amenities.
- *Increasing popularity of non traditional and unstructured sports*; has led to the continual development of open space and parklands.
- *Effects of climate change*; drought (and enforcement of water restrictions) on turf maintenance and management has resulted in the investigation of alternative water sources and the introduction of water saving initiatives.
- *Sharing of funding and resources*; particularly for facility development is becoming ever more prevalent. This has led to joint use of school/community facilities.
- *Popularity of walking*; the most popular physical recreation activity for both males and females. However, the participation rate was much higher for females (32.9%) than it was for males (17.5%).
- *Increase in child participation*; swimming was the most popular sport for children followed by soccer. For boys, the most popular sports were soccer, swimming and Australian Rules football. For girls, the most popular sports were swimming and netball.

Please refer to Appendix 4 for further analysis.

6

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A series of consultations with the community and stakeholders were undertaken during the period August 2006 – May 2007. A comprehensive approach was adopted, and incorporated a number of different techniques. These included:

- Surveys
- Workshops & Forums
- Interviews
- Community Submissions

This was designed to ensure that a wide cross section of people and groups were given an opportunity to provide input into the future planning of recreation for Banyule.

Table 1 outlines the people and groups consulted through this process.

Table 1 – Community Consultation Process

Classification	Group	Date	Collection Method	No.
Community	Residents	Nov 06	Surveys	717
			Workshops	3
Community	Community Reference Group	Dec 06 Mar 07	Workshops	2
Community	Youth (inc. BANYN)	Feb 07	Surveys	44
		Mar 07	Interview	1
Community	Targeted Populations (Somali, Culturally Diverse Senior Citizens & West Heidelberg Neighbourhood Renewal Area)	Mar 07	Interviews	2
		Mar 07	Workshops	5
Community	Disability Reference Group	Mar 07	Workshop	1
Community	Aboriginal Community	May 07	Interview	1
School	Secondary School Students	Feb 07	Surveys	29
School	Primary School Students	Dec 06	Surveys	78
School	Primary & Secondary Schools	Nov 06	Surveys	27
School	Teachers	Feb 07	Workshop	1
Council	Leisure & Culture	Mar 07	Workshop	1
Council	Banyule Leisure Facility Management	Nov 06	Surveys	8
		Feb 07	Workshop	1
Council	Asset Management	Aug 06	Workshop	1
Council	Project Management Group – Banyule Recreation Strategy	Aug 06	Workshops	2
Council	Internal Reference Group	Nov 06	Workshops	2
Council	Neighbouring Councils	Mar 07	Interviews	6
Recreation Clubs & Organisations	Sporting & Recreation Clubs	Nov 06	Surveys	176
Recreation Clubs & Organisations	Peak Sporting & Recreation Organisations	Feb 07	Workshops	1
		Mar 07	Interviews	7
Recreation Clubs & Organisations	Local Sporting Associations	Mar 07	Interviews	13

Recreation Clubs & Organisations	Macleod YMCA	May 07	Interview	1
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Please refer to Appendix 5 for a comprehensive summary of the community consultation.

In addition, the draft Recreation Strategy was available for public comment from 1st February – 14th March 2008. A total of 14 submissions were received, each providing a range of feedback and suggestions on the content and directions outlined in the draft Strategy. Feedback was also received from Council Officers and Councillors (please refer to Additional Notes 2 - Summary of Public Comment).

7

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES AUDIT

Council commissioned Australian Social & Recreation Research (ASR) to conduct a community facilities audit. The purpose of the review was to:

- Identify Banyule's community recreation facility needs through to 2020.
- Assess the capacity of existing facilities to satisfy these needs and identify what changes to existing infrastructure and additional facilities are required and/or feasible.
- Develop a strategy which when implemented will ensure that Council's recreation facilities meet the community needs and are accessible to a range of services, local groups and the broad community.

An analysis of the information and data collected during the consultation formed the basis for the development of recommendations for all community recreation facilities. Tables 2 and 3 outline the high priority and priority project recommendations.

Table 2 – High Priority Projects

Venue	Club/s	Recommendations
Banyule Flats Reserve, Heidelberg	View Bank CC Banyule City SC	Upgrade or extend pavilion Rationalization of existing two ovals & surrounds to allow three soccer pitches.
Binnak Park, Watsonia	St. Damien's Junior FC	Feasibility Study Upgrade or extend pavilion
Elder St Reserve, Watsonia	Watsonia Heights Junior SC Greensborough CC	Upgrade or extend pavilion
Ford Park, Bellfield	Ivanhoe Junior FC Bellfield CC	New ground lighting
Greensborough Park, Greensborough	Greensborough TC	Convert two courts to synthetic
Ivanhoe Aquatic & Fitness Centre, Ivanhoe	N/A	Develop a Master Plan
Ivanhoe Golf Club, Ivanhoe	N/A	Investigate the water needs
Malcolm Blair Reserve, Eltham North	Greenhills Montmorency Baseball Club	Upgrade or extend pavilion
Montmorency Park, Montmorency	Montmorency Tennis Club	Convert two courts to synthetic
NJ Telfer Reserve, Bundoora	Bundoora TC	Convert two courts to synthetic Erect lights over three courts
NJ Telfer Reserve, Bundoora	Bundoora Junior Football Club Bundoora CC	Upgrade or extend pavilion
View Bank Reserve, View Bank	N/A	Upgrade ground, sports lighting hall facilities.
View Bank Reserve, View Bank	View Bank TC	Convert two courts to synthetic
Whatmough Park, Greensborough	St. Mary's Junior FC Riverside CC	Upgrade or extend pavilion
Willinda Park, Greensborough	Willinda Park Committee of Management	Provide more shade structure and outdoor seating

Table 3- Priority Projects

Venue	Club/s	Recommendations
Burkitt Oval, Heidelberg	Banyule Junior FC Banyule CC	Ground Extension
Cartledge Reserve, Ivanhoe	Heidelberg Stars SC Eltham Eagles SC West Ivanhoe SC	Upgrade or extend pavilion
Central Park, Greensborough	Diamond Valley Utd SC Montmorency CC	New ground lighting
Cyril Cummins Reserve, Bellfield	Yarra Valley Hockey Club	Development of Master Plan
De Winton Reserve, Greensborough	Macleod FC Rosanna CC	Facility upgrade or extension
Diamond Valley Learning Centre, Rosanna	N/A	Upgrade of ground
Ford Park, Bellfield	Ivanhoe Junior FC Bellfield CC	Upgrade or extend pavilion
Glenauburn Park, Lower Plenty	Research Lower Plenty BC	Upgrade playing field Upgrade or extend pavilion
Olympic Leisure Centre, Heidelberg West	N/A	Review the operational focus of the centre to ensure that it complements other community facilities and services in the area.
Petrie Park, Montmorency	Diamond Valley Utd SC Lower Plenty CC	New ground lighting
Warringal Park, Heidelberg	Heidelberg FC Heidelberg CC	Upgrade or extension of change rooms
Watsonia Neighbourhood House, Watsonia	N/A	Upgrade or extend facility
Winsor Reserve, Macleod	Macleod Junior FC Macleod CC	Upgrade or extend pavilion

8

KEY ISSUES & ANALYSIS

7.1 Emerging Issues

This section provides an analysis of the key emerging issues identified in the review of existing policies and strategies and consultation processes of the Strategy.

These issues are listed and individually assessed. Each issue has been analysed by identifying the source of the issue (group/consultation), discussing relevant trends and opportunities, and proposes recommendations in response to the issues.

The key issues and opportunities identified throughout the consultation process were:

- 1. Ageing Population*
- 2. Environmental Issues*
- 3. Recreation Opportunities for All*
- 4. Passive Recreation and Open Space*
- 5. Emerging Trends in Sport and Recreation*
- 6. Sustainable Clubs and Organisations*
- 7. Resource Allocation*
- 8. Strategic Alliances*

7.2 Analysing the Emerging Issues

7.2.1 Ageing Population

The proportion of older adults residing in Banyule is projected to significantly increase over the coming years. Whilst this will affect certain suburbs more than others, an overall larger proportion of older adults will mean different patterns of use and demand for recreation facilities and services. Research has indicated that an increase in the ageing population will progressively place pressure on passive recreation facilities. Therefore, the demand for traditional activities such as walking, golf, tennis, lawn bowls is likely to be sustained or increased, with greater demand for walking, group exercise, creative and contemplative pursuits in open space and less demand for contact sports. However this trend may also be at least partly off-set by population mix changes due to in fill housing and increases in housing density in and around the activity centres which are progressively being implemented in line with the Melbourne 2030 strategy.

Discussion

Council's Active Ageing Strategy supports the active participation of older adults in recreation activities for physical and mental well being. This strategy also identifies that disability is a significant issue for the ageing, with more than 55% of people aged over 65 years experiencing some form of disability. Therefore as the onset of age and the level of disability within a community are directly correlated, access to recreation facilities that are relevant to older people, including public open space, will be an issue of increasing importance within Banyule during the coming decade. It is important Council ensures that facilities, particularly open space, are easily accessible and link with public transport and other amenities.

Banyule City Council research indicates the largest numbers of people aged 50 years and older are found in postcodes 3084 (Rosanna, Rosanna East, Heidelberg, View Bank, Eaglemont), 3088 (Greensborough, Briar Hill) and 3079 (Ivanhoe, Ivanhoe North). Recreation providers, especially in these areas, need to work with Council to ensure links are made between older adults and recreation opportunities. Effective communication and information sharing mechanisms need to be explored and established throughout the community. This must also extend to residents from culturally diverse backgrounds in order to ensure equity of opportunity.

The consultation process has highlighted the importance of affordable access for older adults to recreation activities. Support of existing programs such as Pryme Movers at the Macleod YMCA, and the development or subsidisation of new programs with providers is required. Programs need to be adequately promoted amongst older residents, particularly targeting the socially isolated. In addition, transport services complimenting these programs need to be treated as a priority.

There is limited meeting space and time available in community halls in Banyule. Council should consider reviewing the current usage rates at community meeting spaces and subsidising access for older adult groups. This could allow group funds previously allocated for venue hire, to be invested in transport or program development.

During the consultation process it became evident that many retired or semi retired residents were interested in becoming involved in community sport and recreation. Concurrently, many sporting clubs identified the need for additional volunteers and administration support. The major challenge residents identified was the difficulty in accessing information to approach clubs or recreations groups. Council could develop a program that proactively identifies volunteers from such groups as senior citizens and lawn bowls clubs, and links them with local sporting and recreation clubs.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on feedback received during the community consultation process and in recognition of the projected demographic trend and issues outlined above.

1. That Council encourage Banyule Leisure Facility Management (BLFM), Macleod Recreation & Fitness Centre (YMCA) and neighbourhood houses to develop and promote a range of affordable programs suitable for older adults and for Council to investigate funding strategies to assist in this process.
2. That Council review its pricing policies for Council facilities to ensure appropriate concessions (senior's card, companion card and transport options) are available to older adults.

3. That Council develop a New Works and Services schedule specifically targeting the rectification of access issues associated with Council's recreation facilities, including public open space.
4. Develop and implement "Way Finding" strategies in relation to key recreation facilities and public open spaces which address issues such as signage, lighting, quality and safety of footpaths, kerb ramps, crossings, etc
5. That strategies be developed for the systematic installation and maintenance of secondary and supporting infrastructure, particularly in parks and reserves and along shared trails, which is integral to the needs of older adults. Such infrastructure includes seating, shade, drinking fountains, toilets, appropriate directional and interpretive signage etc.
6. That Council support and help promote training and education courses in modern information technology, specifically targeting older adults, in order to improve their access to information.
7. Assess the capacity of existing facilities to accommodate older adult groups for informal recreation activities and meetings at affordable costs and put strategies in place to address any relevant issues identified.
8. That Council, in light of the growing demand for the use of the community buses, review the current Community Transport Policy.
9. That Council investigate the feasibility of establishing a volunteer and mentoring program by recruiting members of Senior Citizens, Lawn Bowls etc and residents and linking them to volunteer roles in local sporting and recreation clubs

7.2.2. Environmental Issues

People highly value the environment. In light of the current conditions, water related issues are highly publicised and topical. Climate change and energy issues are now seen as issues of great importance by the wider community. With the introduction of water restrictions, most people are taking a range of actions to contribute to the protection and improvement of the environment. In addition, the community is strongly supporting government action and regulation of natural resources.

Global Warming, and consequently climate change, is likely to be a major long term issue that will need to be addressed if Council's parks and reserves are to be sustained. Whilst ensuring an on-going supply of potable water is the responsibility of the State Government, there are a range of steps Council can take to improve the availability of water to its parks and reserves as well as within its pavilions and community facilities.

Discussion

Strategies that could potentially be taken include capturing rain water, the harvesting and treatment of storm water, sewer mining, accessing ground water, boring and the use of river water. All of these need to be examined in depth and appropriate strategies identified. This process needs to be carried out in consultation and with the support of key water authorities such as Melbourne Water, Yarra Valley Water and Southern Rural Water. There are a range of funding sources available through State and Commonwealth Government bodies which can be accessed to help meet the cost of water initiatives. Council should actively pursue these funding opportunities where ever possible. In addition, the wider community has advocated for the introduction of such water wise programs at sporting reserves.

There are also a range of options available which can reduce Council's reliance on water in relation to its sporting and recreation facilities. These include the use of warm season grasses, synthetic surfaces and improved lighting at sporting grounds to help distribute wear and tear on surfaces more evenly. In addition, the community identified the need for a comprehensive audit of existing Council recreation facilities and consequently the development of an energy conservation strategy.

Public awareness of the need for energy efficiency and water saving initiatives are high. The consultation process identified the need for improved energy design for council and private facilities throughout the municipality. Council should adopt a set of standards for recreation facility design which include energy and water saving measures that can be incorporated into the planning scheme.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on feedback received during the community consultation process, and the future long term affects of global warming.

1. That Council seek and support State and Federal government funding opportunities for water initiatives and energy efficiencies.
2. That Council prepare a long term sustainable water use strategy for its sporting facilities and public open space, which includes an examination of relevant issues and the development of practical methods/actions for water harvesting, recycling, boring and use of river water etc.
3. That Council continued to re-sow key sporting grounds with warm season grasses.
4. That Council examine the potential to use synthetic sporting surfaces where practical including the feasibility of developing at least one “super sports ground” within the municipality; i.e. a major sporting ground/area converted to a synthetic surface with match strength lighting to allow multiple game/matches to be played.
5. That Council proactively work with sporting associations to optimise fixturing in order to reduce wear and tear on sporting grounds.
6. That Council develop a set of design standards for recreation facilities which includes state of the art water saving initiatives and energy efficiencies that can be incorporated into the planning scheme.
7. That Council;
 - a) Conduct an energy audit of existing Council-owned recreation facilities and consequently develop site specific energy conservation strategies.

- b) Conduct an audit of water use in recreation facilities and develop a water efficiency strategy for each facility, especially the use of backwash water at aquatic centres.
- c) Incorporate all recreation facilities in the implementation of the Sustainability Project.

8. That Council expand the existing Sustainable Lighting Policy to incorporate sporting ground lighting.

9. That Council, after auditing existing usage and infrastructure, develop a comprehensive upgrade/redevelopment program for the conversion of the optimum number of tennis courts at club venues to synthetic surfaces.

7.2.3. Recreation Opportunities for All

The majority of Australians are able to actively participate in community life. However some people experience barriers to participation. Most commonly these barriers take the form of:

- Access barriers, such as those experienced by people with a disability or low socio-economic status.
- Language and cultural barriers, such as those experienced by people from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Social barriers, such as those experienced by people who are exposed to prejudicial behaviour or who are made to feel unwelcome in the community in which they live.

Social cohesion and sustainability is better achieved when there is equity of opportunity for all. Recreation, particularly sport, is recognised as a pivotal tool for overcoming equity barriers and for providing a link with people who have social and cultural differences.

Discussion

Banyule has a lower percentage of people born overseas and from non-English speaking backgrounds than the Melbourne Statistical Division. In addition, residents have higher household income levels and are more than likely to be employed as professionals than the metropolitan average. Generally residents have expressed satisfaction with the wide range and quality of recreation facilities and services available in Banyule. Given all of these factors, the vast majority of residents should be able to access and afford the recreation services and facilities they desire.

However, the consultation process identified some sections of the community whose needs require special consideration. Many populations for various reasons are confronted with issues and/or barriers that make it difficult for them to either access or afford recreation opportunities. These include:

- *Members of the community who have either a physical, intellectual, or mental disability.*
The disability reference group identified the need for programs to be developed for people over 18 with a disability. The projected ageing demographic for the next decade will also mean the likelihood of substantially increased levels of disabled residents in the community.
- *People from non-English speaking backgrounds,* in particular those who are recent arrivals in Australia. These groups generally have language difficulties and are often

confronted with seemingly insurmountable cultural and religious barriers. For example, the increasing numbers of refugees from places such as Somalia, Sudan and China. Consultation with people from culturally diverse backgrounds identified that they were not confident approaching local recreation clubs or facilities.

- *Aboriginal Community.* Consultation with Victorian Aboriginal Youth Sport and Recreation Co-op (VAYSAR) identified the different needs and cultural beliefs of the Koori community. Some sporting clubs within Banyule are perceived to be not responsive, and can make young aboriginals feel unwelcome.
- *Residents in public housing (Heidelberg West, Heidelberg Heights, Bellfield and Watsonia).* A high proportion of these residents are often challenged with a range of social disadvantages such as low income, unemployment and single parenthood.
- *Youth and secondary school students.* Banyule and Nillumbik Youth Network (BANYN) and youth surveys indicated a lack of programs for teenagers and the need for links with local recreation clubs and organisations.

Residents identified the lack of opportunities within the municipality as the main barrier preventing participation in recreation activities. A number of the activities identified, such as bush walking and horse riding, obviously have limited opportunities to occur in Banyule. In contrast, activities such as swimming are available at existing centres (Ivanhoe Aquatic & Fitness Centre and Olympic Leisure Centre) and will be enhanced by the construction of the proposed regional aquatic centre in Greensborough.

During the consultation process it became clear that the cost of activities was a major factor limiting participation for some groups in the community. Youth, as well as people from culturally diverse backgrounds and senior citizens, all indicated the need for ongoing assistance from local and state government with cost. This was evident with residents interviewed from West Heidelberg, who identified the cost of equipment, cost of programs and transport costs as major barriers. Council needs to continually review pricing policies for recreation facilities and ensure appropriate concession rates are available. Furthermore, Council should facilitate initiatives with peak sporting bodies that ensure introductory programs are affordable and accessible for residents with low incomes.

Youth, senior citizen groups and the disability reference group indicated the need for subsidised transport or hire of community buses. Council needs to review the current usage agreement for

community buses and identify alternative methods of subsidised transport for disadvantaged groups.

Peak sporting bodies and schools indicated a significant increase in female participation in sport. Whilst much of this increased demand is due to junior participation, there is also potential for increasing women's participation by providing women's sport and recreation beyond the traditional sports of netball and tennis. Furthermore, schools and clubs identified the need for improved access to amenities and facilities at sporting fields, including better facilities for females.

Council Officers and residents identified a need for more readily accessible information relating to recreation opportunities. The Council Leisure Directory needs to be annually reviewed and updated to ensure accurate and current information is available. This compliments the earlier recommendations to promote training and education courses in modern information and technology.

The consultation process highlighted the importance that Council place a high priority on physical access to recreation facilities. The disability reference group advocated for the continual upgrading of facilities in accordance with the Council's disability access audit.

Council Officers, residents and recreation groups identified the importance of Arts & Culture within the community. The recommendations and action plans in Connected Culture (Council's Cultural Strategy 2007 -2011) need to be acknowledged and supported within this strategy.

Consultation with members of the Culturally and Linguistically Disadvantaged (CALD) community, Victorian Aboriginal Youth Sport & Recreation Co-Op Ltd (VAYSAR) and Council Officers identified the need for linkages between youth and professional development opportunities or employment. Council currently provides an employment service for residents and could expand this service to include traineeships for local youth. The program could involve leisure centres offering young residents industry experience and assisting with the completion of an accredited course. The sustainability of such a program needs to be investigated.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the issues outlined above and feedback received during the consultation process, which included direct communication with representatives from each of the fore mentioned groups.

1. That Council with the Banyule and Nillumbik Youth Network (BANYN) investigate the possibility of developing non-traditional activities and program opportunities for the Banyule youth who presently are having difficulties accessing mainstream recreation opportunities.
2. That Council, in conjunction with disability service providers, leisure facility managers and community groups, facilitate training and development sessions in order to enhance the skills of program providers in dealing with people with a disability.
3. That Council increase the recreation participation of people who are over 18 years of with a disability by strengthening links between disabled service providers, leisure facility managers and sporting clubs, including the provision of disability awareness training.
4. That Council in conjunction with peak sporting bodies develop and implement cultural awareness programs for
 - a) sporting clubs.
 - b) sporting associations and leagues.
5. That Council
 - a) continually review and update its disability access audit
 - b) develop a New Works and Services (NWS) schedule to improve accessibility to recreation and sporting facilities for people with a disability.
6. Build stronger relationships with the Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre and other CALD agencies to help it better understand the recreation needs of CALD groups within Banyule.
8. Promote funding opportunities such as Council's community equipment grants to disadvantaged groups throughout the municipality.

9. Ensure that the Communication Strategy currently being developed by Council includes aspects of recreation such as potential opportunities and services
10. Council develop strategies with Austin Mental Health to promote the involvement of residents with a mental illness in community recreation activities.
11. To investigate the feasibility of staging an annual community event in West Heidelberg.
12. That Council, in light of the growing demand for the use of the community buses, review the current Community Transport Policy to assist community groups that have difficulty accessing main stream recreation opportunities.
13. Annually review and update the Banyule Leisure Directory.
14. That Council support and help promote training and education courses in modern information technology, specifically targeting older adults, in order to improve their access to information.
15. Ensure pricing policies for Banyule City Council facilities are reviewed to ensure appropriate concessions (seniors card, companion card and youth) are available to people whose access is being restricted by low incomes.
16. Review the capacity of sporting pavilions to accommodate female players and officials and develop a strategy for systematically providing such facilities where they currently don't exist.

7.2 4. Passive Recreation and Open Space

Research undertaken by Deakin University (Muller et al 2002) highlights the importance to human health and wellbeing of regular quality exposure to nature, or natural phenomena, such as trees, grass plants, birds and animals. This is particularly critical in urban and sub-urban societies, as these things often aren't always readily available to people unless provided in the form of public parks, gardens and reserves.

The provision of public spaces, which people enjoy gathering in and using can play an important role in promoting and fostering recreation opportunities and activities. Whilst sporting reserves and ovals have a very significant role in this process, it is important to also recognise the critical role that accessible, safe and appealing non-sporting spaces such as parks, playgrounds, and footpaths can play.

Discussion

Consultation and the review of existing recreation participation rates identified many community trends. The most significant is growing participation in passive, unstructured recreation, as an alternative to formal sporting activities. Survey results confirmed this with residents identifying walking tracks and visiting parks as the most frequently utilised recreation facilities. Walking was by far the most popular recreation activity, followed by visiting parks. Therefore it is important for Council to recognise this community preference, and ensure appropriate community infrastructure is developed along Banyule's shared trails; including seating, shade shelters, drinking fountains, and public toilets.

Public open space, particularly linear open space, plays an important role in encouraging walking and cycling as an alternative form of sustainable transport. High quality trail surfaces will not only provide a more sustainable transport option, but will also encourage greater amounts of physical activity.

There is generally high community satisfaction with the condition and provision of parks and open space in Banyule. Residents and community reference groups advocated for the continual improvement and development of existing trails, signage and master plans. The development,

adoption and implementation of such strategies will facilitate the continued provision of facilities, and the on-going encouragement of people to visit public open space.

Similarly, the need for a strategic review of playground works and design was also identified. The adoption and implementation of a playground and playspace strategy will provide a framework for the development of key park activity centres, and planning for diverse leisure needs such as youth and older adults.

Consultation with residents and recreation clubs identified the need for designated dog parks or areas. A number of residents are currently utilising local sporting reserves. These areas are often not functional and lack the basic infrastructure to concurrently support dogs, owners and sporting clubs. In addition to the designated parks/areas, Council would need to develop an awareness program to educate dog owners, clubs and the broader community on the conditions of use and associated maintenance issues.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on feedback received during the community consultation process and the need to provide a wide variety of passive and active facilities in public open space to meet the needs of the community.

1. That appropriate public open space is identified for developing “park activity centres” and regional playgrounds which cater for large groups and provide diverse facilities for social and cultural activities, and allow for medium to longer term visits (half to full day).
2. That Council develop, adopt and implement a signage strategy for shared trails in conjunction with neighbouring councils, Parks Victoria and Vicroads.
3. Ensure that public open space is linked to community facilities and other public open spaces, through the provision of a network of accessible pathways that encourage both walking and cycling.
4. As a priority, ensure that substantial trails, such as those which follow the corridors of major water courses, are completed to shared trail standard (in accordance with Austroads guidelines)

for their entire length and where possible, are also linked to the Melbourne Metropolitan Shared Trails Network and/or Principle Bike Network.

5. That a systematic program for the installation of appropriate community infrastructure be adopted for Banyule's shared trails; including where appropriate seating, shade shelters, drinking fountains, public toilets, etc.

6. That designated areas of public open space be developed and utilised for community fitness and unstructured recreation activities. This should also include the development of a commercial personal/group training policy, for users of such areas and sporting grounds.

7. That a number of informal creative play spaces, specifically designed for children be provided at various locations throughout the municipality.

8. That Council develop and adopt a Playground & Playspace Strategy which includes a schedule of works for the redevelopment of existing infrastructure, rationalisation of existing playgrounds and the construction of supporting facilities such as shade, seating and toilets.

7.2.5 Emerging Trends in Sport and Recreation

There is generally high community satisfaction with the condition and provision of existing recreation facilities in Banyule. Over 60% of recreation clubs believe existing facilities either reasonably or highly meet their needs, with the most frequently suggested areas of improvement being car parking, improved maintenance, and additional space or improved playing surfaces.

Based on industry quantitative benchmarks for the provision of sports facilities by population density from Planning South Australia (PSA) and Australian Social & Recreation Research (ASR), the following observations are made, based on a population of 120,000:

- The industry benchmark is 1 sporting oval per 3,000 people. Banyule is therefore well provided for in that Council currently has 55 football/crickets ovals which equates to 1 oval to every 2181 people.
- The industry benchmark is 1 soccer field per 5,000 people. Council currently has 15 fields which equates to 1 field to every 8,000 people. This supports the strategy's identification of the need for additional soccer facilities.
- The industry benchmark is 1 tennis court per 1,500 people. Banyule is well provided for in terms of tennis courts with currently 97 public courts within the municipality, which equates to 1 court to every 1237 people.
- The benchmark is 1 indoor multipurpose court per 10,000 people. Council currently has 8 stadium courts which equates to 1 court to every 15,000 people. However this figure does not take into consideration single court facilities located in many local schools. Many clubs/groups (such as Ivanhoe East & Eltham Wildcats Basketball Clubs) are utilising additional indoor courts on education sites. In addition, there is currently a proposal for a two court facility based at Montmorency Secondary College.

Discussion

Residents, community reference groups, recreation clubs and schools advocated for the need to investigate the existing utilisation of facilities to identify gaps and opportunities. A number of these stakeholders indicated that before additional facilities are built or upgraded, a thorough review by Council is required. In addition, schools, residents and Council Officers indicated that school facilities should be a priority in this review, as many identified capacity for community sport, especially training requirements.

Furthermore, feedback from clubs and community reference groups identified a current shortage of soccer fields to meet demand. This issue is likely to be further compounded given the anticipated increase in participation levels in the sport generally.

Due to a lack of available open space to develop more soccer fields, Council may have to rationalise selected reserves to enable their conversion to soccer fields. This could also include partnerships with education sites which have existing soccer fields or have the capacity to accommodate such fields. Any future sites should be provided with a minimum of two fields, and have supporting facilities to accommodate multiple teams, junior development and female participants. There is also potential to partially address the shortage of soccer fields by reconfiguring playing areas where multiple fields currently exist at one location and make better use of the space.

Similarly, consultation with a number of junior football teams identified the need for additional grounds and supporting facilities. Junior football teams have increased by 18% in the past four years with most expecting similar trends in the future. Council needs to develop a strategy that plans for growth sports such as soccer and junior football.

Currently, community participation in tennis is high, particularly in the northern part of the municipality. In addition, residents not currently participating in physical activity expressed a need for access to such facilities. It appears from the feedback of clubs and the community that a possible solution to the perceived shortage of tennis courts might be to reschedule competitions across a number of different timeslots, build additional courts across a number of clubs or install additional lighting.

There also appears to be an opportunity to review and improve existing sporting pavilions within the municipality. This apparent shortcoming could be rectified by Council developing an upgrade schedule and ensuring that pavilions are multi-functional with additional meeting space for community groups.

There is capacity to increase the usage at selected sports fields for training. Recreation clubs and Council Officers identified two alternatives that included the installation of new/improved ground lights and the development of a regional training centre. Such a centre could have artificial grass ovals and sports fields and accommodate a variety of sports including cricket,

hockey, baseball, soccer and football. This would reduce the usage rates at existing grounds and allow Council to systematically upgrade ovals with minimal interruption to training (refer to the concept of a super ground in section 13.2.2).

There is a need to develop master plans for all major leisure facilities in Banyule in order to ensure facilities are better positioned to meet future community needs. The development of these plans must consider existing programs and anticipated community changes. For example, Ivanhoe Aquatic & Fitness Centre should be reviewed in light of the Ivanhoe Activity Centre Plan, Olympic Leisure Centre in light of the Neighbourhood Renewal project and the Macleod Recreation and Fitness Centre in the light of its proximity to the Banyule Netball Stadium and visa versa.

An analysis of current recreation trends identified an increase in popularity in non structured activities, and the growing demand for time-effective and alternative activities. In addition, peak sporting bodies acknowledged the need to further develop and promote modified activities such as Recfooty (AFL) and Kanga8 (Cricket Victoria). Council needs to liaise with peak sporting bodies to identify opportunities, and consequently ensure appropriate infrastructure and programs are available to support such activities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on feedback received during the community consultation process and the need to provide a wide variety of facilities to meet the needs of the community.

1. To develop individual facility master plans for the Ivanhoe Aquatic and Fitness Centre, Olympic Leisure Centre and Macleod Recreation & Fitness Centre (YMCA) in order to best position each of these facilities to meet future community needs.
2. Develop a lighting plan for Council sporting facilities, such as tennis clubs and ovals to increase usage and participation. The plan should be incorporated into Council's Sustainable Lighting Policy.

3. Undertake an Active Reserves Strategy, focusing on meeting the needs of growth sports such as soccer and junior football by developing strategies that will ensure the most efficient use of facilities. This would also investigate how the Council can better utilise existing sporting facilities by identifying gaps in use.

4. Develop a new Council policy which makes a clear statement about Council's role in relation to the development of new or upgraded sports and recreation facilities on non Council-owned land (including schools).

5. Investigate opportunities to establish stronger partnerships with local schools and the Department of Education in relation to the potential for:

(a) Greater community use of school sporting and recreation facilities

(b) Greater use of community facilities by schools

(c) More joint Council /school developments

6a. Ensure the design of any pavilion upgrade or construction are multi-purpose and take account of broadly based community needs, including the need for meeting rooms, social rooms, female change rooms, umpires rooms and projected growth of sport. NB. This should also include the development of a Sporting Pavilion Development Policy and New Works & Services schedule.

6b. Prepare a set of funding criteria for the development of new or the upgrade of existing community facilities including sporting pavilions.

7. To investigate potential open space at existing reserves that can be reconfigured or rationalised to create additional playing fields.

8. Investigate the feasibility of developing a high standard regional sporting facility in conjunction with neighbouring councils.

9. That Council examine the potential to use synthetic sporting surfaces where practical including the feasibility of developing soccer fields and at least one "super sports ground" within the municipality.

7.2.6. Sustainable Clubs and Organisations

The management of recreation clubs has become increasingly more complex in the past 10 years. This is due to increasing costs, the increased workload on club administration, decrease in volunteers, the changing patterns of sport participation, and various legislative requirements. Clubs are now expected to adhere to many regulations, such as building codes, health regulations and compete for local community support.

Club administrators are under increasing pressure; needing to be aware of the latest information and advice, in possession of numerous policies and templates, aware of the latest risks and be constantly liaising with their members. The Australian Sports Commission identified these key issues as the instigators for a national decline in volunteers in community sport.

Discussion

There is a diverse range of recreation clubs in Banyule. Whilst most clubs have a strong commitment to the development of sport and recreation, many offer a variety of services and programs for the community. The recreation club survey confirmed this, with 76 sporting, 52 community, 24 instructional/educational and 14 arts and cultural clubs/groups responding. Council should ensure that the needs of both sporting and non-sporting clubs are identified and adequately addressed.

The main concerns that clubs have about their future are the recruitment of committee members and the recruitment of new members. Council, with assistance from organisations such as Volunteers of Banyule, could facilitate a program where residents or volunteers can be introduced to local sporting club officials. The development of a club recognition or rewards system would assist the retention of such volunteers. In addition, Council should promote opportunities for junior members to sit on committees and become involved with coaching and club management.

Clubs indicated that provision of workshops regarding first aid, health & safety, disability awareness, coaching and culture diversity should remain a priority. The continued provision of training and education opportunities for club administrators should be a key priority for Council. Peak sporting bodies and local leagues/associations should be involved.

In addition, Council Officers and recreation clubs highlighted the changing environment and subsequent pressure on administrators to deliver community sport. Many clubs identified the need for improved business practices. Council with peak sporting bodies need to develop business planning templates, policies and guidelines to enable clubs to plan for emerging trends and community needs.

Clubs advocated for the ability to hire out their facilities and stage special events to increase revenue. There is also demand for Council to investigate the feasibility of having a licensing system for events, which would incorporate liquor licensing and public liability.

While recreation trends indicate a shift towards non-structured recreation activities, there will continue to be a need to provide sporting facilities for formal sporting and recreation use. The challenge for many traditional sporting clubs is to also provide opportunities for people who do not seek a structured sporting environment. Some examples identified by residents include social tennis nights, informal soccer and bare foot bowls. Council could assist clubs with the promotion of these programs.

Many residents and clubs identified the need for improved links between local schools and local sporting clubs. Council could develop the framework for a program; that establishes links between clubs, peak sporting bodies and schools; promotes opportunities for children to participate in activities; and utilises local coaches to assist with school-based sporting activities. Sports such as cricket, football, soccer, softball, basketball, gymnastics, golf, hockey and tennis would be ideal as they would be suitable for both boys and girls.

Representatives attending the peak sporting bodies forum identified the need to work closely with both sporting clubs and Councils. Council should utilise the capacity of peak sporting bodies to provide support and leadership to clubs in the development of policies and management practices.

Consultation identified that clubs require further clarification on maintenance procedures and policies. Council needs to review the current reporting process and explore web based alternatives to ensure clubs understand and can easily access the system.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on feedback received during the community consultation process and the importance of supporting and sustaining recreation clubs.

1. To investigate the feasibility of establishing a volunteer and mentoring program, linking organisations such as Volunteers of Banyule, Senior Citizens Clubs and Lawn Bowls Clubs with local sporting and recreation clubs
2. In conjunction with peak sporting and recreation associations, assist sporting and recreation clubs to become more viable entities through the facilitation of club training and education opportunities, including coaching and cultural awareness.
3. Develop a template and subsequent program to assist clubs with the preparation of business plans. This would also include the development of operational policies and guidelines.
4. Streamline the Banyule Special Event Guide to make obtaining permits easier for sporting clubs. This would also include the development of a policy and subsequent process for clubs to hire out their facilities and conduct events.
5. Develop the framework for joint programs between clubs, peak sporting bodies and schools to promote on-going sporting opportunities and linkages for children to progress through to senior sport.
6. Develop a user friendly and efficient maintenance reporting system (which would incorporate the Council's existing Action Request System) for community groups in relation to Council owned facilities.
7. Update and review the current information sharing methods available to clubs and the community, including the 'get set go' guide and the linking of Council and club websites.

7.2.7. Resource Allocation

Council strongly supports and values recreation as a pivotal part of the community. This is demonstrated by the allocation of considerable levels of funding over the last four financial years for Leisure, Recreation and Cultural Services. Funding for Leisure, Recreation and Cultural Services has progressively increased from 9.5% in 2002/03 to 10.5% in 2005/06 of the Council's total operating and capital works budget. This trend is projected to continue for coming years. The resources allocated for New Works & Services for the same period has fluctuated depending on the scale of the projects being undertaken in a particular year. For example, \$9 million was spent in total in 2002/03, which included the construction of the Banyule Netball Stadium and redevelopment of the Watsonia Library.

Discussion

Feedback from sporting and recreation clubs suggests that they feel the current New Works & Services funding process needs reviewing. There is a community perception that insufficient funding is allocated for non active and non traditional recreation activities.

With an ageing population, Council needs to ensure there is an appropriate level of funding for program development and facility access. As previously discussed, older residents are more inclined to participate in non structured activities such as walking and visiting parks. This should be reflected in the amount of resources allocated for the continual development of public open space.

Neighbourhood Houses within Banyule receive on average over 400 visits per week, with some such as Diamond Valley Learning Centre recording up to 600. The centres offer programs and services often not available or affordable to sections of the community. The size and proportion of residents that utilise these services cannot be underestimated, and consequently should be reflected by the level of support shown by Council.

Cultural events and festivals such as Kids Arty Farty Fest and Winter in Banyule are increasing in public profile and attendances. Furthermore, the consultation process highlighted the importance of arts and culture within the community, and the growing demand for additional events and facilities. The recommendations in Connected Culture, Council's new Cultural Strategy, need to be supported with appropriate resources and funding.

Clubs and Council Officers indicated that some sports pavilions are in poor condition and do not adequately meet current or likely future demand. In addition, more than 80% of clubs estimated their membership numbers would continue to increase in the future by between 5-10%. This will result in many pavilions requiring future redevelopment or upgrading. Council need to develop contribution policies and schemes with clubs, and consequently identify appropriate funding ratios to assist with the long term scheduling of facility upgrades.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on feedback received during the community consultation process and analysis of the Council expenditure.

1. To ensure adequate disabled programs are available and sufficient funding and support from Council.
2. That Council review its level of support for neighbourhood houses taking into consideration the programming and operational costs required to sustain them.
3. That Council develop a streamlined funding framework and guidelines in relation to applications from community groups for facility upgrades and the development of new facilities by:
 - (a) reviewing the guidelines of its annual New Works & Services program and by giving particular consideration to incorporating specific funding opportunities to support non active and non traditional recreation activities.
 - (b) committing to a pavilion capital works program for the improvement of existing infrastructure with a focus on extending the life of existing assets and meeting minimum standards and
 - (c) ensuring facilities are multi-functional.
4. Ensure adequate funding is allocated to non-active and passive activities/groups by committing a fixed amount each financial year.

5. Investigate the development of a club contribution policy and scheme, including supporting programs and funding ratios to compliment the recommendations of the Community Facilities Audit.

7.2.8. Strategic Alliances

Schools and local governments have historically developed successful relationships through jointly funded community recreation facilities. Since the first joint developments in the 1970's, a range of facilities such as indoor stadiums, swimming pools and sports fields have all been built on school land. Banyule has jointly funded with the Department of Education such projects as Banyule Netball Stadium at Macleod College, Banksia Basketball Stadium at Banksia Secondary College and the Sports Hall at the Olympic Village Primary School.

The past decade has seen the State Government undertake a schools rationalisation program in response to changing demographics and increasing pressure on resources. Consequently, schools within close proximity of each other have amalgamated and proportionally increased the student populations. This in some instances has also resulted in a decrease in the provision of available community recreation facilities, especially open space.

Discussion

Council has limited open space suitable for the development of additional sporting fields and facilities. Schools, recreation clubs and peak sporting bodies identified the potential for redeveloping existing school facilities to meet the increasing demand of junior sport. Council with support of the Department of Education and peak sporting bodies needs to investigate school sites that could accommodate community recreation facilities. Furthermore, Council currently does not have a policy in relation to contributions towards the cost of new/upgraded infrastructure located on non Council-owned land. Such a policy needs to be developed.

Consultation indicated that many school facilities are not at a level that could allow community access. A cost effective alternative for Council could be the development of a maintenance arrangement with schools. Schools could potentially utilise the sports facilities during school hours and allow community access otherwise.

A number of schools identified existing sporting facilities that are not presently available to external community clubs/groups. Firstly, Council should audit such facilities and determine whether they are adequate for community use. Subsequently, Council could then commence discussions with local schools and the Education Department about developing a greater level of school/community use of both Council facilities and school facilities.

Council should proactively involve peak sporting bodies and schools in the planning stage of key recreational facilities such as stadiums, swimming pools and sport specific fields. This would ensure that proposed facilities are part of strategic development plans for specific sports.

Consultation identified the need for improved communication between Council and key stakeholders. It is recommended that Council conduct biannual workshops with schools, local sporting and recreation associations and peak sporting bodies to address relevant issues, including those associated with facility access and emerging trends.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on feedback received during the community consultation process, particularly from schools, clubs and peak sporting bodies.

1. Establish links between Council, schools, local sporting associations and peak sporting bodies by conducting biannual workshops.
2. That Council develop a policy that addresses the fostering of partnerships, financial and non-financial, with the Education Department, schools and other major land holders in relation to the use of existing sporting and recreation facilities and the development of new ones, on Council and non-Council land.
3. Establish links with government agencies such as Vic Health, Parks Victoria, Kinect Australia, Sport & Recreation Victoria to jointly develop and promote programs to improve and enhance general health and well-being of the community.
4. That where appropriate, partnerships are developed with neighbouring councils to investigate the feasibility of developing a high standard regional sporting facility.

9

ACTION PLAN

This section outlines the Action Plan that shall comprise a series of actions identified from the recommendations and directions contained within the key issues of the Strategy. Each action will have a specific timeframe and resource allocated to it, as well as an indication of the Council Department and/or external stakeholders which shall be responsible for its completion. All actions have been classified into the eight key issues identified in the previous section.

Council will establish an Internal Steering Committee that will meet biannually to assist with the setting of priorities and timeframes. Priorities may change throughout the life of the Strategy as a result of many influences, including funding opportunities, specific demands for facilities and services, environmental factors and Council re-assessing some of its strategic objectives for the provision of recreation.

8.1 Action Plans

8.1.1 Ageing population

No.	Action/s	Responsibility	Timeframe
1	Review the pricing policies for Banyule City Council facilities to ensure appropriate concessions (senior's card, companion card) are available to older adults.	Leisure Services	2008-10
2	Develop a New Works and Services schedule specifically targeting access issues at Council's recreation facilities, including public open space.	Leisure Services Building & Civil Works	2008-10
3	Develop and implement "Way Finding" strategies in relation to key recreation facilities and public open spaces which address issues such as signage, lighting, quality and safety of footpaths, kerb ramps, crossings, etc	Leisure Services Open Space	2008-10
4	Develop a schedule for the systematic installation and maintenance of secondary and supporting infrastructure (such as seats, water fountains etc) at parks and reserves and along shared trails.	Leisure Services Open Space	2008-10
5	Fund and support training and education courses in modern information technology for older adults.	Leisure Services	2010-12
6	Investigate the capacity of existing facilities to accommodate older adult groups for informal recreation activities.	Leisure Services Functions	2010-12
7	Review the current Community Transport Policy in light of the growing demand for the use of the community buses.	Leisure Services Strategic	2010-12

		Planning	
8	Conduct a pilot volunteer and mentoring program which links residents with local sporting and recreation clubs.	Leisure Services Volunteers of Banyule	2008-10

8.1.2 Environmental Issues

No.	Action/s	Responsibility	Timeframe
1	Review potential state and federal government funding opportunities for water initiatives and energy efficiencies on a regular basis.	Leisure Services	2008-10
2.	Develop a long term sustainable water use strategy for Council sporting facilities and public open space.	Leisure Services Open Space Environmental Planning	2008-10
3	Develop a summer seeding program to convert key sporting grounds.	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens	2008-10
4	Investigate the use of synthetic sporting surfaces within the municipality; including the feasibility of developing a central synthetic sporting field.	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens Open Space	2008-10
5	Develop biannual workshops with sporting associations to optimise fixturing and reduce wear and tear on sporting fields.	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens	2008-10
6	Develop design standards for recreation facilities which include water saving initiatives and energy efficiencies.	Leisure Services Planning Building & Civil Works	2010-12
7	Conduct an energy audit of existing Council-owned recreation facilities and consequently develop site specific energy	Leisure Services	2008-10

	conservation strategies.	Environmental Planning	
8	Conduct an audit of water use in recreation facilities and develop a water efficiency strategy for each facility, especially the use of backwash water at aquatic centres.	Leisure Services Environmental Planning	2008-10
9	Expand the existing Sustainable Lighting Policy to incorporate sporting ground lighting.	Leisure Services Environmental Planning	2008-10
10	Develop a comprehensive upgrade/redevelopment program for the conversion of some tennis courts at club venues to synthetic surfaces.	Leisure Services	2008-10

8.1.3 Recreation Opportunities for All

No.	Action/s	Responsibility	Timeframe
1	Facilitate a series of meetings with Council, Banyule and Nillumbik Youth Network (BANYN) and local young people to develop non-traditional activities and program opportunities for the youth in the municipality.	Leisure Services Youth Services	2010-12
2	Facilitate disability awareness training and development sessions in order to enhance the skills of program providers in dealing with people with a disability.	Leisure Services Peak Sporting Bodies	2008-10
3	Develop a pilot program that develops links between disabled service providers, leisure facility managers and sporting clubs.	Leisure Services Peak Sporting Bodies	2008-10
4	Develop and implement cultural awareness programs for sporting clubs and recreation organisations.	Leisure Services Recreation Organisations.	2010-12
5	Develop a New Works and Services (NWS) schedule to increase the accessibility of recreation opportunities for people with a disability.	Leisure Services Building & Civil Works	2010-12
6	Facilitate a series of workshops with the Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre and other CALD agencies to better understand the recreation needs of CALD groups within Banyule.	Leisure Services	2010-12
7	Develop a process for promoting funding opportunities to disadvantaged groups throughout the municipality.	Leisure Services	2008-10

8	Ensure that the Communication Strategy currently being developed by Council includes aspects of recreation such as potential opportunities and services.	Leisure Services Communications	2008-10
9	Develop a pilot program with Austin Mental Health to promote the involvement of residents with a mental illness in community recreation activities.	Leisure Services Austin Health	2008-10
10	Investigate the need for an annual community event in West Heidelberg.	Cultural Services Banyule Community Health Services	2010-12
11	Review and update the Leisure Directory and "Get Set Go" Guide annually	Leisure Services	2008-10
12	Develop a New Works and Services (NWS) schedule to improve the capacity of sporting pavilions to accommodate female players and officials.	Leisure Services Building & Civil Works	2010-12
13	Develop a proactive strategy to address the recreation needs of the CALD community, by benchmarking and fostering positive engagement between service providers and communities.	Leisure Services	2010-12

8.1.4 Passive Recreation and Open Space

No.	Action/s	Responsibility	Timeframe
1	Develop park activity centres and regional playgrounds within the municipality.	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens	2008-10
2	Develop and implement a signage strategy for shared trails.	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens	2008-10
3	Link public open space to community facilities through the provision of a network of accessible pathways.	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens	2008-10
4	Ensure major shared trails, such as Yarra & Darebin trails, meet standards set by Austroads guidelines and link to the Melbourne Metropolitan Shared Trails Network and/or Principle Bike Network where applicable.	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens	2008-10
5	Develop a NW&S schedule for the installation of facilities along shared trails; including seating, shade shelters, drinking fountains, public toilets, etc.	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens	2008-10
6	Investigate the feasibility of designated areas of public open space being developed for community fitness and unstructured recreation activities. This would also include the development of a commercial personal/group training policy, for users of such areas and sporting grounds.	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens	2011-2013
7	Develop a commercial personal/group training policy, for users of public open space and sporting reserves.	Leisure Services	2008-10
8	Investigate the feasibility of developing unstructured creative play spaces, specifically designed for children.	Leisure Services	2010-12

		Parks & Gardens	
9	Develop and adopt a Playground Strategy which includes a schedule of works for the redevelopment of existing infrastructure, rationalisation of existing playgrounds and the construction of supporting facilities such as shade, seating and toilets	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens	2008-10
10	Conduct an assessment of existing recreation facilities to service the new medium to high density residential areas (Ivanhoe, Heidelberg & Greensborough) identified in the 'Melbourne 2030 Strategy'.	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens Open Space	2011-2013

8.1.5 Emerging Trends in Sport and Recreation

No	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
1	Develop facility master plans for the Ivanhoe Aquatic and Fitness Centre, Olympic Leisure Centre and Macleod Recreation & Fitness Centre (YMCA).	Leisure Services	2008-10
2	Develop a lighting plan for Council sporting facilities, such as tennis clubs and ovals to increase usage and participation.	Leisure Services	2008-10
3	Undertake an Active Reserves Strategy, focusing on meeting the needs of growth sports such as soccer, baseball and junior football. This would also investigate how the Council can better utilise existing sporting facilities by identifying gaps in use.	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens	2008-10
4	Develop a sporting facility policy for developments on non Council-owned land (including schools).	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens	2011-13
5	Establish stronger partnerships through regular meetings with local schools and the Department to enable greater community use of school sporting and recreation facilities and the development of joint Council /school facilities.	Leisure Services	2011-13
6	Develop a set of design standards for pavilion upgrades and/or the construction of new multi-purpose facilities. The standards would include the need for meeting rooms, social rooms, female change rooms, and projected growth of sport.	Leisure Services Planning	2008-10
7	Develop a set of funding criteria for the development of new or the upgrade of existing community facilities.	Leisure Services Planning	2008-10
8	Investigate the feasibility of rationalising existing sporting reserves to accommodate additional playing fields	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens	2008-10

9	Investigate the feasibility of developing synthetic sporting surfaces, and the concept of a “super sports ground” within the municipality.	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens	2008-10
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8.1.6 Sustainable Clubs and Organisations

No	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
1	Investigate the feasibility of establishing a volunteer and mentoring program, linking organisations such as Volunteers of Banyule, Senior Citizens Clubs and Lawn Bowls Clubs with local sporting and recreation clubs	Leisure Services Volunteers of Banyule	2008-10
2	Facilitate, with the assistance from peak sporting bodies and local associations, club training and education opportunities focussing on coaching and cultural awareness.	Leisure Services Peak Sporting Bodies	2008-10
3	Develop a template and subsequent program to assist clubs with the preparation of business plans.	Leisure Services Peak Sporting Bodies	2010-12
4	Develop a streamlined version of the Banyule Special Event Guide to make obtaining permits easier for sporting clubs.	Leisure & Cultural Services	2010-12
5	Facilitate the development of a joint program between clubs, peak sporting bodies and schools to promote sporting opportunities and linkages for children to progress through to senior sport.	Leisure Services Peak Sporting Bodies	2008-10
6	Review the existing agreements with sporting clubs including the maintenance reporting system.	Leisure Services Building Maintenance	2010-12
7	Review the current information sharing methods available to clubs and the community, including the 'get set go' guide and the linking of Council and club websites.	Leisure Services IT	2010-12

8.1.7 Resource Allocation

No	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
1	To ensure adequate funding for disabled programs throughout the municipality.	Leisure Services	2010-12
2	Review the level of support for neighbourhood houses, with consideration given to the programming and operational cost.	Leisure Services	2008-10
3	Review the New Works & Services (NW&S) program, focussing on specific funding opportunities to support non active and non traditional recreation activities and developing a pavilion capital works program.	Leisure Services Open Space	2010-12
4	Develop a NW&S schedule for the development of non-active and passive activities.	Leisure Services Open Space	2008-10
5	Develop a Sporting Pavilion Development Policy, including club contribution programs and funding ratios to compliment the recommendations of the Community Facilities Audit.	Leisure Services Building & Civil Works Parks & Gardens	2010-12
6	Develop a NW&S schedule that incorporates the recommendations of the Community Facilities Audit.	Leisure Services Parks & Gardens Open Space	2008-10

8.1.8 Strategic Alliances

No	Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe
1	Facilitate biannual workshops with local sporting associations and peak sporting bodies.	Leisure Services Peak Sporting Bodies	2008-10
2	Investigate the feasibility of developing an agreement/policy with the Education Department, schools and other major land holders in relation to the use of existing sporting and recreation facilities and the development of new ones, on Council and non-Council land.	Leisure Services Property Services	2008-10
3	Facilitate the development of recreation programs with government agencies such as Vic Health, Parks Vic and Sport & Recreation Victoria.	Leisure Services	2011-13
4	Investigate the feasibility of developing regional sporting facilities with neighbouring councils.	Leisure Services	2011-12
5	Facilitate biannual workshops with teachers from local schools.	Leisure Services	2008-10

10 REFERENCES

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