



Mackay Regional Council

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy 2010-2016

Final Report

November 2010



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Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy

Mackay
REGIONAL COUNCIL



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- Cr Paul Steindl Portfolio Councillor for Health Sport and Recreation Committee
- Cr Karen May Portfolio Councillor for Community Services and Facilities
- Cr George Christiansen Portfolio Councillor for Parks and Environment
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- Dominic Doyle Senior Advisor, Sport and Recreation Services, Department of Communities

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This project was undertaken in partnership with the Queensland Government who provided 50% funding of \$45,615 to Mackay Regional Council to undertake this Strategic Plan to get more Queenslanders active through sport and recreation.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Open Space Sport and Recreation Strategy has been developed based on the existing studies completed for the former Mirani, Sarina and Mackay local government areas. The plan has been informed further by consultation with the community and identifies a five year strategy for Council's planning and provision of open space, sport and recreation. One of the main challenges in preparing this strategy was to develop an approach that reflected the higher level of planning needed for the newly formed Mackay Regional Council. Integral to this is the need to develop a basis for decision making that accommodates the wider scope of consideration required for the regional communities as well as recognising that Council still has significant resource constraints.

The plan seeks to define a regional context for the planning and provision of parks, sport and recreation and proposes a new framework for the management and delivery of sport and recreation opportunities.

I.I. MACKAY REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMUNITY

The population of the Mackay Regional Council local government area was estimated to be 116,123¹ as at 30 June 2009. This population indicates an increase of 2.8% from the previous 12 months and an average growth rate of 3.3% between 2004 and 2009, compared to a state average of 2.61%.

The region's community is a diverse mix of urban, rural and coastal population centres and villages. The main industries supporting the local economy are construction, transport, rural and mining services.

Population growth is a key issue for the community with housing availability and affordability a major concern. There are significant pressures on urban development to deliver additional housing at affordable prices. However demand for coastal and city areas has meant that residential land has become difficult to obtain and growth has extended to urban fringes and higher density development of existing areas.

Residential growth and increasing demand for available land has meant that pressure has increased on existing parks and sporting field supplies and there is increased pressure to address under supply, particularly of sporting land in the residential growth areas.

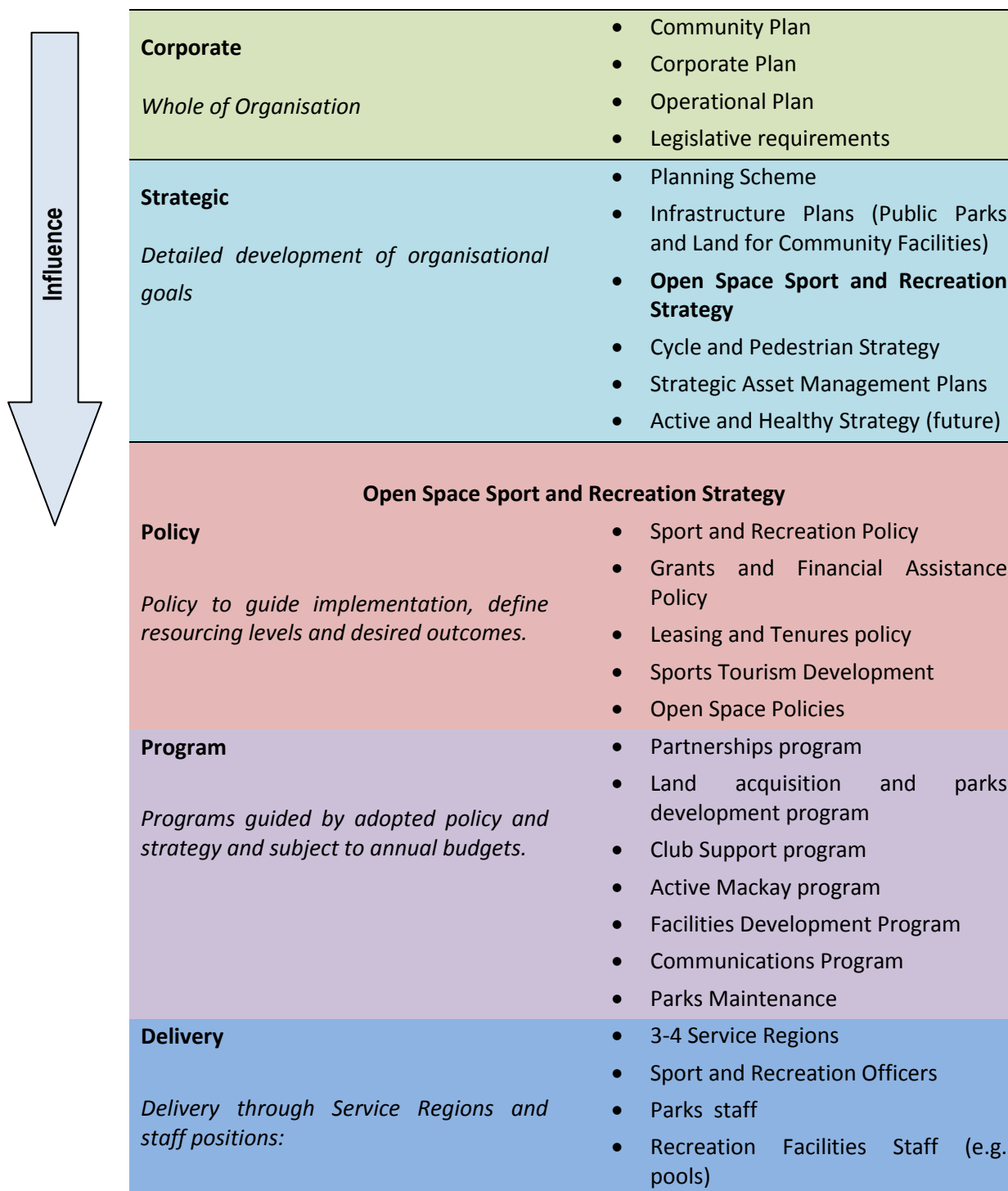
To 2026 population projections indicate the region is expected to grow by up to 63,895 people². Planning for and providing parks, sport and recreation opportunities for that growth is a challenge that this strategy seeks to address by identifying a number of strategies to improve the use of existing resources and ensuring the investment in new facilities is undertaken in a way that maximises short and long term benefits for the community.

¹ Mackay Regional Council Population and Housing Profile.(preliminary figure), July 2010 OESR, Queensland Treasury

² High growth forecast contained in Population and Housing Profile July 2010-Ibid.

1.2. FRAMEWORK FOR DELIVERY

The following diagram explains the proposed framework for delivery of this Strategy and management of sport and recreation overall.



1.3. KEY STRATEGY DRIVERS

A number of key issues were identified during the study. Responding to these issues has informed the recommendations forming the core of the strategy. The issues and possible responses are discussed in more detail in Section 5. These “drivers” are summarised below:

- There is a need to develop a consistent approach to provision of open space sport and recreation facilities and services that accommodates the diversity of communities within the new regional council and provides an objective basis for decision making and budgeting.
- As a consequence of amalgamation there are inequities in leasing and tenure and levels of support for sport and recreation groups.
- Mackay has a high youth population and has several areas where provision of recreation and sport opportunities is limited. This is compounded by limited public transport. Responding to these issues should consider provision of both structured and unstructured opportunities for young people.
- Implementation of past plans and the ability of council to build on or take advantage of funding or other opportunities has been limited in the past by a lack of staff resources. Additional staffing in sport and recreation would allow for a number of initiatives which will increase shared and multiple use of existing community resources and will help build capacity in community organisations.
- There is an increasing emphasis on active living and physical activity opportunities both at state and federal government levels. Local governments are recognised as critical in delivering a healthier community. In addition participation trends are showing the demand for “recreational exercise” opportunities is increasing and is becoming one of the core services expected by communities from their local government. One of the main areas this is evident is in the demand for walking and cycling trails and paths. The general aging of the population also means that providing for active living needs to consider facilities and programs appropriate to older residents.
- As a regional council, there is a need to adopt a new strategic approach to development of sporting facilities, which considers how best to build on existing facility precincts in the three former council areas as well as identifying how to prioritise support for the numerous proposals for new facilities.
- Rapid population growth has placed considerable pressure on existing parks, fields and facilities as well as demands on council to develop new parks, fields and facilities. In some areas there is an under supply of sporting parks and few opportunities to address the shortage. In addition the legislative framework (Sustainable Planning Act 2009) covering developer contributions through infrastructure charges, constrains both the amount of land and the level of embellishment that can be charged for.
- Community feedback has indicated that increased diversity of park settings is desired as well as a strong awareness that there are equity issues in regard to the quality of park development and availability of opportunity. A strong perception exists that new urban areas are not delivering acceptable levels of parkland.

- Council, like other agencies, is operating in a time of extreme financial constraint and needs to ensure that strategies such as this are realistic and achievable.
- Under supply of indoor sporting facilities has been a consistent theme of past plans and was reinforced during the consultation for this plan. Addressing this need must now be informed by analysis of the impact of the Federal Government's Economic Stimulus/ Building Education Revolution funding which will deliver school based indoor facilities. While these facilities are required to be made available to the community there is uncertainty as to the final design of many of those proposed and a lack of clarity on what each school perceives as "community access". A strategy to resolve under supply of indoor sports facilities will need to consider how the school facilities can be "enabled" as well as what level of multi-court and specialist provision (e.g. Gymnastics) is required.
- An Aquatic Facilities Strategy has been prepared at the same time as this study and a Feasibility Study for Sarina Indoor Sport, Recreation and Youth Centre has recently been completed. The recommendations of those strategies need to be incorporated into this overall strategy and priorities between the studies compared.
- Sport and recreation clubs and groups have indicated they are subject to significant pressures both financially and with the decline in volunteerism. While they want to continue their role in delivering formal sport for the community there is recognition that current pressures are unsustainable. New ways of working with and supporting these groups are required to ensure they remain sustainable and are able to adapt to changing social environments.



2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations have been assigned the following priorities.

- Immediate (Within next 12 months)
- Short term (1 – 2 years)
- Medium term (3 – 4 years)
- Long term (5 years)
- Ongoing (recurring activity at annual or shorter interval)

Recommendations are grouped into the following categories:

Planning, Administration and Management
Facilities and Infrastructure
Services and Programs

The implementation of all recommendations within this report would be beyond the responsibility and/ or capacity of Council to fund in its own right. To this end, partnerships, external grants and other funding contributions will be sought wherever possible. Recommended actions should be reviewed annually for the life of the plan and a major review undertaken in year five to prepare a new five year plan.

Figure 1 Bluewater Quays Regional Parklands



2.1. PLANNING, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

2.1.1. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION	Priority 1 = Immediate 2 = Annual 3 = Short- ongoing
RECOMMENDATION	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopt and implement the Mackay Regional Council Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy according to the priorities identified. 2. Undertake annual reviews of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy as part of a planning process that reviews priorities and determines activities for the following year. Progress on implementing the strategy should be detailed in Council's annual report. 3. Council should consider a community survey every two years to assess performance in implementing the plan and identifying trends and emerging issues. This could be linked to Council' regular Community Attitude Survey. A shortened version of the survey used for this study could provide the basis for a new survey and allow for good comparability of results over time. 	
RATIONALE	
<p>This sport and recreation plan represents detailed input from the community and a strategic overview to guide resources for the next 5+ years. The plan will allow for a sustained effort and consistent direction for sport and recreation in the Mackay Region.</p> <p>To maximise the effectiveness of the Sport and Recreation Plan it should be reviewed regularly to adapt to changing circumstances and shifting priorities. Following this, it is likely the plan will need a full review after 5 years and this should involve detailed consultation with the community.</p> <p>Conducting a regular community survey will allow council to assess performance in meeting issues and concerns of the community and in implementing the plan. Using the same survey base over time will allow data to be compared and will also build up a reliable body of knowledge in regard to participation and activity trends. Using an on-line method has shown to be successful and can be undertaken at relatively little expense.</p>	

2.1.2. YOUNG PEOPLE	Priority 1 = Short –Medium 2 = Short
RECOMMENDATION	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare a Youth Space Strategy that builds on the current skate park program and seeks to develop a number of youth focused spaces to ensure provision of informal recreation opportunities at district or township/ village levels. 2. As a priority new spaces should be developed or existing spaces improved at Koumala, Mirani, Eungella and Sarina. Short term considerations would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop shade and seating in the recreation reserve in Koumala adjacent to the sports court for young people and enable informal access. ▪ Additional Improvements to Mirani Skate Park ▪ Developing a space in Eungella ▪ Initial development of youth facilities in Brewers Park including a skatepark 	
RATIONALE	
<p>Mackay has a younger community than the state average. In several locales throughout the region there are high populations of young people. In addition there are geographic constraints to accessing centralised facilities and a need to provide more localised development of spaces for young people to gather, be active and to socialise. While the need for opportunities for young people has been acknowledged by council with the development of several skate parks a new approach should focus more on providing spaces with diverse activity solutions according to the aspirations of local young people.</p> <p>However there are limited resources to develop spaces and places which are accessible, safe and desirable and a coordinated strategy developed with young people should identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Priority locations for new spaces ▪ Improvements to enhance or “re-life” existing spaces ▪ Creating diverse spaces with individual character and ownership of design by local youth. ▪ Timeframes for revitalising/ redesigning spaces that should apply to youth spaces. Periodic refurbishment or redesign is required to meet changing needs as new age cohorts emerge or local community needs change. <p>It is essential that young people are extensively involved in the development of the strategy and the design and management of any local spaces.</p> <p>There are immediate needs in Koumala, Eungella, Sarina and the Pioneer Valley which should be met with interim strategies to provide additional opportunities for young people. This is partly driven by the lack of transport options in these townships.</p>	

2.1.3. LEASING AND TENURE	Priority 1 = Short- Medium 2 = Short - Medium
RECOMMENDATION	
<p>1. Council should develop and adopt a new policy on not for profit leasing and access arrangements for community use of Council land and assets. The Policy should consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Normalising pricing mechanisms (access fees) for field and court spaces so that leases or seasonal tenancies pay the same amount relative to their level of use. b) Access fees be set at a base rate and adjusted according to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Level of maintenance provided by Council ii) Contribution of Clubs to maintaining general community access areas c) Utility charges (water, power) to be borne by user groups (whether leased or non-leased). d) Summarise the responsibilities of user groups/ lessees and Council by way of a simple “club information package” which is provided to incoming executive committee members. e) Defining reasonable minimum maintenance standards which must be complied with. f) Where fields are leased by a club or organisation holding a full liquor license with gaming machines and/or community use is restricted by way of full fencing then all maintenance should be the responsibility of the lessee and general rates would be payable. g) Advertising for expressions of interest for the use of new sports fields or spaces. h) Including a “use it or loose it” clause based on specific guidelines, so that clubs can’t land bank when other sports need access to the land. i) If there is any need for special arrangements for groups who provide a significant community service. <p>2. The new policy should be developed over the next 1-2 years in conjunction with a consultative group representing sport and recreation clubs and consequently a staged roll out of the policy should be planned over several years.</p>	
RATIONALE	
<p>The need to develop a consistent policy framework for leasing and tenure of Council fields and facilities is primarily driven by two key issues: the first is the increasing stress of clubs and groups providing sport and recreation and the need for Council to offer a supportive environment that encourages sustainability of community delivered sport (see 2.3.1). The second is the impact of amalgamation and the subsequent inequity in fees charged and support given across the new regional council area.</p> <p>A number of issues emerged during consultation that reflected both the problems of amalgamation and the diversity of past agreements involving leasing or club use. There are numerous concerns about equity in regard to the fees and costs carried by sporting and community groups as well as inequity in levels of support (e.g. maintenance) received. The three former councils had differing approaches to leasing and club support. It will take some time to resolve some issues and develop a standard approach across the new regional council area. Both short and long term strategies will be needed. Core areas which need to be addressed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing equal access to land and allowing all groups to “bid” for land (i.e. through an “expression of interest” process). ▪ Providing security of tenure and tenure terms sufficient for clubs to access external grants and funding. ▪ Shifting towards multiple and shared use as the norm and developing tenure models that enable this. ▪ Recognising the value of community sport and recreation and the contribution of the clubs to providing activities or services for the community. This should be reflected in a fee structure that is designed to create sustainable clubs not just recover costs or generate income. <p>There are numerous complexities in leasing and tenure and any program to develop an integrated approach will mean that some groups will face changed conditions. To be able to adequately assess the impact of proposed changes and identify the best method for implementation, will need the advice of those involved in the community sport and recreation sector. An advisory / consultative group will be the best way to obtain this advice and provide assistance to Council in developing a new policy.</p>	

2.1.4. STAFFING	Priority 1 = Short 2 = Short
RECOMMENDATION	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council should consider the engagement of an additional Sport and Recreation Officer. To assist with establishing this position external funding assistance (such as through the State Government Local Sport and Recreation Jobs Plan) should be sought. 2. Council should consider employing a Parks and Community Facilities Infrastructure Coordinator to ensure the Public Parks and Land for Community Facilities Infrastructure Plan is finalised and implemented. This implementation includes numerous tasks including strategic acquisition and development of land. This position may be funded out of the Infrastructure Charges Plan directly as costs associated with administration are allowable³. 	
RATIONALE	
<p>The increasing constraints on capital expenditure and difficulties associated with new facilities means that council must ensure that existing community resources are used to capacity before additional facilities are developed. With the increased investment in schools and the high reliance on community groups to manage sporting facilities and deliver sport and recreation programs, Council's most effective approach is to provide support resources and dedicated staff who can work with community groups, schools and other stakeholders to ensure that resources such as school fields and covered courts are being used effectively.</p> <p>An often expressed need is for a "brokering" and advisory role to support shared use outcomes. No resources to provide this exist and a single officer is not able to meet the needs of the multiple communities within the council area. For Council it is likely to be more cost effective to provide staff to deliver on increased sharing and dual use solutions than to provide numerous capital development solutions to facility needs.</p> <p>In comparison with other major regional councils Mackay is under resourced. Population to staff ratios for sport and recreation services (including managers but excluding parks staff) are around 1 position per 20,000- 30,000. Mackay is currently double that with 1: 60,000.</p> <p>The final development and implementation of a Public Parks and Community Land Infrastructure Plan will mean a capital acquisition and development program in excess of \$70 Million. It is prudent for a dedicated position to manage a program of this size and in particular to manage in a way that allows for flexibility while ensuring council meets the legal requirement to deliver the outcomes it is charging for in the plan. This applies even if Council is using a Regulated Charge in the short term. Given that the Public Parks Infrastructure Plan will require property acquisition, detailed negotiations and coordination of capital budgets a full time position should be developed and placed within Parks and Environment.</p>	

2.1.5. ACTIVE LIVING, PATHS AND TRAILS	Priority 1 = Medium 2 = Ongoing 3 = Medium 4 = short- medium 5 = Short- Medium 6 = Short-Medium
RECOMMENDATION	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council should seek funding support from State and Federal Governments to develop an Active and Healthy Strategy for Mackay Regional Council. One of the key action areas for this strategy should be rural 	

³ The Standard Infrastructure Charges Schedule allows for costs of 1-2% of total network costs to be charged for planning and administration (i.e. per network). This cost can include that of an officer to manage the program.

- communities and the provision of paths and trails..
2. The development of “destination trail and path networks should continue with a focus on creating iconic routes within each of the service regions and ensuring that rural areas have local opportunities.
 3. Consideration should be given to developing a *Regional Trails Strategy* as a way of integrating current proposals and developing a prioritised implementation plan which could support future funding applications.
 4. As a priority in the region, the development of a major recreation and trail corridor along the Pioneer River linking the mountains to the sea should be planned and progressed even if the Regional Trails Strategy is not progressed.
 5. An integrated marketing strategy could be developed prior to the completion of an Active and Healthy Strategy. A recognisable “brand” such as *Active Mackay Region* could be created and used to promote a series of opportunities and identify walking and cycling routes and iconic trails (such as Bluewater, Gooseponds, Eungella, Sarina and foreshore trails).
 6. Future reviews of the planning scheme should consider improving active and healthy outcomes and ensuring future urban development meets guidelines for Active and Healthy Communities (see www.activehealthycommunities.com.au for planning scheme and other information). One of the most important actions is to ensure that neighbourhoods encourage walking and cycling.

RATIONALE

The development of an integrated strategy to create an Active and Healthy Mackay will support priorities at state and federal levels to improve the health of the community. Mackay has an opportunity to develop a strategy which integrates several infrastructure initiatives currently underway (such as Bluewater and bikeways planning). This will allow future programs and services provision to focus on increased community cohesion and more vibrant community life as a result of active and healthy programs. It is also likely that there will be a growth in funding programs linked to increasing physical activity and decreasing obesity as both the Federal and State governments have a major financial incentive to reduce the future health costs of inaction in this area. Rural areas and small communities who don’t have ready access to the larger regional trails should be prioritised.

Rural areas have recently been identified as having significant obesity and physical inactivity issues (“farming men and women are more often overweight or obese than average Australians”; “Over 30% of farming men and women have raised blood glucose levels”- Farmer Health Quarterly Summer 2009) and as the region has a high number of farming families it should be a priority action area for any strategy or program.

Walking has emerged as the top activity of Mackay residents, 83% identified walking as their top activity and more than 73% walk 3 or more times per week (with 20.5% daily). Community feedback recognises the value of Bluewater and other trail initiatives. Continued investment in recreational trail networks including neighbourhood bikeways and pathways, will have the most benefit for investment in infrastructure to encourage physical activity and meet emerging recreational demand. A Regional Trails Strategy could also identify a number of low cost options to increase provision through improved directional and education signage which encourages community use and improves definition of trail routes which use a combination of paths and links. A key longer term strategic opportunity is the development of a regional trail and recreation corridor along the Pioneer River.

A number of issues were raised by the community in regard to urban design, barriers to being active and access to outdoor recreation. Key among these were the design of public parks (shade, visibility, access, amount of space available) and useable pathways (visibility, lighting, proximity, separation from traffic). A review of the scheme provisions may be able to ensure improved outcomes in this area. Another issue which will need to be addressed is the lack of public transport within the region and the need to ensure that public transport networks link with regional facilities such as the Bluewater Trail and the Porose Pioneer River Trail.

<p>2.1.6. LEVELS OF SERVICE, SERVICE REGIONS AND POLICY</p>	<p>Priority</p> <p>1 = Short</p> <p>2 = Short</p> <p>3 = Medium</p> <p>4 = Immediate</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p>	
<p>1. Adopt a revised hierarchy for defining service levels and supply of parks and sporting facility opportunities that reflects the following levels of provision:</p>	



<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Region wide (whole of Council area) b) Regional Centre (Services a group of Districts or locales) c) District/ Township (services a number of neighbourhoods or a specific locale) d) Local/ Village (neighbourhood or village level) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The desired standards of service for provision of parks and sporting land and the level of embellishment should define standards for the following “Urban Settings” <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Urban areas- Major residential precincts b) Rural townships c) Rural villages and small communities d) Industrial precincts e) Commercial/ Retail Precincts f) Mixed use - High density residential and commercial 3. Council should consider adopting a service region approach to Sport and Recreation management and operations. The service regions could be based around geographic catchments and population numbers. 4. The draft Sport and Recreation Policy Framework should be finalised and considered by Council for adoption.
RATIONALE
<p>As discussed in section 5.4 the new regional council needs to consider how best to define service regions and levels across the council area. With the increased emphasis on controlled planning for growth it is also important for the provision of parks and sporting land to be planned in a way that delivers an appropriate service level for different community types. The adoption of a new hierarchy for parks and recreation facilities is designed to reflect the shift to a regional council and acknowledges that the increased size requires a new level in the hierarchy (regional centres).</p> <p>The diversity of communities in the new regional council area means that a focus on geographic areas will be critical in being able to deliver equitable services. The levels of staffing will also be crucial in delivering service (see 2.1.4). Adopting service regions will allow more equitable planning of programs and comparisons of resources and support provided to the community.</p> <p>A sport and recreation policy framework has not yet been finalised for the new regional council. A formal policy will help provide a basis for decision making and implementation of this plan and other strategies. A draft Policy framework is provided in Appendix One for consideration and is designed to support the development of specific policies which will ensure an objective basis for forward planning, establishing priorities and development of programs.</p>

2.2. FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

2.2.1. REGIONAL FACILITIES	Priority	
RECOMMENDATION	1 = Short-Medium 2 = Medium-Ongoing	3 = Ongoing 4 = Short-Medium 5 = Medium (Planning)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare a Regional Facilities Strategy with a focus on the establishment of several “Event Precincts” across the Council area. These Event Precincts would build on existing infrastructure and aim for an ongoing strategy to consolidate facilities in these precincts and establish key events for each. 2. Following the development of the strategy, Council should support implementation through officer support for groups seeking funding, access to land resources and financial contributions when possible. 3. The aim of the strategy should also be to identify those sporting bodies or groups who can drive the development of key facilities in each precinct and to establish support mechanisms for these groups. 		

4. Council in conjunction with DERM, SRS and potential club users should investigate options for a recreational trail bike facility in the Mackay Region. This facility should provide for casual riding as well as club based activity and must address the needs of unlicensed riders (e.g. young people). A location in the Pioneer Valley where significant demand exists should be investigated.
5. Prepare a master plan for the Pioneer River Corridor which establishes a long term vision for a network of trails, recreation nodes and water based sport and recreation.

RATIONALE

With the amalgamation of council areas there is a need to integrate the planning for regional scale and event capable facilities. Preparing a strategy which identifies existing precincts to enhance further and new facilities to be planned and developed, offers the opportunity to diversify within the council area without duplicating resources. Diversifying locations also has the advantage of distributing the benefits from regional facilities (such as events) across several communities. It is suggested that the following be considered within the strategy:

- Rectangular field⁴ and Basketball/ Indoor Court sports in South Mackay Sports Precinct
- Shooting and Archery at Mt Vince (Pioneer Valley)
- Mountain Bike and crossover pedal sports at Black Mountain
- Equestrian (including covered arena) in Pioneer Valley
- Athletics precinct with a synthetic track
- Cricket and AFL (Harrup Park)
- Gymnastics facility capable of hosting state level events.
- Rowing and Paddle Sports in the Pioneer River (Marian)
- Ocean sports (Harbour)

There is a need to provide a legal area for recreational trail bike riding in the Pioneer Valley. At present there are no legal sites for unlicensed riders and unregistered bikes. State forest and DERM lands only allow use of internal roads by licensed riders on registered bikes. In South East Queensland this need has been acknowledged and the Council of Mayors (SEQ) in partnership with the State Government are in the process of establishing a recreational trail bike park in Wyaralong. Based on feedback from DERM and community members it is likely that demand exists across the region and the establishment and operation of a site could not only provide for a recreational need but could add to local tourism development and provide diversification of the industry.

The Pioneer River Corridor is the most significant opportunity for Council to develop a public space and recreation network that links the mountains to sea. A strategy for the realisation of this vision will take several years and will rely on opportunities as they arise. The aim is not only to provide significant recreation benefit but a major tourism product that will cater to the rapidly growing outdoor recreation market (walking, cycling, paddling) and provide income to communities in the Valley.

2.2.2. PARKS	<p>Priority</p> <p>1 = Immediate- ongoing</p> <p>2 = Medium</p> <p>3 = Medium</p> <p>4 = Short- ongoing</p> <p>5 = Immediate</p> <p>6 = Medium</p>
RECOMMENDATION	
<p>1. Increased emphasis should be given to ensuring better park outcomes in new developments and areas where redevelopment is delivering higher densities. The Desired Standards of Service and Infrastructure Plans for Parks and Active Transport (bikeways and pathways) should be revised according to the suggestions in Section 5.4. In particular the following outcomes should be sought:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Improved local path networks linking parks and residential areas b. Use of linear open space (providing it has good road frontage) along creeks and conservation area as 	

⁴ Would cater to Rugby codes, Football and Touch



linkage between larger parks and recreation infrastructure.

- c. Ensuring parks are developed to minimum standards initially so early residents do not have to wait. (this requires linking of capital works and PFTI⁵)
 - d. Ensuring parks have good visibility to surrounding areas (achieved through a minimum of 50% road frontage)
 - e. Ensuring parks are provided on usable land with acceptable slopes and minimal other constraints such as flooding.
 - f. Design that minimises maintenance costs and costs of reconfiguring the park as community needs change over time.
 - g. Increased provision of land for sport and recreation.
 - h. Park and pathway design that encourages active recreation. This includes increased provision of shade and water and definition of usable spaces such as Off-leash areas and exercise sites and trails.
2. As part of future planning scheme preparation council should consider preparation of a regional Open Space Network Plan which identifies key regional network elements and destinations and seeks to protect or enhance these opportunities in the planning scheme. This would include:
 - a. Identification and implementation of regional open space corridors (e.g. Pioneer River)
 - b. Regional trails integration
 - c. Foreshore and waterway corridors and opportunities for developing linked open space networks and park precincts that result in larger regional scale open space elements.
 3. Implement an ongoing program that provides modest “seed” funding or in-kind assistance for community groups to “define” their local park with both physical elements and activities. The aim of the program is to help with “activating spaces”, creating a sense of place and encouraging use.
 4. Implement capital planning and asset management programming which enables major functional and aesthetic refurbishment of parks on a regular cycle of 10- 15 years which matches shifting community needs and aspirations. One of the key targets will be to increase play and activity opportunities for older children and youth.
 5. The review of public parks infrastructure planning and the Desired Standards of Service (see 2.1.6) should consider formalising the provision of parks for industrial and commercial areas. It is recommended that industrial and commercial precincts provide a district level park providing areas for physical activity, lunch and short stay recreation.
 6. Development of fenced off-leash areas for dog (and owner!) exercise should be incorporated into district park development particularly in communities which are mostly urban and are some distance from beach or waterway corridors where off-leash zones can be readily identified.

RATIONALE PARKS

⁵ Plan for trunk infrastructure

Community feedback on parks and the design of local parks in particular reflected that newer urban areas such as in the northern beaches appeared to have a lower standard of provision with less accessible park, poorer quality and delays in parks being developed (embellished) for community use. A number of improvements were identified in community forums many of which related to the choice of the land for the park, park locations and the configuration of surrounding street and path networks.

Increased demand for walking and physical activity opportunities is also driving a shift in community preferences with more active space required and a greater emphasis on pathways for “recreational exercise” such as riding, running, walking and fitness trails, as opposed to just access networks/ footpaths leading to shops.

Another issue of concern was the delay in parks being developed within new urban areas and the lack of new land for sport. The adoption of the Infrastructure Charging regime should allow for more timely development of parks and sporting fields however land suitable for sporting (particularly field sport) uses is more difficult to obtain and early acquisition of a few key sites is strongly recommended.

Following amalgamation Mackay Regional Council has a significant opportunity to develop a regional open space network which can provide green corridors delivering both conservation and recreation outcomes. If planned and implemented in alignment with the planning scheme, there will be numerous incremental steps where “missing links” can be acquired or protected as development expands and over time the network can emerge. There are opportunities in Mackay City and Mackay south to consolidate coastal and water way corridors along with other linear systems such as the old cane rail corridors.

Community feedback on local and district parks expressed a strong desire for increased diversity in the development of parks and landscape settings that reflect local community culture as well as “difference” from other neighbourhoods. Indications were that barriers to park and pathway use for some people included concerns about personal safety and a desire to have other people around when using parks. To assist in the development of more diversity in parks, a program which encourages local groups to undertake place making activities will increase community ownership and use of parks as well as providing for expression of local cultures.

As communities change in neighbourhoods – the demographic changes and the activities and uses of parks will also change. It is prudent to recognise that this will always be the case as suburbs cycle between new families, high teen demands and maturing communities. A good example is the strong community feedback that while small children were well catered for with playgrounds there was no additional infrastructure added (or playgrounds redeveloped) in response to the aging of the same children. Building in the need for regular refurbishment according to changing demographics ensures the land asset is always used efficiently. A 10-15 year cycle is likely to be the most responsive and the funding for regular refurbishment could in part be sourced from Infrastructure Plans.

Employees in commercial and industrial areas require access to outdoor areas which offer opportunities for exercise related recreation, outdoor recreation and meal breaks. Emerging trends indicate there are increasing demands for before and after work activity as well as provision of areas away from the workplace to relax, eat meals or undertake exercise during the working day.

Provision of off-leash facilities was raised numerous times by the community. Encouraging owners to walk their dogs by providing dedicated spaces also assists in encouraging physical activity. However where no linear reserves (such as beaches) exist which can have defined sections for off-leash provided it is recommended that a fenced area be provided both for the comfort and safety of owners and other users of the park. Off-leash facilities should be provided at a district level.

2.2.3. INDOOR FACILITIES	Priority 1 = Short 2 = Short	3 = Short- Medium 4 = Ongoing 5 = Medium- Long
RECOMMENDATION		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake an indoor facilities and Schools facilities audit for available capacity that assesses the impact of the Schools Stimulus Funding. 2. Prepare an indoor facilities strategy that investigates partnerships with school and sports clubs to deliver a network of multi-court facilities servicing the main service regions (including court sports as well as other indoor uses such as squash, gymnastics, 8 ball, boxing, martial arts, dancing). Priorities for the strategy are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adopting an approach that develops multi-court/multi-use hubs for each of the service regions (Northern Beaches, Mackay City and South, Sarina and southern communities, Pioneer Valley) supported by satellite facilities (mostly single courts located in schools). b. Increased indoor court space in Northern Beaches (possibly achieved through expansion of the PCYC, consideration of a second multi-court facility and/or securing community use of school facilities). c. Development of a new gymnastics facility with major event capacity d. Support the expansion of the Mackay Basketball Complex to service Mackay City and South e. Development of Indoor or covered court and indoor recreation centre capacity in Sarina which achieves the broader youth recreation outcomes identified in the recent feasibility study⁶. f. Support for the continued development of an indoor and outdoor hub at Marian State School to service lower Pioneer Valley communities. g. Identification of shared use opportunities for sports such as 8 ball and Dancing where access to dedicated space is required but a new facility is not essential. h. Developing support and facilitation mechanisms for community/ club use of school facilities. 3. Consider partnership funding or operational assistance (such as help with negotiating access agreements) to enable community access to existing or future indoor resources including schools. Indoor facilities are needed in Sarina, Northern Beaches and the Pioneer Valley. 4. Council support for development of new facilities should only be given where a sustainable operational model has been identified which does not require Council management or significant ongoing financial subsidies. Capital support should be given, where possible, for developments which deliver increased multiple use and significant community access. 5. Plan for an integrated community indoor and aquatic facility in the Northern Beaches/ Northern Suburbs. This facility could provide a highly viable operating model by having both indoor and aquatic facilities under single management at a location central to northern suburbs communities. The facility could provide for a range of sport, recreation and community services and be operated under internal or external management. 		
RATIONALE		

⁶ Sarina Indoor Sport, Recreation and Youth Centre Feasibility Study 2010

School surveys and analysis of the BER⁷ funding in the region appears to indicate that at least 13 new indoor courts or covered sports areas could be constructed. However feedback from some schools has indicated that community use will be facilitated at only 6-8 of these and that some of these facilities will not be full sized. The audit is important as it will determine both the capacity of the new facilities (i.e. can it support senior netball) and the availability to the community. It is a requirement of the BER and stimulus funding that facilities will be made available for community use, however some schools may have differing views on meeting that requirement or may not have the mechanisms in place to enable community use. Following the audit Council will be able to identify those schools where some additional support in developing systems or brokering agreements will deliver community access.

There is a significant under supply of indoor Court capacity in Mackay. Demand estimates based on current state participation statistics⁸ indicate that around 11+ courts would be needed for the current population and an additional 4-5 to meet future growth to 2026. While school facilities resulting from BER/ Stimulus funding will be able to address low level and training demand they are not sufficient for event and formal competition in urban areas (particularly netball, basketball, futsal and volleyball) which requires multi-court facilities to be able to deliver economically sustainable competitive sport.

The Northern Beaches and Suburbs will be the focus of significant growth and need for an aquatic centre to service this growth has been identified in the Aquatic Facilities Strategy. Combining the aquatics and indoor facilities will create a far more commercially robust and sustainable model for provision.

2.2.4. AQUATIC FACILITIES	Priority 1 = Immediate 2 =Short 3 =Immediate 4 = Short – Medium 5 = immediate 6 = Medium 7 = Medium	8 = Short - Medium 9 = Long 10 = Medium Long 11 = Medium Long 12 = Long (10-15 years)
RECOMMENDATION		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council should seek to include sufficient funding in future capital works and maintenance budgets to undertake the minor rectification works recommended in the <i>Condition Assessment</i> report for all Council Pools. 2. Council should undertake a Detailed Condition Analysis of the structure of the Memorial and Pioneer Pools during the 2011 shutdown period to determine their realistic remaining useful life. 3. Undertake further negotiation with Sarina State High School to resolve community access issues. 4. Review management arrangements and leasing conditions at Mirani Pool with a view to resolving community concerns about limited opening hours and poor program access. Revise the layout of traffic circulation and parking to increase pedestrian safety for those using the facility. 5. Explore market opportunities and invite expressions of interest for a professional, experienced aquatic facility operator(s) to manage one, several or all of Council’s pools. 6. Commence planning for the upgrade of Pioneer Swim Centre as Council’s main regional standard competition facility. Finalise the upgrade concept and priorities and seek external funding support for upgrading over the next 3- 5 years. 7. Seek external funding for the redevelopment of Seaforth wading pool to a zero depth water play area. 8. Consider the immediate (next 3-5 years) future of Memorial Swim Centre following the completion of the detailed condition assessment and levels of demand after the upgrading of the Pioneer Swim Centre. 9. Longer term consideration of the future of Memorial Swim Centre should consider projected costs to repair, maintain and operate balanced against demand and possible closure of Memorial Swim Centre after the upgrade of Pioneer Swim Centre as the main competition pool and prior to or after the development of the proposed new Northern Beaches Facility. 10. Identify a preferred location for development of a new aquatic facility within the Northern Beaches area at a 		

⁷ Building Education Revolution- Schools Stimulus Funding

⁸ ERASS 2008



central location (possibly Bucasia) as part of an integrated indoor sports, fitness and aquatic complex. Ensure the facility is incorporated into future reviews of the Public Parks and Community Facilities Land Infrastructure Plan and seek external funding to assist with development. The facility mix for this facility should include:

- 25m heated outdoor pool;
- Multi-purpose indoor program pool;
- Café;
- Toilets and change rooms;
- Reception, offices and staff amenities;
- Development of minor leisure water to support the findings of the consultation for Council pools to be family orientated and provide an aquatic pathway;
- Optional, health and fitness facility (subject to confirmation of demand).
- Co-location with an indoor sports centre

11. Consider future upgrades of Mirani Swimming Pool to improve access, shade and possible heating of the pool and seek funding when appropriate external grants or programs are available.

12. Plan for the development of a new aquatic facility in the Ooralea locality including the potential for partnership with the Central Queensland University campus. The facility should include:

- 25m heated outdoor pool;
- Multi-purpose indoor program pool;
- Café;
- Toilets and change rooms;
- Reception, offices and staff amenities;
- Development of minor leisure water to support the findings of the consultation for Council pools to be family orientated and provide an aquatic pathway; and
- Health and fitness facility (subject to a feasibility and demand analysis closer to the development date).

RATIONALE

As the Aquatic Facilities Strategy is a 15-20 year strategy only the main actions which are relevant to this five year plan have been included.

Addressing use and access issues in the short term for Mirani and Sarina pools allows improved opportunities for the residents without the need for immediate major capital investment in infrastructure.

The Memorial Swim Centre Condition Assessment found that the 50m pool and water treatment plant need to be renewed, upgraded or scrapped in the foreseeable future based on a prognosis of there being a very limited realistic 'useful life' potential. The wading pool was determined to be at intervention point and is not providing an acceptable level of service. Based on the condition of the Memorial Swim Centre assets, Council would need to invest significant capital funding for it to remain 'just a suitable community aquatic facility'. However confirmation of this should be obtained through a more detailed condition assessment as recommended in (2) above.

The proposed integration of the Northern Beaches Aquatic Centre and an Indoor centre represents a better model for sustainability and centre viability.

The Aquatic Facilities Strategy recommended that council adopt a new service model which looks at developing two new centres in Ooralea and Bucasia/ Northern Beaches (in line with major population growth).

<p>2.2.5. SARINA INDOOR SPORT, RECREATION AND YOUTH CENTRE</p>	<p>Priority 1 = Immediate 2 = Short 3= Medium</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed facility should not proceed in the current format until a final assessment of the impact of the new indoor sports halls being developed in Sarina has been assessed as part of the overall schools facilities assessment recommended in 2.2.3 (1). 2. Following determination of the level of community and youth use to be provided at new halls in the Sarina region (as a result of federal funding) the master plan for Brewers Pk should be revised to reflect a possible decline in the priority of an indoor sports court. A revised facility mix is likely to focus more on youth activity and program space which may be provided at a significantly lower cost if a sports hall is not included. Management models should also be reviewed at this time with a view to identifying a partner or community based organisation to manage the facility. 3. A revised Stage 1 should be progressed with the assistance of grant funding. 	
<p>RATIONALE</p>	
<p>The recently completed Feasibility Study for this precinct concluded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is demonstrated need for multi-purpose indoor centre to serve the Sarina community and surrounding district. • Absence of a contemporary indoor facility in the immediate catchment provides further evidence that the proposed centre could be well utilised if managed, promoted and programmed professionally. • Significant and widespread community benefit would be delivered by the proposed indoor centre. • The facility is likely to necessitate a level of Council subsidy in the order of \$150,000 per year for the first stage. • Brewers Park is seen as a suitable location for a master planned indoor sport, recreation and youth centre. • The development of a single (1) court centre with youth space and support facilities will meet the community’s immediate needs and support the training, competition and programming needs for the first 5 years, during which time Council should assess further longer term requirements of indoor sport, recreation and aquatic facilities (Stages 2 and 3). • Council should exercise caution prior to proceeding with the project, and fully investigate other proposals (non-Council) for indoor facilities in the immediate town catchment area, together with broader regional demand for investment in indoor sport and recreation facilities. 	

Figure 2 Wading Pool



2.2.6. ACTIVE LIVING, PATHS AND TRAILS	Priority
RECOMMENDATION	1 = Ongoing 2 = Short- Ongoing 3 = Ongoing 4 = Short 5 = Medium
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council should continue to expand Bluewater trail with additional links to other networks and a long term vision for integration with a future Pioneer River trail network. 2. Council should pursue opportunities for development of recreational paths (e.g. with grant funding) to serve all urban communities. In coastal communities the focus should be on foreshores and waterway networks with inland communities investigating development along waterway corridors. Any reviews of Local Transport Infrastructure Planning (Bikeways and Pathways) should seek to build in emerging proposals for funding from Infrastructure Charges. In addition, sections of recreational paths in public parks or other open space (such as waterway reserves) should also be included in cost calculations for parks infrastructure charges. 3. Council should continue to support the 10,000 steps program and additional installation of signage encouraging walking and physical activity. This should be aligned with the proposed emphasis on facilitating physical activity discussed in 2.1.5 (5). 4. Council should finalise and implement its draft Bicycle Plan in conjunction with relevant authorities and according to funding opportunities and implementation of infrastructure plans. 5. Council should consider the installation of Exercise sites and outdoor gym equipment at district park locations across the regions. Particular priority should apply to more remote communities and rural areas that do not have ready access to a range of sporting opportunities. 	
RATIONALE	
<p>The direct costs of obesity and physical inactivity in Australia have been estimated at \$8.2BN and \$1.5BN respectively.</p> <p>There is very strong international scientific evidence, based on a wide range of well-conducted studies, that physically active people have a lower risk of developing a number of disabling medical conditions and lower rates of various chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, breast cancer and depression.</p> <p>A recent (2009) Queensland Health survey to determine the prevalence of health risk factors and chronic diseases of Queenslanders found that 55.3% were overweight/ obese and only just over half (55.9%) undertook sufficient physical activity to derive a health benefit.</p> <p>National and international research has identified that increased walk-ability and cycle-ability of the built environment are key policy responses to tackling obesity and inactivity. Proposals exist for foreshore paths at Seaforth and Sarina Beach- these should be supported.</p> <p>The Bluewater Trail has been very successful with many residents praising the initiative. Implementation of the longer term plan for the trail and linkage into south Mackay and to other networks such as the old rail corridor will continue to build on this initiative. Survey results and participation trends in the state and nationally indicate that walking is the number one recreational exercise. Many residents prefer to walk on destination paths such as Bluewater or foreshore trails. Expanding existing trails and the diversity of destinations within the network will increase the level of opportunity available.</p> <p>The popularity of walking and cycling and the results of the community survey support the continued development of walking and cycling paths. Expansion of opportunities should seek to build on existing networks and make use of linear open space systems. Some sections will be able to be funded under Public Parks or Transport Infrastructure Plans while others will require grant funding or capital works.</p> <p>Providing exercise and active recreation opportunities in some areas will more effective with provision of exercise sites and outdoor equipment to complement path and trail development.</p>	

2.2.7. SPORT AND RECREATION PRECINCTS	Priority 1 = Short- Ongoing 2 = Short- Medium 3 = Ongoing 4 = Medium- Long
RECOMMENDATION	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to develop sporting facilities in precincts and prepare master plans for key precincts to integrate the planning of various user groups and ensure a coordinated approach to precinct development. Master Planning should be undertaken according to the following priorities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mackay South Sporting Precinct (including proposed relocation of some sports to Milton St) b. Northern Suburbs Precinct (Norris Rd- Beaconsfield Rd) c. Brewers Park Sarina d. Future Northern Beaches Precinct (Geislars Paddock) 2. In conjunction with user groups prepare Precinct Management Plans which identify future growth and development priorities and formalises management and coordination across the precincts between groups and Council. The following should be prepared in the next five years: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Walkerston sports ground/ BMX b. The old dump land on Petrie St (which has the potential to be developed as an adventure sport precinct linking to the beach area) could support uses such as Blokarts, BMX, Mountain Biking and Archery. c. Queens Park d. A location within Pioneer Valley with the potential to develop as equestrian precinct . e. Marian Primary School Precinct f. Mirani Recreation Reserve- Primary School Precinct 3. Continue the development and enhancement of the Bluewater Precinct and Trail as a major destination for the region. 4. Acquire (and develop) a new sporting precinct of 15- 20 Ha to serve Northern Suburbs populations. Acquisition would ideally be in the Richmond/ Bucasia/ Nindaroo locale and would occur within 5 years. This precinct should be the planned location for the future community/ indoor sports and aquatic facility discussed in 2.2.3 and 2.2.4. 	
RATIONALE	

The current precincts which form the focus for many sports have developed over time with little integrated planning to consider traffic, expansion of individual sports and event hosting. Many sports indicated a desire for expansion or further development of their facilities. Preparation of overall precinct plans will ensure that sports are not planning in isolation of adjacent land uses as well as identify potential opportunities for partnership projects and shared facility approaches which will reduce capital and operating costs.

Establishing the communication and information sharing between user groups required to prepare Master Plans or Precinct Management Plans will create a foundation for a more integrated management approach and provide opportunities to plan events and improve event capacity. For example an integrated plan may deliver on a shared event parking precinct and pedestrian links to various facilities so that a single hub can service all major facilities in the precinct. Master Plans could be prepared internally with a sport and recreation officer coordinating the process.

Other, smaller, precincts would also benefit from coordinated planning but do not need the same level of documentation that the major precincts require. For these a “management plan” is recommended which documents the directions and proposals of the user groups and agrees on a shared vision for the area. The process of preparing the plan will also be important to resolve any existing shared use and cooperative issues as well as agreeing a framework for future management and clarifying any outstanding tenure or leasing issues.

Bluewater Lagoon and Trail has been very successful and the development of the lagoon has changed the precinct creating additional demand and a new sense of a community destination. Higher density residential growth in the city and no additional land for parks means Bluewater Precinct and Trail will increase in importance for local residents as well as the regional community.

Over the next 15 years up to 63,000 additional people are likely to be living in Mackay. Much of that growth will be located north of the river. Existing sporting land in the Northern Suburbs and Beaches is heavily used and has limited additional capacity. It is critical that Council secures a parcel of land for future needs and that the land is of sufficient size to accommodate future growth in demand. Acquisition should be funded through Infrastructure Charges.

2.2.8. PROVIDING AND IMPROVING SPORT AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES	Priority 1 = Immediate 2 = Ongoing 3 = Ongoing 4 = Immediate- Short 5 = Short 6= Short
RECOMMENDATION	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council should focus its resources on ensuring that existing fields and facilities are being used to capacity and that support is given to projects that increase shared use as a priority over single use projects. 2. The draft prioritisation tool should be reviewed and adopted by Council and used as an objective method for prioritising requests for capital expenditure and other assistance. 3. Council should continue the current approach of providing support to clubs applying for grants for the lighting of fields and outdoor courts to expand capacity of existing resources. Particularly where lighting will improve multiple use of a facility. 4. Build on the existing inventory of facilities (contained in the Background Report) by adding in school and other agency facilities and fields that will be available for community use following the completion of BER/ Stimulus funding. The inventory should seek to document the available capacity of facilities for community use and the conditions under which they can be used. 5. Council should only give priority to supporting major partnership projects (from clubs or others) that have been proved to be viable and sustainable through a feasibility study or similar analysis. 6. Council should develop its role in facilitating shared use and community access to school facilities through the support of experienced staff, developing new model agreements and establishing guidelines and templates to streamline future processes. 	
RATIONALE	



Council has limited resources to develop new facilities or to increase maintenance support for existing facilities. While rapid population growth will require the development of new facilities eventually, Council can be most effective by ensuring that existing resources are being fully utilised before supporting the development of new resources. Part of achieving this is to support those projects which, with modest support from Council can increase the multiple use of facilities.

As there are often many subjective views on the merits of particular proposals, it is fairer for all clubs and more effective for Council to have an objective basis for decision making. This helps remove emotive arguments and allows for an objective comparison of competing demands. A draft prioritisation tool is contained in Appendix 2.

As part of the proposed approach that prioritises expanding use of existing resources it is effective to support lighting projects which will increase the capacity of a facility to expand the user base. Consideration of support for lighting should also include possible residential impacts as well as the level of impact on improving user access.

The existing inventory has primarily been developed by combining the inventories prepared for the previous plans covering the former council areas. To become an effective resource for identifying potential field or facility capacity within the community it is important to include the non-council resources such as those managed by schools, private clubs or other institutions. This cannot be completed until the full impact of the stimulus and BER funding (for school facilities) has been identified.

In keeping with the proposed approach for the Partnerships Program (see 2.3.2) there is a need to adopt a consistent basis for prioritising request as there is likely to be more requests for assistance than available funding or in kind support.

As part of ensuring community owned facilities are being used as effectively as possible it is suggested that Council can have a leadership or facilitation role in working with clubs, groups and schools to broker agreements that enable community use of school fields and facilities. Often the barriers to community use of school facilities can be resolved through assistance with negotiating agreements or in some cases negotiating supporting contributions such as in kind services. It is however critical that a clear policy be established guiding the ways in which Council can support school use and the level of responsibility Council; is willing to accept in brokering agreements.

2.3. SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

2.3.1. SUPPORTING CLUBS & COMMUNITY GROUPS	Priority 1 = Short 2 = Annual 3 = Short- Medium
RECOMMENDATION	
<p>1. Develop a support program for clubs and groups who manage and maintain council land and facilities and provide community level sport and recreation. The support program should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Delivery of training and skill development opportunities for volunteer committees, officials and coaches. Provided in partnership with SRS and sports associations. b. Development of information guides and templates to simplify club management, facility sharing, merging of clubs and formation of precinct coordination or other “umbrella groups” c. Provide information and communication tools for clubs to use (such as a central website and email service) and regular marketing vehicles that clubs can access (such as weekly column in the paper or a radio spot). d. Consideration of establishing a “shared services network”/ “administration hubs” where secretariat and other administrative services are provided for groups of clubs to lessen the load on the volunteers. This program could be established with a mix of grant funding and contributions from clubs to generate enough for a full time position and council could consider providing office space and phone. e. Encourage the sharing or expertise and resources between clubs in the “service regions” through provision of an electronic notice board on Councils website or the proposed club web site. 	



2. Conduct an annual Sport Summit as a day event which provides clubs the chance for information exchange with Council as well as opportunities for training and to workshop policy and priority issues with council for the following year.

As part of the review of tenure and leasing arrangements, Council should establish a consistent policy basis for providing rates rebates or exemptions and contributions to or assistance with maintenance (or mowing) of facilities.

RATIONALE

Most of the organised sport and recreation in the Mackay Regional Council area is provided by not for profit community groups who rely on volunteers to deliver these opportunities. Consultation with sporting groups indicated that many of these groups are struggling to recruit and retain volunteers and the workloads and stresses affecting community level sport have become almost untenable. In addition many indicated that they are struggling with normal maintenance activities as well as finding it hard to undertake any refurbishment or renewal of their built assets.

If Council wishes to ensure a diverse range of sport and active recreation is available to residents it needs to consider how best to support these community groups against the costs of alternative models of delivery. Alternatives to the community delivery model of organised sport and recreation include Council taking full responsibility for all facilities and the organisation of all sports or Council contracting delivery to a commercial entity. Either of these would cost significantly more and would most likely be unsustainable.

The current approach will also be unsustainable without accepting that this “partnership” with community groups has to consider a broader and more flexible range of support mechanisms that develop independence, skills and capacity as well providing realistic levels of organisational, financial and in-kind support.

The sport summit conducted for the study received good attendance and demonstrated that there is benefit in sharing information between sporting groups as well as a formal environment for Council to discuss policy and planning issues with sporting groups. An annual day long summit was suggested as a great way to keep communication between Council and clubs and within the sporting community. The summit would also include skill development opportunities and a forum for future planning of major events or facilities.

As there was some difference between the former councils in terms of support for clubs and maintenance it is recommended that a single policy be developed which can be applied fairly. In addition some consideration of additional support for clubs most in need is required with development of a minimum level of support which might be delivered as in-kind services or financial support. It was argued by some that a small cash grant would go further in a volunteer organisation than it would if expended on council services. A further concern is the likely implementation of minimum standards for playing surfaces (by State Sporting Organisations or by legislation) will require some system to ensure that fields and courts are shown to be up to standard. This may require additional work from clubs and professional advice from Council staff as to what is required to meet standards.

The review of “not for profit” tenure should establish a reasonable policy that considers both Council’s resources as well as those within the community. Appendix Four provides a brief comparison of some Queensland councils and their approach to sporting club leasing and tenure. This indicates that Mackay Regional Council may wish to review how much support is provided to clubs. The policy should consider such issues as:

- Eligibility for support through any rates rebates or part exemptions.
- If Council should offer a base level of service and the potential to charge clubs for an increased level of service.
- How support mechanisms linked with tenure agreements could be delivered to those clubs with genuine need (such as those areas in small communities which struggle to have enough volunteer resources to meet maintenance standards).

2.3.2. PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM	Priority 1 = Short - Medium 2 = Short - Medium
RECOMMENDATION	
<p>1. Council should establish a “Partnerships Program” which supports and encourages increased sharing of facilities and community use of school facilities as well as encouraging community groups to provide new opportunities. The program could be resourced by a combination of staff time, agreement templates and seeding funds or support budgets. The aim will be to help groups establish shared use, to remove the barriers from shared use and to develop new sport and recreation programs at existing parks and facilities. Possible elements of the program would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A small contribution to maintenance or operation for the first year or more b. Being guarantor for a club’s access agreement (e.g. for school use) c. In kind support (offering professional advice and support in negotiating agreements) d. Subleasing a field or facility and then managing community access (Council leases the field direct and then licenses sporting uses) e. Coordinating “contra” agreements where schools might have free access to club facilities in exchange for community use of a school facility. f. Providing seeding funds for a group to establish a new sport or active recreation opportunity and other “active living” opportunities g. Promotion of good models and positive stories <p>2. Consider adopting an annual budget to support the partnerships program.</p>	
RATIONALE	
<p>Research and analysis conducted for this strategy highlighted that there can be many barriers to sharing of facilities or to community groups starting new programs or sporting opportunities. Many of these barriers can be procedural and support and advice from skilled Council staff can resolve these barriers and facilitate shared use outcomes. Other issues which inhibit sharing can be a matter of a small cost to establish the use or to accommodate new users. While there are many potential issues the scale of these can often make it “too hard” for community groups to battle through and secure access to a school facility for example.</p> <p>For Council the staff time and possible small financial support can deliver a new resource to the community for a fraction of the cost of developing new facilities. However it is prudent to establish a basis for determining which proposals to support. The adoption of the Sport and Recreation Policy Framework and consideration of the policy priorities in that document and this study will help. Ideally a priority assessment tool would be developed once the program was established.</p>	

2.3.3. COMMUNICATION	Priority 1 = Short- ongoing 2 = Short
RECOMMENDATION	
<p>1. Review the recommendations in this plan and develop a formal communication strategy for Recreation Services. The Strategy should consider low cost/ cost efficient ways to communicate with the community on sport , recreation and physical activity opportunities. Suggestions include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establishing and promoting clear contact points for sport and recreation organisations to talk to Council. b. Development of a web portal/ web page as part of Council’s web site which provides a starting point for a range of information. c. A sport and recreation (clubs and facilities) data base on the web site which can be accessed and searched by general public and provides secure access for clubs to update details on their activities and management. d. A monthly e-mail newsletter to clubs. e. A regular segment on radio and in print media. (developing regular channels for information). f. A Sport and Recreation Calendar in conjunction with or as part of Council’s Events Calendar, which allows clubs and groups to post their events and will help minimise scheduling conflicts. g. A trading space/ notice board. h. A volunteer register/ skills register . i. Establishing a local reference group for each service region. <p>2. As part of defining the communication strategy and improving the reach of activities it is recommended that Council consider developing a recognisable “brand” (under Council’s overall brand) which can be used to promote sport and recreation in Mackay. The brand should be able to be readily recognised as the place for information about recreation and sport and could link with tourism and outdoor/ adventure tourism products.</p>	
RATIONALE	
<p>A number of issues concerning communication were raised during consultation. Clubs were unsure of who to contact in Council regarding various issues and the community in general identified lack of information about sport and recreation opportunities as a key barrier to participation. Very positive feedback regarding the recent appointment of a sport and recreation officer indicated that clubs felt that having a direct contact made a significant difference.</p> <p>The communication strategy will be able to identify the immediate and staged actions within budget constraints that can provide the outcomes desired and will allow forward planning.</p> <p>Adopting a branding strategy allows for advertising and promotional activities to increase in effectiveness as residents and visitors get used to looking under the “brand” for information. In addition it will assist clubs in marketing by creating a higher profile market awareness that will provide more recognition and media response than clubs trying to promote by themselves.</p>	

2.3.4. DEVELOPING EVENTS AND SPORTS TOURISM	Priority 1 = Immediate 2 = Medium 3 = Short 4 = Immediate 5 = Medium
RECOMMENDATION	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider establishing a Sports Tourism Working Group to help coordinate and develop proposals for events and precincts. 2. Establish an events support budget that provides sponsorship and in kind support to assist new events to get established. An initial budget should be determined by Council. 3. The Sports Tourism Working Group should investigate the potential for development of a niche market in specific types of events (e.g. schools championships). This would mean tailoring facility and accommodation directions to meet the market need above other opportunities. 4. Proposals requiring Council investment to upgrade facilities for a single event only should not be supported. Any capital provided for facility development upgrades should be prioritised for multiple event outcomes and general capacity building in hosting events. 5. Council should consider ways to encourage additional accommodation stock to be provided within or near to major sporting precincts that doesn't compromise the planning scheme. 	
RATIONALE	
<p>Several sports indicated there was potential to stage events and to attract visiting teams for pre event training. There has been some development of sports tourism on this basis with regional and state championships held in Mackay in several sports and for school competitions. Along with NQ games and other initiatives sports tourism could also be boosted by development of outdoor/ adventure sport opportunities such as Mountain Biking, Bolo-karting, rogaining, canoeing and multi-day endurance events.</p> <p>However the major barriers to developing this potential further including the lack of coordination between groups and a failure to build on the collective experience of sporting and tourism groups who have held or planned events (or developed visiting team markets).</p> <p>An important observation made at the Sports Summit was that “we don't seek to build on our existing or planned events”. This means that better communication and coordination with tourism industry and between sports could expand events by adding pre and post opportunities as well as packaging some of the regions attractors into event marketing. The “Events Support Program” should consider a number of factors to establish priority for assistance. A draft program guideline is contained in Appendix 3.</p> <p>Developing sports tourism needs further development of facility/ event hosting capacity this means improving the accommodation and athlete “stay” capacity in the region and around specific hubs (as well as developing appropriate facilities). The main need is for mid-range and group accommodation to service markets such as schools and visiting teams.</p>	

3. STUDY BACKGROUND

3.1. PURPOSE

The **aim** of the study was to:

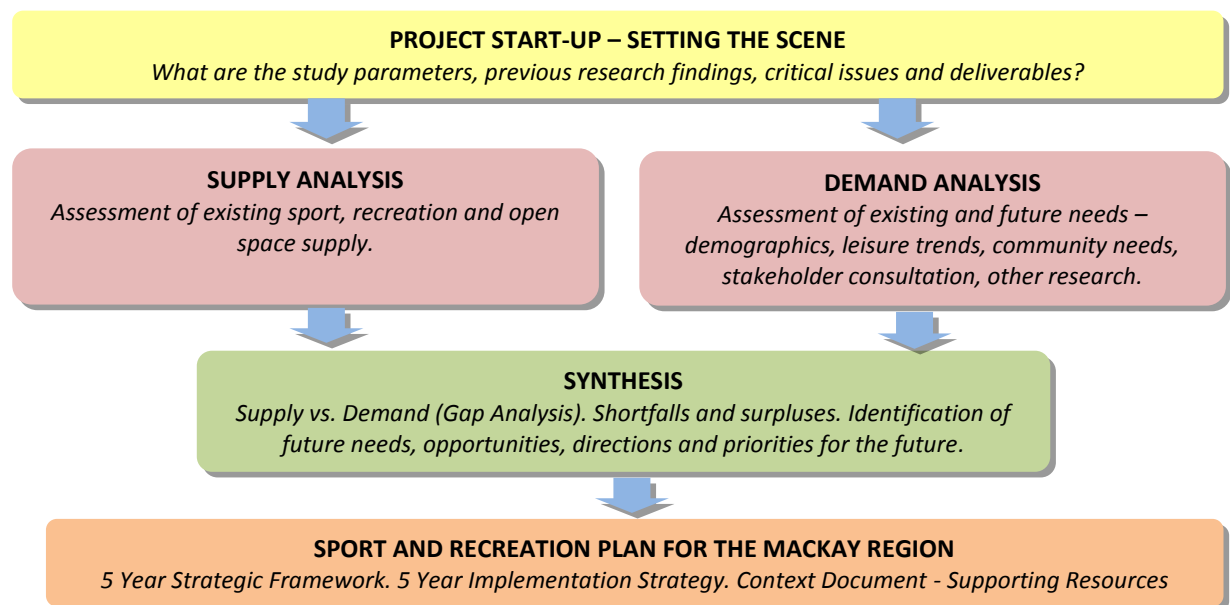
To develop an Open Space, Sports and Recreation strategy that reflects the needs and expectations of the Mackay region to support future planning and development that is prosperous, sustainable, vibrant and in harmony with the environment.

The following five key **objectives and outcomes** were identified for the study:

1. To provide Council with an overarching document for open space, sports and recreation planning that spans five (5) years.
2. To provide an implementation strategy for Council to effectively and efficiently support club development in the region.
3. To develop a strategy that facilitates the development of facilities and services through integrated planning and strategic initiatives.
4. To develop a strategy that aligns projected population growth with the identification of key open spaces, sports and recreation facilities.
5. To provide Council with a planning document that can assist it to support community sport and recreation to source funding

3.2. STUDY METHODOLOGY

The study approach included a five stage methodology which is outlined below.



4. CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Consultation through on line surveys, community meetings, focus groups and a sports summit identified a range of issues, concerns and ideas from the community and sport and recreation organisation perspectives. These are discussed in more detail in the Background Report. The key points are summarised below.

4.1. GENERAL COMMUNITY

- Walking, cycling, swimming, running and aerobics are the most popular physical activities participated in by residents
- 63.9% of residents are satisfied with parks
- 40.8% are satisfied with sporting facilities
- 38.3% are satisfied with recreation facilities
- Areas Council is perceived to be performing poorly include:
 - Facilities - indoor sports, walking and cycling (except central city), indoor recreation, health and fitness and court sports.
 - Parks - Toilets, lighting, drinking water and BBQ's.
 - Beaches - pathways/ bikeways- along foreshore, provision of stinger nets, toilets, protecting foreshore vegetation, drinking water
- Areas Council is perceived to be performing well include:
 - Facilities - skate/ BMX, pools and Bluewater, playgrounds (esp. shade program)
 - Parks - play facilities, natural landscape, ease of access and size.
 - Beaches - providing lifeguards, play facilities, parking, access to beach
- Emerging Directions for provision of sport and recreation:
 - Paths and trails and increased use of natural areas
 - Indoor facilities a priority
 - Sports grounds- value adding to existing facilities
 - Parks - improve supply in new developments, access needs to be visual and physical, better standards of development, address inequities across region.
 - Information provision plays a key role.

4.2. SPORTS CLUBS & COMMUNITY GROUPS

Key comments include:

- There is a strong need for increased support for volunteer based groups including: grants and in-kind financial support; information and communication; skills development and training; rates rebates; and providing an officer to assist clubs in getting grants.
- A crucial strategy will be to improve use of and community access to schools.

- Need to develop more opportunities for partnership and collaboration such as: shared administration services, accommodation for visiting teams, resources and skills registers.
- Need and support for, increase in multi-use precinct models.
- Need for improved equity in land and facilities access.
- Need for increased staffing.

4.3. SUMMARY FOR MACKAY

The following points summarise issues and concerns in Mackay. *They are not provided in order of perceived importance just as a listing.*

Parks and Open Space:

1. Keeping up the standard of park supply and development – with the pressures of growth.
2. The importance of developing connectivity- Local, District, Regional (walking and cycling).
3. Establishing more recreation in natural areas (walkways and pathways).
4. Providing more off-leash areas.
5. Creating more diversity in public parks and a better sense of place.

Sporting Fields and Facilities:

1. Need to develop an athletics facility capable of hosting events.
2. There is a well documented need for development of a gymnastics facility capable of hosting events and as a “home” for Gymnastics in Mackay.
3. Strong support for a precinct approach to providing sporting fields and facilities.
4. Emerging demand for development of cycle sports and a proposed establishment of a “wheel” sports precinct which could include all forms of cycling as well as skating, skateboarding and roller-blading.
5. Undersupply of indoor facilities particularly for indoor sports.
6. Need for more land for outdoor sports particularly in northern suburbs and a need to ensure that a substantial portion is above flood.

Recreation Opportunities:

1. Youth recreation is a high need particularly in outer suburbs and high youth areas. Needs can't be met just by providing sports fields or clubs. Informal and self directed opportunities are needed.
2. Developing a Pioneer River Trail linking the mountains to the sea would be a good strategic aim and at local community level can provide opportunities like the Bluewater Trail.
3. A major priority for the community is increasing opportunities for walking and cycling. The focus should be on building missing links and closing gaps between residential areas and access to path networks.
4. A major opportunity is recreational pathways and links based on coastal areas.
5. More information on opportunities and promotion of options is needed.

Council's Role in Sport and Recreation should be:

1. Providing information on opportunities to clubs and community and collating information from clubs and community groups.
2. Providing support equitably to clubs (to access land and funding, information/ communication, facilitation, skills and planning support). Clubs also need to have clear communication with council.
3. Providing adequate resourcing (staff) to meet growth
4. Planning for and acquiring land for district sport and parks
5. Coordination and advocacy with state and federal government
6. Support/ planning for major events- sports tourism

4.4. SUMMARY FOR PIONEER VALLEY

Parks and Open Space

1. Meet minimum standards of development (lighting, shade, public art, play)
2. Plan for long term establishment of the Pioneer River open space corridor and shorter term development of recreation spaces to meet local community needs.
3. Improve Mirani Recreation reserve.
4. Establish more walkways and pathways.
5. Develop youth spaces (Marian, Eungella, Finch Hatton).

Sporting fields and facilities

1. Support for development of Marian School Precinct as a community-School sport and event precinct.
2. Need to increase lighting of fields.
3. Develop trail bike areas/ motor sports.
4. Consider developing an Equestrian events precinct development (Balnagowan or possibly Gargett).
5. Support development of more Indoor facilities- indoor sports opportunities.
6. Resolve pool issues (opening hours, lack of programs, parking, shade).
7. Consider the future use of Gargett Rodeo Grounds.

Recreation Opportunities

1. High need for youth spaces.
2. Finish George Johnson Park.
3. Develop the Pioneer River trail.
4. Expand the Walk and cycle network and linkage.
5. Protect the recreational use of Dams and N.P.s
6. Could improve use of halls by supporting development of local programs.
7. Support development of nature based tourism - outdoor recreation as a key feature of the Valley.

Council's role in sport and recreation should be:

1. Providing support for clubs (to access land and funding, information/ communication, facilitation, equitable support)- help with grants.
2. Provide resourcing (staff) to meet growth.
3. Master planning existing and future parks and facilities.

4.5. SUMMARY FOR SARINA

Parks and open space

1. Improve the standard of development (lighting, shade, sense of place, public art, aging picnic and play equipment)
2. Increase promotion of destination parks and trail opportunities.
3. Continue to develop destination parks in the locale. (e.g. Brewers Park).
4. Provide off leash areas.
5. Develop more foreshore park opportunities.

Sporting fields and facilities

1. Provide a new Sarina Pool (not at school).
2. Implement Brewers Park master plan.
3. Develop an Indoor sports facility.
4. Need for Gym and fitness.
5. Provide better access/ informal access to Koumala sports court for young people.

Recreation opportunities

1. Provide youth spaces (Koumala, Sarina).
2. Expand existing walk and cycle paths and recreational trails.
3. Develop foreshore trails.
4. Consider supporting active living programs.
5. Develop more nature based tourism- outdoor recreation.
6. Need for participation initiatives for girls and women.

Council's role in sport and recreation should be:

1. Provide support for clubs to access land and funding, information/ communication, facilitation, equitable support).
2. More resourcing (staff) for southern communities.
3. Providing facilities equitably.
4. Provide programs (active living).
5. Undertake and implement master planning for key sites (e.g. Brewers).

5. KEY ISSUES ANALYSIS

5.1. OVERALL REGIONAL PLANNING, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

5.1.1. LEVELS OF SERVICE FOR MACKAY REGION

Key Issues

- Significant diversity in standards of provision and levels of service (such as support for clubs) across the three former councils
- The amalgamated Mackay Region requires a new service model for sport, recreation and open space provision.
- Desired standards or service levels need to differentiate between Urban, Township and Village settings.
- Maintenance and operational standards need to be normalised across the region with recognition of different community types.
- Facility maintenance and minimum development standards vary across the new region and a base standard is needed to move towards equitable provision of parks, sport and recreation facilities.

Future Directions

1. A revised Hierarchy for defining service levels and standards is recommended:
 - Region wide (whole of Council area)
 - Regional Centre (Services a group of Districts or locales)
 - District/ Township (services a number of neighbourhoods or a specific locale)
 - Local/ Village (neighbour or village level)
2. Desired Standards of Service for Public parks and community facilities land should consider different urban “settings” and should define a new standard for both land provision and the level of development (embellishment). Proposed settings are:
 - Urban areas- Major residential precincts
 - Rural townships
 - Rural villages and small communities
 - Industrial precincts
 - Commercial/ Retail Precincts
 - Mixed use - High density residential and commercial
3. New Service Regions should be defined which can guide the allocation of staff, financial and infrastructure resources. A possible approach would be to define the following as service regions:
 - Pioneer Valley
 - Sarina, southern villages and southern coast
 - Mackay City and Mackay South
 - North Mackay and northern villages

5.1.2. LEASING AND TENURE

Key issues

Key issues have emerged both from amalgamation and historical approaches to providing land and facilities for sport and recreation organisations to conduct their activities:

- Some clubs are finding access to land or facilities difficult and want security of tenure to allow them to focus on development of their sport and their facility.
- Some form of secure tenure is needed for clubs to access grant funding opportunities.
- There needs to be a fair system of land allocation that provides equity of opportunity for clubs wanting space and ensures that public land not being used is made available to meet demand rather than being held by a single club for possible future use.
- With a land shortage and increasing population there is a need for more multiple use of land. Tenure models and agreements need to give Council more control in ensuring land is used to capacity.
- Lease and access fees should be “normalised” across the new region so that inequities in charging are reduced. (e.g. clubs using pools and indoor facilities feel they pay significantly more than field sports. Clubs in similar sports may pay different amounts for the same field provision)

Future Directions

1. Develop a new policy on Not for Profit/ sporting club tenure and access arrangements. The new policy should consider:
 - Normalising pricing mechanisms (access fees) for field and court spaces so that leases or seasonal tenancies pay the same amount relative to their use.
 - Access fees be set at a base rate and adjusted according to:
 - Level of maintenance provided by Council
 - Contribution of Clubs to maintaining general community access areas
 - The proportion of All utility charges (water, power) to be borne by user groups (whether leased or non-leased) and according to consumption.
 - Summarise the responsibilities of user groups/ lessees and Council by way of a simple “club information kit” which is provided to incoming executive committee members.
 - Defining reasonable minimum maintenance standards which clubs must comply with and providing support to clubs to develop practices which help them meet these standards.
 - Where fields are leased by a body holding a full liquor license, gaming machines and/ or community use is restricted by way of full fencing, all maintenance would be the responsibility of the lessee and general rates would be payable
 - Advertising for expressions of interest for the use of new sports fields or spaces.
 - Including a “use it or lose it” clause so that clubs can’t land bank when other sports need access to the land.
2. The new policy should be developed with a consultative group representing users and would take several years to roll out.

3. Develop a policy and linked support program on support for clubs including any subsidy of rates or other charges. The policy needs to identify the criteria for eligibility and the priorities for support.

5.1.3. YOUTH

Key Issues

- Mackay has a large youth population and a younger community.
- There are existing issues with lack of provision in Northern Beaches and other growth areas.
- There are significant numbers of young people in rural townships with limited transport and limited opportunities. (needs are particularly evident in Sarina, Koumala, Marian and Mirani)
- There is a high need for provision of active recreation opportunities and legitimate spaces for young people that are accessible and informal.
- Young people identify that there is a lack of programming and events. To address this there is a need for spaces to host programs as well as program providers.
- Travel to Mackay or other centres and the cost of travel are major barriers for youth.

Future Directions

1. The current program of developing skate parks should be expanded to one of youth space creation with a targeted provision level of district and townships. Council could consider a youth space strategy that identifies community and agency partners in identifying locations and options for a range of locations that will also provide diversity in the activities offered at each space.
2. Additional indoor facilities, supported with youth appropriate programming, are needed in Sarina, Northern Beaches and Mirani/ Marian. Specific solutions should be explored where need is already identified.
3. Transport cost and availability will continue as an issue – so provision of opportunities at local and district levels is more important than large central facilities.

5.1.4. STAFFING

Key Issues

- Following amalgamation there is a considerable workload involved in working with community groups who provide sport and recreation opportunities.
- A review of past plans has indicated that many actions could not progress without sufficient staff resources to implement strategies.
- Mackay is growing significantly and at the current population of around 120,000 Council is under resourced compared with other large regional councils. (Cairns has 7 staff in sport, recreation and venues)
- Providing support advice and facilities resources to sporting groups needs to be resourced sufficiently if clubs are to remain sustainable.

- When the Plan for Trunk Infrastructure (PFTI) for Public parks is implemented this will mean a program involving over \$60 M in acquisitions and development, there will be a need for dedicated resources to manage this.

Future Directions

1. Council should consider additional staff in the sport and recreation team so that each proposed service region has an allocated contact and development officer. This may take a few years to achieve. In the short term an additional officer is strongly recommended.
2. When Priority Infrastructure Plans are implemented and the Public Parks Infrastructure Plan becomes “live” then there will be a need for dedicated Public Parks and Recreation Planning position to manage the PFTI implementation. In particular acquisitions, negotiations, planning and park development cycles and modifications and updating of the plan.
3. Providing additional staff resources will allow for better use of community resources through negotiated facility sharing and partnerships. The investment in people will save on capital and asset costs by ensuring new facilities are only built where necessary.

5.1.5. ACTIVE LIVING

Key Issues

- Active living and encouraging active and healthy lifestyles is emerging as a major policy issue for state and federal governments in terms of preventive health. It is likely that funding programs available to local government for both infrastructure and program outcomes will increase.
- Local governments will be seen as key delivery areas for active and healthy outcomes due to their control of the urban environment and their role in delivering basic infrastructure.
- The top activities are walking, running and cycling which are major users of bikeways and pathways. This is an ongoing increasing trend and means that investment in path networks (both additional and improving existing) is important.
- There is additional evidence that swimming for fitness (not club based) is increasing along with other “individual” exercise related activities, this points to a general trend for increased participation in “recreational fitness”.
- Funding programs are likely to provide source of investment for facilities and programs. Some good partnerships are already established in Mackay through the Physical Activity Reference Group
- Parks sport and recreation are integral to active living and encouraging people to be physically active
- Rural areas tend to have lower provision of programs and opportunities for physical activity.
- The ageing population and existing seniors network has a primarily social focus (not activity) on recreation. However social fitness activities such as walking programs are increasingly important as they meet needs for interaction as well as exercise.

- Older persons are becoming isolated in outlying growth areas (Marian, Mirani, Sarina), with limited access to programs and social activities and major barriers in terms of transport a key concern.
- Indigenous groups have much higher incidence of illness and are constrained by cost, transport and cultural barriers to accessing programs.

Future Directions

1. Council should consider preparation of an Active and Healthy Strategy which could consider most of the following:
 - a. Urban design and planning approvals should incorporate ACTIVE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES (See www.activehealthycommunities.com.au) principals.
 - b. The review of the Desired Standards of Service should include more active recreation opportunities and especially ACTIVE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES design principals.
 - c. Increased focus on Active Transport opportunities and programs
 - d. Facilitate increased levels of walking and cycling. (Some good programs already exist e.g. Active School Transport Program (DTMR).)
 - e. Developing new program opportunities with a focus on schools e.g. Walking Bus, Cycle Bus – growing catchment of schools is a challenge, as schools aren't 'local' anymore and service larger districts.
2. Review the standards for pathway construction in Mackay Region to ensure high use corridors are suitable for the range and volume of use.
3. Create "destination" paths or trails to service all neighbourhoods, villages and townships. These could be branded with special signage (e.g. MARS- Mackay Active Region Strategy) and be marketed to the community. (Sandfly Point, Bluewater or Gooseponds are good examples)
4. Foreshore trails with natural aesthetic/ treatment, integrated with picnic/play and rest areas should be the focus for coastal communities.
5. Expand on the success of Bluewater Trail with development of an overall plan for the Pioneer River corridor.
6. Council should pursue strategic / opportunistic approaches for increasing active transport opportunities and providing active recreation e.g. road resealing programs can deliver wider road shoulders for cycling; replacement of underground services could be used as an opportunity to remediate with a trail.
7. Support Active Transport Programs in smaller communities e.g. Walking Bus or Cycling Bus to Schools.
8. Support the ongoing roll-out of 10,000 Steps signage and walking support programs.

5.2. FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

5.2.1. REGIONAL FACILITIES

There are a number of potential regional facilities that have been proposed or should be considered for further investigation or implementation. These include:

- Gymnastics Competition Centre
- Equestrian Centre with Covered Dressage Arena
- Athletics

- Mountain Bike and other crossover pedal sports
- Indoor Court Sports (Mackay Basketball)

Current Issues

- With amalgamation arises the opportunity to integrate planning for regional facilities.
- Development of regional facilities with “event” capacity links strongly to sports tourism and other economic development strategies.
- Current projects include the South Mackay stadium and Harrup Park.
- Planning for regional facilities should seek to minimise duplication and encourage amalgamation. This may create issues in some sports where previous planning had been focused within the old shire boundaries.
- A complete absence of legal Recreational Trail Bike riding opportunities for unlicensed riders is a major issue in Pioneer Valley and other rural areas.

Future Directions

1. Explore opportunities to support the development of regional competition and event precincts through the preparation of a regional facilities strategy. The strategy should be prepared in partnership with stakeholder groups and should consider:
 - Motor Sports
 - Indoor Court Sports
 - Gymnastics
 - Shooting and Archery
 - Equestrian
 - Mountain Bike, BMX and crossover pedal sports (Black Mountain)
 - Marine sports
 - Rowing and Paddle sports
 - Athletics
2. Council’s role could include the provision of land, access to advice and officer support, financial contributions, support for grant funding.
3. It is expected that the sports associations and state bodies will provide impetus for these facilities and investigations would be supported by SRS and MRC.
4. Council in conjunction with DERM, SRS and potential club stakeholders should investigate options to establish a recreational trail bike facility or facilities. Recent progress on provision of these types of facilities has seen the state government provide land in SE Qld as well as develop a state planning policy to facilitate the activity. The priority would be near Mirani or Marian.

5.2.2. PARKLAND AND OPEN SPACE NETWORKS

Key Issues

There were a number of key issues surrounding supply and development of parks and public open space.

- Increasing demand for outdoor recreation and exercise motivated recreation. This is creating a significant focus on Parks and Pathways.
- Northern Beaches has an undersupply of sporting land and facilities.

- Strong perceptions in the community that new developments are not delivering acceptable levels of parkland and that design is not delivering safe and useable spaces.
- High pressures on available land and considerable quantities of land constrained from residential use due to flooding.
- Community expectations are for parks which are visible, functional and linked through path and open space networks.
- In smaller communities, parks, recreation settings and sports facilities are intrinsically linked to 'local identity' and 'sense of place' (a greater emphasis on place making and diversity in parks is required post amalgamation).
- There is considerable variation in embellishment standards across the former council areas.
- A strong theme from community emerged that more/ different park development approaches are needed to make parks useable. This is a call for greater diversity in how parks are developed and provided.
- Playground provision seen as improved markedly in recent years with shade the major reason for positive comments. However a gap in provision for older children has been raised repeatedly by the community.
- There is an expressed emerging need (whole of Mackay Region) – for the provision of dog exercise parks.
- The region has some significant open space resources that with long term planning and strategies for key acquisitions and trail developments would create a major regional resource for the community and a base for growth of outdoor and nature based tourism.

Future Directions

1. Increased emphasis should be given to ensuring better park outcomes in new developments and areas where redevelopment is delivering higher densities. In particular design outcomes should seek:
 - Local path networks linking parks and residential areas
 - Use of linear open space (providing it has good road frontage) along creeks and conservation area as linkage between larger parks and recreation infrastructure.
 - Ensuring parks are developed to minimum standards at the start (this requires linking of capital works and PFTI)
 - Ensuring parks have good visibility to surrounding areas (achieved through a minimum of 50% road frontage)
 - Ensuring parks are usable land with acceptable slope and other constraints.
 - Design that minimises maintenance costs and costs of reconfiguring the park as community needs change.
 - To encourage active recreation
2. A regional Open Space Network Plan could be developed that looks at development of key network elements:
 - Identification and implementation of regional open space corridors (e.g. Pioneer River)
 - Regional trails integration

- Foreshore and waterway corridors and opportunities for developing linked open space networks and park precincts that result in larger trail networks and increased outdoor recreation opportunities.
- 3. Greater diversity is needed in park design and development to help define local character and meet needs of residents. An ongoing program that provides funding for community groups to “define” their park may help with both “activating spaces” and creating a sense of space.
- 4. As communities change in neighbourhoods – the demographic changes and parks need to be more frequently “refurbished” to reflect these changes. Capital cost structures and asset management programming should consider the inclusion of major functional and aesthetic refurbishment of parks on a regular cycle of 10-15 years.

5.2.3. INDOOR FACILITIES

Key Issues

- There is an apparent under supply of indoor sports courts: Demand estimates based on broad participation statistics (ERASS) suggests a minimum of 11 courts would be needed to serve the current population (approximate catchments of 10,000 people per court apply). Future demand to 2026 would mean an additional 4-5 courts would be required.
- Efficient provision of indoor sports courts relies on 2 -3+ court complexes which allows for diverse programming as well as better management of competitive sport.
- Currently there are only two multi court complexes (combining indoor and outdoor court(s) and a number of single courts (mostly at schools).
- The catchment radius is also important with 5 km being optimal, but due to the linear nature of parts of the region’s development this would need to be modified. A catchment population of around 8,000- 10,000 per court would be a reasonable rate of provision.
- Lack of indoor sports and recreation facilities has been identified in all previous studies and remains a key issue for the community. Indoor sport and recreation is a high priority for community.
- Additional Gymnastics facilities – particularly a purpose built facility capable of hosting events has been identified by the sport as a critical issue. Current facilities are at capacity.
- Northern Beaches has very limited supply of indoor facilities.
- Current sports unable to find sufficient indoor space include: 8 Ball, Gymnastics, Basketball, Futsal, Boxing, Netball
- BER- schools stimulus funding is likely to only deliver 6 – 8 single court (covered or indoor) facilities available to the community for regular use.
- No real indoor facilities in Pioneer Valley with school facilities the only supply.
- Mackay Basketball have well developed plans for the expansion of their facility which will deliver 3 indoor courts plus outdoor courts.
- No contemporary indoor centre or gymnasium facilities in the Sarina District except existing indoor basketball stadium (single court) which is an ageing facility attracting limited public use.

- Council needs to be cautious in developing any new facilities that do not have sustainable operational models. Preference should be for those where operating responsibility will be external to Council.

Future Directions

1. Prepare an indoor facilities strategy that investigates partnerships with school and sports clubs to deliver a network of multi-court facilities servicing the main service regions. (this should investigate court sports as well as other indoor uses such as squash, gymnastics, 8 ball, boxing, martial arts, dancing)
2. Support Mackay Basketball in their plans to develop additional courts at their facility.
3. Undertake an indoor facilities and Schools facilities audit for available capacity that assesses the impact of the Schools Stimulus/ BER funding.
4. Consider partnership funding or operational subsidy to enable community access to existing indoor resources including schools.
5. As a priority planning should focus on provision of a multi-court indoor facility central to the Northern Beaches Growth area. This could consider development of a precinct for indoor sports and aquatic sports as more viable commercial model.

5.2.4. AQUATIC FACILITIES

An Aquatic Facilities Strategy has been prepared for Council and the issues and recommended directions are discussed in that report. The main recommendations from that report are integrated into this strategy.

Key Issues

- Memorial Swim centre may be reaching the end of its useful life.
- Demand growth will be centred in the Northern Beaches/ Northern Suburbs and around Ooralea. Future provision planning should consider new facilities in these catchments.
- The Sarina pool is not meeting needs due to management and leasing issues (the pool is on school land) concerned with access hours and program provision. In addition the pool is ageing.
- Seaforth wading pool is ageing and is expensive to operate for the level of provision it offers.
- Mirani pool will require some future investment in the longer term but in the short term there are community concerns regarding program provision, opening hours, shade and car park safety.

Future Directions

1. New pools to be developed in Northern Beaches/ Richmond area and Ooralea.
2. Future of Memorial Pool to be considered.
3. Pioneer centre to be upgraded.
4. Mirani Pool to have management issues resolved in the short term and in the long term be upgraded.

5. Seaforth wading pool to be converted to a zero depth wet play space.
6. Sarina pool to have management issues resolved in the short term.
7. Sarina pool's future would be re-considered in the longer term (10-15 years) following a more detailed consideration of the impacts of the proposed aquatic facility development at Ooralea.

5.2.5. DEVELOPING SPORT AND RECREATION PRECINCTS

There are a number of key precincts which are developing or have potential to create a network of district or regional sporting and recreation "hubs" which service the various communities.

Key Issues

- Developing sporting precincts is more efficient than development of numerous small fields and facilities.
- Precincts allow for sharing of resources and encourage cooperative approaches between sports clubs.
- Constraints on land supply in growth areas suggest that longer term planning for strategic acquisition and ensuring high land quality to maximise flexibility of use will be critical.

Future Directions

1. Full Master plans should be developed for the following
 - Mackay South sporting Precinct which considers the future needs of resident sports and the impact of the new stadium.
 - Brewers Park Sarina
 - Northern Suburbs Precinct (Norris Rd- Beaconsfield Rd)
2. Other precincts that require a consolidated plan for future development- (concept plans) are:
 - Walkerston sports ground/ BMX
 - The old dump land on Petrie St (which has the potential to be developed as an adventure sport precinct linking to the beach area) could support uses such as Blokarts, BMX, MTB, Archery, radio controlled cars.
 - A potential regional equestrian precinct in the Pioneer Valley (possibly Gargett or Balnagowan).
 - Mirani Recreation Reserve- Primary School precinct
 - Proposed new sporting area in Mackay South on Milton Road.
3. Council should support Marian Primary school in the development of a sporting hub based around the school fields.
4. A new precinct servicing Northern Beaches suburbs should be planned with acquisition of the land base targeted within the life of this plan. This precinct should be considered for an integrated indoor facility and aquatic facility development.

5.2.6. PROVIDING SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES

While providing facilities such as parks and sporting fields is seen as a core function of Council there are a number of issues which affect this role.

Key Issues

- Lack of suitable land in northern suburbs.
- Increasing costs of maintenance.
- Aging infrastructure and pending need for major refurbishment or replacement.
- Changing community needs and expectations in regard to provision of facilities and times of use.
- Recent stimulus funding for schools and potential additional infrastructure to meet needs.
- Community awareness of and increasing acceptance that sharing and multi-use is the future for all facilities.
- Precinct models which group several facilities and users in a single area or within a large sports park have been shown to be successful and provide more cost effective provision.
- A history of clubs taking on a significant share of the operational costs for facilities. But clubs reporting reduced capacity in this regard due to decline in volunteers and increased cost of operations.
- A need to avoid the duplication of resources but to ensure sufficient facilities are available and accessible to the majority of the community.
- Education Queensland has a policy framework that strongly encourages community use of school facilities (Smart Moves). However there are still several schools that are reluctant to consider any regular community use due to fears of damage or impact on academic programs.

Future Directions

1. Council has a primary role in ensuring suitable land is available for sport and recreation facilities. Additional land for field sport and indoor facilities should be acquired in the northern suburbs. Potential locations have been identified in the current Parks Infrastructure Plan (draft). If possible areas should be no less than 5 Ha. The potential to achieve some of the proposed land for sport should be reviewed and the plan adjusted if necessary with a view to acquiring a larger (20 Ha) precinct to service the Northern Suburbs and beaches. Potential locations are likely to be on the margins of the residential areas in Nindaroo or Richmond
2. Increased emphasis on shared facilities and community use of school facilities.
3. Council should seek to ensure partnership and shared use opportunities are exhausted before encouraging the development of new facilities.
4. Council should ensure new club or community group driven proposals are viable and sustainable before supporting the proposal.
5. To negotiate and facilitate shared use and community access to school facilities requires experienced staff to develop new agreements and establish guidelines and templates to streamline future processes.
6. A detailed inventory of facilities and capacity for community use needs to be developed.
7. Council should consider what support mechanisms could be provided to facilitate shared use such as:

- A contribution to maintenance or operation
 - Being guarantor for a club's access agreement
 - In kind support
 - Subleasing a field or facility and then managing community access
 - Providing "contra" agreements where schools might have free access to other council facilities in exchange for community use of a school facility.
 - Promotion of good models and positive stories
8. Lighting of fields continues to be a priority with clubs to expand capacity of fields and respond to changing community participation modes. This should continue to receive support from Council.

5.3. SERVICES

5.3.1. SUPPORTING CLUBS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

Clubs and groups have identified the need for support to retain their strong role in providing sport and managing facilities.

Key Issues:

- Clubs have identified a number of stresses affecting them including cost of maintaining facilities, upgrades needed, declining volunteers, increased responsibilities and requirements in management.
- Council could not manage the facilities and activities that the community sector is responsible for and deliver a similar cost structure. It is in the best interests of all for community groups to be supported and remain viable.

Future Directions

1. Council should formalise the activities and priorities involved in a “club support” program:
 - Additional Sport and Recreation Development officers. Council could consider applying for funding under the recently released Local Sport and Recreation Jobs program.
 - Training and skill development opportunities should be delivered as formal sessions and self directed resources such as templates and guides.
 - There should be a focus on encouraging, supporting and developing the volunteer base.
 - The program should encourage clubs and provide incentives for new models of management to be developed that see more amalgamation of resources and administration.
 - Support for clubs should include “Information and communication tools” (e.g. a central website and access to promotional channels) as well as in kind and financial support.
 - Priorities should be linked to a sport and recreation policy framework.
2. Clubs should be encouraged to improve sharing of skills and resources as well as administration.

5.3.2. COMMUNICATION

Information and communication remain important issues for the community and for sport and recreation organisations.

Key Issues:

- Clubs are unsure of who to contact within council regarding issues.
- Lack of information on opportunities is cited frequently as a barrier to recreation and sport participation.

- Recent efforts in communication with clubs arising from having a dedicated officer have been well received and have shown benefits.

Future Directions

1. A communication strategy should be developed for sport and recreation services. It should include:
 - Development of a “live” sport and recreation opportunities data base (available on council’s web page).
 - Monthly email newsletter to clubs.
 - Shared events calendar resource.
 - Resources sharing and skill sharing register or trading area.
 - Clear communication back to Council.
 - Communication between clubs.
 - Consideration of local reference groups in each of the service regions.

5.3.3. DEVELOPING EVENTS AND SPORTS TOURISM

The development of sports tourism opportunities requires a range of outcomes to be defined and coordinated. While Council and Mackay Tourism have roles in supporting the development of events they can best support through coordination and access to facility resources or destination marketing.

Key Issues

- Lack of accommodation capacity and proximity to potential venues is constraining growth of sports tourism.
- Scheduling of events is not being coordinated and conflicts arise as well as opportunities for synergies are being lost.
- Lack of skills and capability to manage large events in Mackay.
- Lack of skills and resources to prepare hosting bids.
- Facilities which have limited capacity for spectators or are not quite up to standard for the proposed event.
- Club and Community dissatisfaction at large amounts of capital being invested in single purpose facilities or for a small user group. In other words they do not perceive sufficient community benefit for the investment.

Future Directions

1. A sports tourism working group should be established to help sports develop opportunities.
2. As per the regional facilities strategy (5.2.1) develop a few key facilities with a view to specific event opportunities and where the club or sport has good viability and energy in pursuing events.
3. Provide sponsorship and in kind support for events.
4. Consider developing as niche market approach such as schools championships or adventure sports.
5. Do not invest heavily in facility upgrading for a single event. Any infrastructure spending should be supported by feasibility work to demonstrate value back to the community.

5.4. REVIEW OF OPEN SPACE STRATEGY AND DESIRED STANDARDS OF SERVICE

A brief review of the current Open Space Strategy and the Desired Standards of Service which inform the Public Parks Infrastructure Plans was undertaken to provide information for a more detailed investigation being undertaken by Council.

The issues and recommended directions have been based on the investigation undertaken for this study and the feedback from the community on parks and sporting fields.

5.4.1. CURRENT STANDARDS AND POSSIBLE REVISIONS

Following amalgamation there is a need to revise the Desired Standards of Service for Public Parks to accommodate the more diverse range of urban settings and community types. In addition the recent consultation for the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Plan has highlighted that community preferences and expectations have changed in regard to parks and sporting fields. A number of key issues have emerged for consideration in a review of the Current Standards:

Urban Development and Land Availability

Urban development pressure has highlighted the lack of suitable land for residential as well as increasing demands from developers to locate public parks on land that is unsuitable for residential uses. The underlying quality of the land used for parks is a central issue for council as there is a need for housing and a need for provision of parks and recreation opportunities to service residents in that housing.

The provision of outdoor recreation (Park) opportunities needs to be sustainable in that Council must be able to afford the ongoing maintenance costs as well as the periodic reconfiguration of the park as community needs (at around 10-15 years) change over time. Full life costing of parkland will demonstrate that land quality has a major impact on cost and land that is regularly flooded or so constrained as to be expensive to develop or redevelop will be more expensive for the community over the life of the asset than land that is more expensive to acquire initially but is of a better quality.

Park Size and Access

Another issue that emerged is size of parks. The community prefers larger more diverse parks to small "pocket parks" which have limited amenity and opportunity for activity. Walking a bit further to parks is not an issue with residents provided that the walk is enjoyable and on safe pathways. This means that the park's linkage to the residence is important to the overall perceived "quality" of the park opportunity. Parks connected by linear open space such as foreshores and riparian reserves are the desirable outcome as long as those linear systems meet expectations for road frontage, visibility, landscape amenity, lighting and general amenity.

Parks and Linear Systems (Beaches and Waterways)

Provision of parkland also needs to consider the opportunities provided by large linear systems such as foreshores and beaches. These open space areas provide a significant level of opportunity at local and district catchments and for residential areas within local catchments they also provide supply for local park and outdoor recreation opportunities. Given an environment of constraint in terms of development of additional infrastructure and the ongoing cost implications it is prudent to consider where maintenance dollars will provide the best outcome for the community. In areas where beach systems provide a range of local and district level outdoor recreation opportunities it would be reasonable to allow for a lower quantum of other park land needed to accommodate demand and focus instead on the access and amenity development needed for the beaches and foreshores to provide for recreational needs.

Parks in Industrial and Commercial areas

Provision of parks in industrial and commercial areas has been widely discussed issue for some time and community preferences and evidence regarding this area of provision is highly divergent. However exercise and physical activity trends along with feedback from the community indicates that use of outdoor recreation resources such as parks and pathways is increasing considerably and participation now occurs before, during and after work shifts.

The main demand from industrial and commercial areas would be for amenity uses such as places to meet friends for lunch or to relax in a lunch or meal break and places to engage in some physical activity before or after work or during a break. In a commercial precinct public open space can be incorporated in to central public spaces and provide significant commercial opportunities as well as providing relief from the built environment and a key feature enhancing surrounding commercial activities.

In all cases employees in these areas would want the opportunity to spend time in a green park as a relief from the work environment. Provision of parks in these areas is most efficiently through provision of central district level parks of a size able to accommodate a mix of users and activities. These would be connected to the pathway and bikeway network and may comprise a node or nodes on a linear system such as a creek. Design would accommodate physical activity and could allow space for informal field sports and court sport activity or perhaps provide exercise stations or outdoor gyms.

Increased Demand for Exercise Focused Recreation

One of the clear trends emerging from national participation data and reinforced by the results of the community survey is the increased demand for exercise focused recreation opportunities. This means that the community want more opportunities to be active outdoors. Bikeways, pathways, exercise circuits , outdoor gyms, parks with larger areas for group activity and access to open space areas such as beaches, waterways and bushland trails is highly desired.

Reinforcing this demand is the state and federal government focus on encouraging physical activity and the financial incentives for improving rates of physical activity as part of the strategy to address rising obesity and future health costs.

In terms of local government provision and the community in Mackay region there is a clear benefit to providing more opportunity for activity and responding to the increasing

demands of the population for safe and accessible opportunities. Changes to park design need to consider incorporation of physical activity opportunities in to embellishment standards for parks as well as better integration with pathways and linear linkages providing local loops and visible public space for exercise and outdoor activity.

Provision of Land for Sport

Sporting requirements are such that land shape, slope and capacity are critical in effective provision. Community feedback indicates that some areas are undersupplied in sporting land. However there is also an understanding the sporting land is more difficult to provide given the constraints of flooding and topography and competing demands for suitable land from residential and agricultural uses.

Based on current participation rates for Queensland around 1.8 - 2.0 ha /1000 is required to accommodate land needs for field sports, court sports, and built facility sports. This assumes a reasonable level of efficiency of use of area and allows for required ancillary uses such as parking and amenities. This does not include demand arising for self directed activity participation such as cycling, running and walking or provision of space for surf sports or other “natural feature “ related sports.

If Mackay continues to grow at expected levels this could mean an additional 1200 houses per year (PIFU 2009) and at an average density of 2.8people per dwelling that **means 3360 additional people or a demand of 6.72 Ha of additional sport land needed per year.**

Provision of land for sport is also most efficient when provided in precincts allowing sharing of access and parking infrastructure and providing centralised locations for sports to expand existing facilities. Ideal precincts are 10+ Ha. Grouping several sports together in a precinct also assists in making public transport options more effective.

Community expectations are that access to sporting facilities requires a drive or trip on public transport and reasonable distances are seen as 5-10 km or 10- 20 minutes drive. Provision of sporting land can therefore be located to service a sizable catchment and provided the land is of sufficient quality to allow for sports to develop and maintain facilities and to grow then location within a catchment is less important than for local parks.

5.4.2. CONSIDERATIONS FOR A REVIEW OF THE DESIRED STANDARDS OF SERVICE

The following suggestions are recommended for consideration in a review of the DSS for Public Parks.

1. The DSS should be revised to develop specific standards (particularly for quantum of land and type of park) for the different urban settings in the new regional council. Suggested approach:
 - Industrial and Commercial (provision of district park only)
 - Rural Villages (less than 1000) (no local parks provided just village park and sporting land provision)

- Rural towns (1000- 3000)- (Local parks, 1 township park instead of district parks and sporting land)
 - Coastal Urban Areas (within 1 km of beaches and foreshores) –(discount local park required due to beach and foreshore provision. Increase embellishment to allow for beach access development and foreshore development as part of public park provision. District parks, LGA wide parks and Sporting parks to be provided as per the main standard)
 - Urban areas and new urban areas- (as per the main standard)
 - For high density urban areas the rate of provision (ha/1000) stays the same but the access radius could decrease to accommodate higher densities. The increased demand could in part be mitigated with increased allowance for linear open space development (such as trails and paths) and access to built active recreation opportunities or alternative outdoor recreation such as river based activity.
2. Provision in industrial and commercial areas should be for a district level park only, based on providing a park of 2-3 Ha per 4,000 employees
 3. Performance criteria dealing with land quality in the DSS should be reviewed to enable more diversity of settings with provision of trails and recreation nodes in natural areas used to offset some local park demand. In addition provision of local park nodes along waterway corridors should be encouraged provided flood immunity for the node is still above ARI 10 and the node has good road frontage and visibility.

Riparian land adjacent to a waterway corridor could be considered as contributing to the local park provision provided the minimum width above bank is greater than 20m and that sections considered as park have road frontage and flood immunity greater than ARI 5. It is not desirable that any more than 50% of local park provision be linear however larger nodes providing substantial space for active recreation (min 0.5Ha) embedded into linear systems could combine to provide the full supply of local park providing all residents have access within 10 minutes walk or 750M. Any district park provision as part of a riparian corridor must have flood immunity greater than ARI 50 for a minimum of 50% of the area and a minimum of 10 % above ARI100 to allow for construction of toilets and other amenities.

4. Access requirements for local parks could be reviewed with a focus on providing larger more diverse local parks and expanding access radii to 750 m or 10 minutes safe walking.
5. Embellishment standards should be reviewed with a view to increasing provision of facilities which encourage active living. This would include:
 - Off-leash areas
 - Fitness stations and exercise trails
 - Outdoor gym equipment
 - Informal field and courts (bocce, touch, basketball)
 - Paths
 - Signage (instructional and way finding)
6. Sporting land should continue to be provided at around 2 ha per 1000 however small sites and allocations of less than 5 ha are not desirable. A few large precincts servicing larger catchments should be targeted. Land quality for sport may need to be reviewed with levels of flood immunity lowered due to lack of supply. Where flood immunity is lower than desired there should be a minimum

percentage specified for above ARI100 to ensure that built facilities can be accommodated in any future sports precinct and general amenity needs such that maintenance costs or flood recovery costs are sustainable for council and clubs.

Figure 3 Bluewater Quay – Regional Parkland



APPENDICES

Appendix One - Sport and Recreation Policy Framework

Overview

Mackay Regional Council recognises that sport and recreation is essential to the health and wellbeing of its residents and that provision of diverse sport and recreation opportunities creates the lifestyle and social environment that makes Mackay a great place to live or visit.

Well planned and managed sport and recreation provides the following benefits:

- Improving the physical and mental health of residents
- Developing strength in communities through building social capital and reducing anti-social behaviour
- Stimulates economic growth through participation in organised activity, sport and outdoor recreation based tourism and creation of jobs and social involvement
- Provides opportunities for a greater appreciation for the natural environment
- Pride in local facilities, opportunities and achievements

Council's Role

Mackay Regional Council defines its role as a provider and facilitator of sport and recreation opportunities. To meet the demands of this role Council has to ensure that sufficient land and facilities are provided as well as establish partnerships with others that deliver a wider range of opportunities as well as identifying efficient ways to provide within limited resources.

Vision

Sport and Recreation will continue to be central to life in the Mackay Region and the community and visitors will have multiple opportunities to be involved in sport, community recreation, fitness, outdoor recreation and other physical activities which meet their individual needs and contribute to individual and community health.

Guiding Principles & Goals

The following guiding principles underpin the provision of sport and recreation across the Mackay Region supported by a defined goal for achievement.

Participation: Providing opportunities for involvement in sport, active recreation and physical activities in either a structured or unstructured setting.

Goal: *To provide opportunities and encouragement for all residents to participate in sport and active recreation.*

Access, equity and diversity: Ensure design and provision of facilities and opportunities enables all community members to participate in a diverse range of activities according to their needs and abilities and that a minimum level of provision is offered regardless of socio-economic status, age, gender, religion, or race.

Goal: To ensure equitable access to spaces, facilities and programs which provide diverse sport and recreation opportunities for all members of the community.

Innovative and responsible resource management: Managing council and community resources to maximise benefit and minimise life cycle costs means making sure that existing resources are well used and shared fairly while planning for needed upgrades and refurbishments in a timely manner.

Goal: To plan, develop and manage parks, sport and recreation facilities in a way that ensures long term use for the community and best value for the community's investment in infrastructure.

Partnership and collaboration: Improved outcomes for the community come from establishing sustainable partnerships with other agencies and community groups that deliver increased opportunity and facility outcomes through pooling of resources and expertise.

Goal: To develop and maintain partnerships and alliances which build on the expertise and resources of other agencies and community groups to deliver improved outcomes for sport and recreation provision.

Council's Role

Council is responsible for ensuring the provision of sport and recreation opportunities for residents. This will be enabled through:

DELIVERY AREA	ROLE
Regional Planning and Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Region-wide planning and coordination for sport and recreation ▪ Ensuring strategic planning for provision of future land and facilities ▪ Ensuring land provision for sport and recreation is of a suitable quality to enable a range of uses and opportunities over multiple community cycles. ▪ Planning Scheme support for parks, sport and recreation facilities- protection, development and operation. ▪ Managing community access to council land and facilities ▪ Ensuring equity of provision ▪ Development of key strategic approaches such as for active living, trails and sports tourism

Programs and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial assistance for not-for-profit community groups to provide sport and recreation services to the community ▪ Supporting community groups through advice, in-kind assistance and access to other support mechanisms. ▪ Development of specific programs to address areas of need ▪ Establishing partnerships to develop and implement programs ▪ Communication with the community on sport and recreation opportunities and matters ▪ Encouraging active and healthy lifestyles
Sports Fields Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning for and joint-contribution to major multi-purpose and flexible facilities ▪ Brokering community use of school facilities and other community resources ▪ Advice and technical support for not-for-profit community groups managing facilities ▪ Provision of fields, indoor sport and recreation and aquatic facilities or ensuring adequate community access to same thorough adoption of minimum standards of provision and minimum standards of service. ▪ Cycle and pedestrian network planning, construction and maintenance ▪ Planning and developing new facilities and opportunities that reflect changing demands
Parks and Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Acquisition and development of a public parks network ▪ Planning for parks development in collaboration with local communities ▪ Maintenance of parks and open space ▪ Development and application of minimum standards of provision and development that ensures equity of opportunity for all residents. ▪ Encourage use of public parks and adoption of active lifestyles.

Appendix Two: Prioritisation Matrix

Project Priority Criteria		Project Rating Continuum Does not comply 1- fully complies 5				
Community Benefit		Does the project...				
Respond to need identified in adopted plans or strategies?	1	2	3	4	5	
Increase the use or multi use of the facility?	1	2	3	4	5	
Increase participation in sport and recreation? (increase the number of people participating)	1	2	3	4	5	
Improve access to disadvantaged e.g. People with disabilities, older adults, indigenous and woman's groups?	1	2	3	4	5	
Provide an upgrade to meet minimum levels of provision or reconfigure a resource to meet a significant change in demand?	1	2	3	4	5	
Total	OUT OF 25					
Minimum Levels of Service and Asset Management		Is this project required to...				
Meet requirements to comply with legislation covering safety or design of facilities and community use?	1	2	3	4	5	
Address safety and essential maintenance or priority repairs identified in Asset Management Plans?	1	2	3	4	5	
Meet Council defined minimum standards of playing surface, lighting or other critical operational standard?	1	2	3	4	5	
Increase operating efficiency and reduce future operating costs?	1	2	3	4	5	
Minimise impact on environmental areas?	1	2	3	4	5	
Total	OUT OF 25					
Strategic Context		The extent the project...				
Is supported by the Open Space Sport and Recreation Plan, feasibility studies, master plans, concept plans or other strategies.	1	2	3	4	5	
Is identified as being a priority for implementation in the next year? (1 = not identified, 2= not due for 1 or more years, 3= due now, 4 =1 year overdue, 5 = more than 2 years overdue)	1	2	3	4	5	
Establishes a sustainable partnership which offers a capital or recurrent saving?	1	2	3	4	5	
Provides economic benefit to the region or local community? (ability to host events, minimise participation costs, establish local employment)	1	2	3	4	5	
Offers an opportunity which may be lost if not implemented immediately?	1	2	3	4	5	
Total	OUT OF 25					
Sporting Club Operations		The project...				
Has minimal impact on future Council operating expenditure?	1	2	3	4	5	
Has previous funding history in terms of capital works contribution from Local, State or Federal Governments or other funding sources? (represents an ongoing funding partnership)	1	2	3	4	5	
Complies with not for profit tenure policy, lease agreements and liquor licensing regulations?	1	2	3	4	5	
Includes financial support from the facilities user group?	1	2	3	4	5	
Is supported by club or association planning and contributes to sustainability of user groups?	1	2	3	4	5	
Total	OUT OF 25					
OVERALL TOTAL	OUT OF 100					

Appendix Three- Sports Tourism Project Considerations

Introduction

Sports tourism can involve both the staging of an event and the marketing of a facility. Primarily it can be:

1. The staging of an event which attracts spectators and competitors from outside the local government area
2. The marketing of a facility or facilities to visiting teams and user groups who may wish to use the facility for pre-event training or conditioning of players
3. The marketing of a facility or facilities to third parties to host events in the region

Sports tourism is supported or enabled by the following:

1. Suitable diversity and quantity of accommodation stock
2. Transport hubs (air, road and rail) and internal hire capacity (e.g. buses)
3. Suitable facilities to support events or private training. Event capacity also means sufficient spectator capacity as well as income opportunities from advertising, food and beverage sales.
4. Destination attractiveness. The ability of a destination to provide ancillary opportunities to extend stay duration or to increase desirability of the visit.

Sports Tourism Investment

There are a number of considerations which should affect Councils decision to invest in sports tourism initiatives:

1. Facility investments should only be considered where they will add to needed local capacity and be able to provide affordable use for local teams and groups.
2. Investment should only be made where there is substantial certainty of continued benefit and recurrence of the event or additional events.
3. All facility investments should have multiple use outcomes and be able to support a range of events
4. No facility investments should occur without feasibility studies or viability investigations which identify expected impact on operating costs
5. Proposals which build on existing events and enhance current facilities are to be favoured
6. Investment should seek to establish or reinforce niche markets which have less competition than many of the mainstream events.
7. A strategic approach should seek to develop a “packaged” image which builds on compatibility of several facilities and events (e.g. developing outdoor and adventure sports for multi-sport and endurance market)
8. Council should not invest where they cannot demonstrate a substantial return for the community in terms of economic boosts or ongoing facility benefits.
9. Support for initiatives through in-kind or moderate seeding funds should prioritise those that will help bring competitors and spectators to the region and can build or reinforce a regular event.

Appendix Four – Brief Sample of Other Council's Approaches to Leasing and Tenure

LGA	Tenure Arrangements	Rates and Charges	Maintenance	Rebates/ Concessions
Brisbane City Council	<p>Mostly leases of building and playing field areas. Normal lease period is 5 years. Some longer term leases (up to 20 years) which require separate approval by officer delegation (up to 10 yrs) or Civic Cabinet (10+ yrs).</p> <p>There are a number of tenancy arrangements in place where clubs have no formal tenure.</p>	<p>No general rates charged</p> <p>Service charges and lease fees payable</p>	<p>Council does a minimum number of 'cuts' for playing fields whether leased or not (22 per annum).</p> <p>If leased, all other maintenance is the responsibility of the club.</p> <p>If area has only a 'license to occupy', Council does field maintenance</p> <p>If ground is fenced (usually with liquor license and gaming machines) Council does not undertake any maintenance</p>	Subsidy for water rates
Gold Coast City Council	<p>Lease building footprint only. Right of use agreement over playing fields.</p> <p>Specialist facilities can get lease of playing area and buildings (e.g. bowls, tennis)</p>	<p>Field hire fees charged for 'right of use' areas</p> <p>Leased areas pay general rates (with rebate), service charges and lease fees</p>	<p>Council maintains non-leased playing fields and lights</p> <p>Users pay for lights usage and bulb replacement</p> <p>All leased areas maintained by lessee</p>	Rebate of general rates up to 100% for unlicensed/restricted license clubs
Ipswich City Council	<p>In general, no leases granted over playing fields.</p> <p>Seasonal bookings are granted over playing fields</p> <p>Clubs can obtain a lease over building footprint area.</p> <p>Specialist facilities can get lease of playing area and buildings (e.g. bowls)</p>	<p>Leased areas pay general rates and service charges (rebate available)</p> <p>Clubs pay field hire fees for seasonal bookings of playing fields (including use of lights)</p>	<p>Council maintains playing fields and lights but specialised areas (e.g. turf wickets) are maintained by clubs</p> <p>Council controls irrigation of sports fields remotely via use of automated soil moisture sensing technology</p> <p>All leased areas maintained by lessee but ICC assists with structural issues</p>	Leased areas can apply for rebate if eligible
Former Caloundra	Only specialised facilities were leased (e.g. bowls,	Clubs paid for cleaning, water	Maintenance varied. Either Council	Clubs got waiver of sewerage

LGA	Tenure Arrangements	Rates and Charges	Maintenance	Rebates/ Concessions
Shire Council ⁹	tennis) Council granted license to occupy or management agreement over playing fields	and fire levy – not sewerage or general rates Peppercorn fee over leased areas	undertook field maintenance or subsidised clubs to do so (varied between \$4,000 and \$11,000).	charges
Former Noosa Shire Council ¹⁰	Leases granted over playing areas and building areas	No general rates, water or service charges levied. Peppercorn rental charged over leased areas.	Clubs responsible for maintenance but usually paid a small grant to assist	Small grant to assist with maintenance
Former Maroochy Shire Council ¹¹	Leases granted over playing areas and building areas	All leased areas paid rates, water and sewerage charges. Clubs with full liquor license or gaming machines were charged general rates	Clubs responsible for all maintenance	Clubs without liquor and gaming licences eligible for full rebate on rates.
Former Pine Rivers ¹²	Mostly leased buildings and playing fields. Leases or licenses generally for 5 years. Longer term could be negotiated.	No general rates. Clubs paid service charges (water & sewerage) but received rebate. Lease fees(between \$100-\$450), higher if club had gaming machines	Lessees conducted all field maintenance and building maintenance. Some minor assistance for field maintenance was available.	Rebate paid upfront for service charges.
Former Caboolture Shire Council ¹³	Generally no leases of sports fields. User committees managed sports field areas subject to guidelines which outlined Council/ user responsibilities	No general rates, service charges levied	Council maintained all playing fields and irrigation. Fields were all of high quality. Users were responsible only for maintenance of lights, fencing, line marking and equipment.	N/a

⁹ Former Caloundra City Council now part of amalgamated Sunshine Coast Regional Council. Policy is being reviewed.

¹⁰ Former Noosa Shire Council and Maroochy Shire Council now part of amalgamated Sunshine Coast Regional Council. Policy is being reviewed.

¹¹ Former Noosa Shire Council and Maroochy Shire Council now part of amalgamated Sunshine Coast Regional Council. Policy is being reviewed.

¹² Former Pine Rivers, Caboolture and Redcliffe Councils now part of amalgamated Moreton Bay Regional Council. Policy is being reviewed.

¹³ Former Pine Rivers, Caboolture and Redcliffe Councils now part of amalgamated Moreton Bay Regional Council. Policy is being reviewed.

LGA	Tenure Arrangements	Rates and Charges	Maintenance	Rebates/ Concessions
Former Redcliffe City Council ¹⁴	Leases were granted over building area only, with user agreements over playing fields. Many leases were longer term (up to 20 years) but new leases were offered for shorter terms (3 years)	General rates (with rebate) levied Lease fees between \$100 and \$500	Council undertook mowing and minor maintenance of fields. Council maintained light towers and exterior of buildings. Leased clubs were responsible for internal building maintenance and replacement of light tower bulbs.	100% subsidy of general rates for juniors and 75% for seniors. 50% subsidy of water & sewerage charges for juniors and 25% for seniors. 40% subsidy of cleansing charges for juniors and 25% for seniors.
Cairns Regional Council ¹⁵	Leases granted over fields and facilities. Mix of terms. Several multi-use areas with mixed leases. Some areas with seasonal licence and clubs charged a use fee.	General Rates and Service Charges Levied. Junior sports clubs eligible for up to 50% rebate on rates.	Leased areas maintained by clubs. (former Douglas Shire did maintain multi-use areas) Council maintains areas where seasonal licences are granted.	Only Clubs with all juniors eligible for 50% rates or sewerage rebates.

¹⁴ Former Pine Rivers, Caboolture and Redcliffe Councils now part of amalgamated Moreton Bay Regional Council. Policy is being reviewed.

¹⁵ Comprised of former Cairns City Council and former Douglas Shire. Policy currently under review.

Appendix Five – Glossary of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
MRC	Mackay Regional Council
DA	Development Assessment
DERM	Department of Environment and Resource Management (Qld)
DIP	Department of Infrastructure and Planning (Qld)
DTL	Difficult to Locate (sports such as shooting, motor sports etc)
DSS	Desired Standards of Service (used in Infrastructure Planning)
ERASS	Exercise Recreation and Sport Survey (Senate Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport)
ICP , ICS	Infrastructure Charges Plan, Infrastructure Charges Schedule
MTB	Mountain Bike
NFP	Not for Profit
PFTI	Plan for Trunk Infrastructure
PIP	Priority Infrastructure Plan
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
RICS	Regulated Infrastructure Charges Schedule
SICS	Standard Infrastructure Charges Schedule
SRS	Sport and Recreation Services (Dept of Communities – Qld)