



RECREATION STRATEGY

VOLUME 1 - THE ACTION PLAN

SUPPORTED BY



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Glossary of Terms

TERM	DEFINITION	TERM	DEFINITION
Unstructured recreation	Recreation that is undertaken at a time and place that suits the individual and is not governed by rules e.g. walking, jogging.	Structured Recreation	Recreation such as sport that have rules/regulations governing how people participate.
Active Recreation	Recreation activities that require participants to be physically active.	Social Recreation	Recreation activities that are primarily about social engagement e.g. picnicking.
LGA	Local Government Authority		

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

On behalf of Council I want to thank the many individuals and organisations that have attended community forums, completed surveys and provided valuable information and feedback to the Recreation Strategy.



As a result of the extensive community contribution to this project Council has been able to develop a Strategy that reflects the community's vision and priorities for recreation, and that provides a framework for Council decision-making for recreation for the next 10 years.

An important outcome of the Strategy has been the community's clear message in relation to the 'definition' of recreation.

The valuable role of sport in Loddon is undeniable not only in terms of the opportunities that it provides for developing physical skills and providing for competition, but also in terms of its role in bringing communities together for support in times of hardship and celebration.

However the clear message throughout the project has been the need to support and recognise the importance of other forms of recreation such as walking, bike-riding, the arts, fitness activities and the environments associated with these such as trails, waterways, parks and built structures.

The community has also expressed a desire to maximise opportunities associated with recreation. These opportunities relate to economic benefits such as those associated with recreation based tourism and special events and festivals; social benefits such as those associated with membership of clubs and organisations and volunteering; health and wellbeing benefits such as those associated with increased levels of physical activity and community engagement; and environmental benefits such as those associated with protecting and enhancing our natural environments.

This Strategy identifies the pressure that many of our organisations are under because of a declining volunteer base and a lack of young people volunteering. I strongly urge those who have thought about volunteering in the community to assist in whatever way they can, and in particular I ask the young people of Loddon to think about volunteering with a local club, organisation or event.

On behalf of Council and the organisation I want to take this opportunity to thank the many volunteers and organisations that play a role in providing for the recreation needs of the community. Your passion and commitment is reflected in the number and range of recreation opportunities and facilities that have been developed and maintained over the years.

Finally, the Action Plan contained in this Strategy is extensive because it reflects the aspirations and breadth of thinking of the Loddon community in terms of recreation. As a result it will require the combined efforts of all sectors of the community to achieve its implementation.

Council has identified the role that it can play in implementing each of the recommendations and the type of organisations that it will look to for support with these initiatives.

Council looks forward to working with individuals and groups to achieve the community's aspirations for recreation in Loddon.

GAVAN HOLT

Mayor
Loddon Shire Council

1.0 Background

The purpose of the Recreation Strategy is to provide a framework to guide Council's decision making in relation to recreation services, programs and infrastructure for the next 10 years. The project has involved extensive community consultation and research including household surveys, surveys of young people, community forums, workshops, interviews and the review of submissions and other Council service planning documents.

The Strategy has been prepared in three volumes:

Volume 1: The Executive Summary and Action Plan

This volume provides an overview of the key principles that have guided the project and that will guide priorities for the provision for recreation into the future. The Action Plan details recommendations and the key steps required to implement the recommendation. It also details the role that Council will play in supporting the recommendation and other key stakeholders that will need to be engaged.

Volume 2: The Basis of the Recreation Strategy

This volume provides an overview of the context that has influenced the direction of the Strategy and a detailed analysis of the key issues that were identified throughout the project.

Volume 3: Working Papers

This volume contains the details of the research undertaken for the project.

The directions, policy statements and strategies proposed in the Recreation Strategy are designed to support Council's initiatives to achieve its long-term

Vision – *'Loddon will be a proud community leading rural Australia as a great place to live, work and visit'* and Mission – *'To continue to lead and maximise community growth and development. Building viable small communities with strong links to regional centres.'* (Council Plan. 2006)

The focus for the Recreation Strategy has been defined in terms of the four 'Environments for Health and wellbeing' which will ensure that planning and provision for recreation will consider and address recreation needs in terms of the Loddon's *social, natural, built* and *economic* environments.

The way in which Council will work to achieve its objectives in relation to recreation is summarised in the following Key Direction Statements:

Environment for Health and Wellbeing	Key Direction Statement
The SOCIAL environment.	Council will work with local communities to provide for a range of recreation opportunities that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - encourage healthy lifestyles, - increase active and social participation, and - strengthen community networks.
The BUILT environment.	Council will work with local communities to plan responsibly for the long-term infrastructure needs of recreation.
The NATURAL environment.	Council will work with local communities to enhance and effectively manage recreation access to natural resources and environments.
The ECONOMIC environment.	Council will work with local communities to maximise the benefits and sustainability of recreation services, programs, infrastructure and support networks into the future.

Council has determined a number of areas that it will focus on as a priority to address the findings of the Recreation Strategy. These are detailed in Volume 2 of the Strategy and in the Action Plan ('Issue').

A full analysis of the issues emerging from the research conducted for the strategy is in Volume 2, Section 4 - 'Current Situation Analysis'. This section provides the rationale behind each of the recommended actions in the Action Plan.

A number of Policy Statements were also developed to guide Council's decision-making for recreation service provision for the next 10 years. These Policy Statements are listed below. An explanation of the rationale that sits behind the policy statement can be found in Volume 2, Section 3 - 'Future Direction Framework for Recreation

WHAT THE Policy Statement relates to	The Policy Statement
Benefits of Recreation	Support is provided to recreation in recognition of the personal, social, environmental and economic benefits that it returns to the community.
Proven Need and Maximising Outcomes	Provision for recreation will be based on substantiated need and opportunities to maximise wider community benefits.
Infrastructure Development	Priority will be given to recreation development proposals that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are designed to cater for a range of uses or additional community activities, - minimise management and asset maintenance imposts on the community, - form part of a community hub or are part of a strategy to establish a community hub, - consolidate existing functions and buildings - have 'spin-off' benefits e.g. tourism benefits, and - reflect community pride.
Infrastructure Maintenance	Maintenance of existing buildings will generally be a priority over the development of new buildings.
Sustainability	Planning and provision for recreation must be sustainable into the future.
Council's Role and Partnerships	Council is one of a number of providers of recreation opportunities in the community and its role will be clearly defined.
Equity of Provision	Groups providing recreation opportunities will be treated equitably and according to clear criteria.
Access to Opportunities	Recreation planning will seek to minimise social, physical, economic, and geographic barriers to participation.

Council does not have the capacity to address all the recreation needs in the community without significant assistance from a range of key partners.

A major partner is the local community and its many clubs and organisations that provide solid and continuing support to the provision of recreation opportunities in the Shire. Other major partners include the state and federal governments, the private and business sectors and the health and wellbeing sectors.

Council has determined that it will play one of a number of the roles in relation to the recommendations in the Action Plan. These roles may include Service Planning, Service Provision and Management, Advocacy, Leadership and Innovation, and/or Facilitation and Communication.

Council's role will vary considerably in relation to each of the issues identified in the Recreation Strategy. In determining the KEY role it will play in relation to any one issue, Council has considered:

- the sustainability of its role over the life of the Strategy;
- the way in which Council can maximise the impact of its resources;
- priorities identified in the plan;
- opportunities for a proactive response to recreation development and management needs in the community; and
- the role played by other recreation provision partners.



2.0 Implementation and Review of the Recreation Strategy

An *Implementation and Review Committee* with representatives from Council Departments that have a key role in the implementation of the Action Plan will be established to monitor the Action Plan in accordance with key measures.

In addition, relevant projects will be reviewed and monitored by separate project management teams that will report findings to the *Implementation and Review Committee*. These project teams will involve community, business and Council representation as relevant to the project.

A review process is important to ensure that the Action Plan continues to respond to current issues and opportunities. The Recreation Strategy has been prepared as a working document and provides a basis for Departmental 'workplans', and community and Council partnerships.

It is therefore essential that the principles on which the Recreation Strategy is based, continue to reflect the changing needs and priorities of Council, the community and other stakeholders. It is unlikely that there will be significant change to the vision and principles of the plan over its 10 year life, however Actions may be reviewed and varied in response to changing needs.

Year	Action
Annual monitoring	On an annual basis the Action Plan and priorities will be reviewed to identify changing needs and issues, and to ensure the Strategy is being implemented in accordance with key measures.
Every 3 years	Review of timelines, key directions and priorities.
Year 9	Commencement of the full review of the Recreation Strategy

3.0 Summarised Action Plan

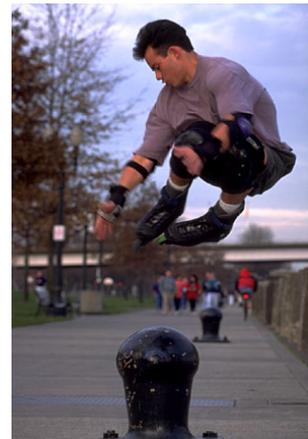
The Action Plan responds to the issues and opportunities discussed in Volume 2, Section 4 (Current Situation Analysis) of the Recreation Strategy. Priorities have been determined according to whether these issues and opportunities:

- were significant throughout the community consultation process; and/or
- have particular implications in relation to the demographic profile of the Shire and demographic trends; and/or
- have been identified in other community planning projects; and/or
- have been identified as a priority by Council, state and federal government agencies.

The Summarised Action Plan provides a listing of Actions according to their priority ranking. Actions are prioritised as:

- PRIORITY 1 – These are actions identified for implementation in years 1-3.
 PRIORITY 2 - These are actions identified for implementation in years 4-6.
 PRIORITY 3 - These are actions identified for implementation in years 7-10.

A detailed Action Plan is contained in Volume 2, Section 6.



Actions rated as 'PRIORITY 1'. (Actions Identified for implementation in years 1-3)

No.	Action
1	<p>Recognising the Benefits of All Types of Recreation Action: Acknowledge, support and promote the importance and benefits of both 'structured' (e.g. sport) and 'unstructured' (e.g. walking) recreation.</p>
2	<p>Sustainability of Sport and Recreation in Loddon Action: Maximise the sustainability of existing sports across the Shire.</p>
9	<p>Volunteer Support Program Action: Facilitate the development of a Volunteer Support Program for recreation clubs and organisations as part of an overall (cross service areas/regional) program.</p>
10	<p>Volunteer Support Manual Action: Develop a Volunteer Support Manual that can be progressively added to/developed over time (roles, responsibilities, contacts, relevant Council policies etc.)</p>
24	<p>Infrastructure Database and Audit Action: Prepare an integrated data base for recreation and social infrastructure that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a full listing of all assets from which groups operate including those that are on land that is owned and or managed by other agencies (e.g. DSE reserves); - condition status and expected lifespan; - costs associated with compliance e.g. legislation, standards, policy); - usage numbers and frequency of use.
25	<p>Infrastructure Development and Funding Policy Action: Prepare an Infrastructure Development and Funding Policy that provides the basis for future infrastructure funding. Policy should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consider different asset types e.g. sport, tourism; - have a high priority for developments that deliver a range of benefits e.g. economic, social; - determine the level to which different infrastructure may be funded e.g. 20% for projects that achieve integration/rationalisation of buildings.
26	<p>Infrastructure Upgrade Action: Identify an annual budget allocation for the upgrade/renewal/replacement of recreation infrastructure that addressed the priorities established in the asset and usage audit.</p>
28	<p>Referral of New and Upgraded Assets to the Asset Database Action: Develop and formalise a process to ensure that all new and upgraded assets are referred to the asset database.</p>
29	<p>Referral of Building Applications by Sport And Recreation Groups Action: Develop and formalise a process to ensure that sport and recreation building applications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - are referred to relevant departments for comment; and - comply with Council policy relating to standards, compliance, amenity provision, consolidation etc.
30	<p>Risk Management Action: Work with clubs and organisations (operating on both Council and non-Council owned land) to ensure that appropriate risk management protocols are in place.</p>
33	<p>Compliance of Recreation and Community Social Infrastructure Action: Develop a process for maximising compliance of all recreation infrastructure to relevant legislation and guidelines.</p>
34	<p>Access to Indoor School Facilities Action: Identify opportunities to increase use of school facilities for indoor recreation / sporting activities. Consideration should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demand for existing activities; - short-term and longer term strategies e.g. short-term = floor upgrade, longer term = expansion and upgrade of amenities; - opportunities to introduce new sports, including those that do not rely on large team / club numbers e.g. badminton; - opportunities for improving amenity (presentation, access to 'social' / tea rooms); - opportunities to support participation e.g. childcare at Neighbourhood Houses / Family Day Care; - daytime activities e.g. women's programs; and - combining a number of recreation and health and wellbeing opportunities at the site.
35	<p>Bridgewater Lawn Bowls and Golf Clubs Action: Actively support the co-location of the Bridgewater Lawn Bowls Club and Golf Club and maximise opportunities for the redevelopment to address other community recreation/social infrastructure needs</p>

No.	Action
37	Swimming Pools Action: Implement the 10 year program of works to maximise the lifecycle and use of community pools.
39	Public Toilets (Cleaning and maintenance) Action: Review cleaning and maintenance regimes to ensure consistency across the Shire.
40	Senior Citizens Centres and Public Halls Action: Maximise access to Senior Citizens Centres and Public Halls for the whole community.
47	Loddon River Action: Ensure that economic development opportunities associated with recreation access to the Loddon River are not jeopardised by current state and federal government negotiations relating to the River system.
49	Maintenance of Waterways Action: Advocate to water management agencies to ensure that water systems are well maintained.
50	Responsible Use of Water Action: Work with clubs and organisations to identify priorities in relation to responsible water management practices and systems and opportunities to address these.
51	Operational and Policy Statements for Recreation Action: Review all operational al procedures and policies (formal and informal) to ensure that they reflect the principles documented in the Recreation Strategy.
52	Recreation Strategy Implementation and Review Group Action: Establish a cross functional team to oversee the implementation of the Recreation Strategy.
54	Reserve Master Planning Action: Review Reserve Master Plan proformas to ensure that they reflect the principles and priorities identified in the Recreation Strategy e.g. consolidation of buildings. Creation of community hubs, integration with township planning, compliance with contribution policies, referral and consultation requirements.
55	Manager of Recreation and Community Development Action: Review workload and position description of this position to ensure there is the capacity to implement the Recreation Strategy and to ensure that the position reflects the requirements of the Strategy.
56	Appointment of a Recreation Development Co-ordinator Action: Appoint a Recreation Development Co-ordinator
57	Action: Review the Halls and Reserves Allocation Policy in relation to level of annual allocation to clubs.
58	Charitable Trust Action: Identify opportunities to establish a Charitable Trust involving financial contributions from the corporate sector, benefactors and donors for the resourcing of community projects.
59	Consistent Club and Organisation Support Protocols Action: Develop a policy that clearly articulates consistent service and support levels to community groups/organisations
63	Programming Opportunities at Local Schools Action: Continue discussions with the YMCA to investigate opportunities for increasing programming of community (including school) facilities.



Actions rated as 'PRIORITY 2'. (Actions Identified for implementation in years 4-6)

No	Action
1	Encouragement of Alternative Sports Action: Support the development of alternative (indoor and outdoor) sporting opportunities e.g. soccer, badminton.
5	Gymnasium Facilities Action: Work with local communities to investigate opportunities to establish sustainable gymnasium facilities at appropriate locations.
6	Fitness/Exercise Programs Action: Actively encourage the establishment and promotion of exercise programs/classes for a range of age groups e.g. gentle exercise for older adults, youth fitness programs.
7	Arts Hub Action: Identify the feasibility of establishing an 'arts hub' in Wedderburn.
15	Active After School Programs Action: Work with schools and local clubs/organisations to identify opportunities for increasing the number of schools involved in the 'Active After Schools' program.
17	Young People Action: Implement the recommendations of the 2003 (Youth) Recreation/Skate Strategy.
18	Young People and Information Action: Increase community awareness of young people's recreation choices.
21	Council Web Site Information (Short Term) Action: Examine opportunities for Council's website to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - more effectively promote recreation opportunities and provide information to clubs and organisations. - expand and upgrade information relating to visitor opportunities, and develop brochures that can be downloaded.
27	Review of the Recreation Infrastructure Works Program Action: Review the Program of Works for Recreation and Sport Infrastructure based on the Infrastructure Development and Funding Policy criteria.
31	Park, Reserve and Township Furniture Standards Action: Prepare a Shire wide policy for park and township furniture (including seating; lighting, security and boundary fencing; shelters etc.) that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establishes a theme across the Shire or within townships; - is durable; - reflects community standards, aspirations and pride.
32	Building and Amenity Standards Action: Prepare a policy for sport and recreation infrastructure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - specifies building design standards; - specifies standards relating to 'finish'; - considers impacts (streetscape, environmental, site); - requires integration with open space and neighbourhood amenity or theme (or opportunity to establish these); - requires compliance with relevant legislation and guidelines.
42	Integrated Trail and Footpath Strategies Action: Facilitate the preparation of township based plans for the development and implementation of integrated trail and footpath networks. Plans should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be based on proformas that are consistent between townships; - identify a hierarchy of trails (h, m, l); - include recommendations for infrastructure e.g. seating, signage; - be consistent between townships; and - identify opportunities for linkages to regional and inter township trails.
44	Park and Open Space Maintenance Standards Action: Review park provision and maintenance protocols and standards to ensure consistency, and opportunities to increase standards of provision.
45	Township Beautification (Landscaping and Plantings) Action: Identify opportunities to support township groups undertaking amenity improvement works through landscaping and tree planting.
53	Action: Develop a framework and relevant processes to ensure all Council and community planning projects are well integrated and appropriately resourced.
61	Recreation Tourism Action: Identify opportunities to support the growth of the recreation-based tourism sector in the Shire.

Actions rated as 'PRIORITY 3'. (Actions Identified for implementation in years 7-10)

No	Action
2	Healthy Lifestyle Groups Action: Support the establishment and promotion of 'healthy lifestyle' activity groups e.g. 'mums and prams' walking groups, 'walk and coffee' groups.
8	Support to Arts and Cultural Activities Action: Identify and encourage opportunities to increase the profile of community and professional arts and expand participation opportunities.
11	'Models'/Examples of 'Good Practice' Action: Develop models/examples of good practice that can assist clubs/organisations develop their sport/activity e.g. funding submissions, program initiatives.
12	Young People and Volunteering Action: Encourage initiatives that engage young people in volunteering.
13	Travelling Volunteer Program Action: Investigate community interest and opportunities to establish a program that encourages people from outside the shire to volunteer with local community based projects. (Consider establishing as an industry model)
14	Inter Club Management Co-operatives Action: Actively work with clubs/organisations to identify opportunities for clubs to develop integrated and co-operative management structures.
16	Community Houses Action: Work with Committees to maximise provision and promotion of recreation opportunities provide through Community Houses.
19	Increased Participation by 'Isolated Groups' Action: Recognise and support initiatives that encourage participation by people that are 'isolated in the community' (e.g. financially, physically)
20	Holiday Programs Action: Facilitate discussions between local and regional agencies/organisations to expand the range of Holiday Program opportunities and promote activities.
22	Council Website Expansion Action: Seek funding to investigate the cost and requirements for hosting an interactive component of Council's website that allows clubs/organisations to update contact information and opportunity details.
23	Website for Young People Action: Investigate community interest in establishing a 'Loddon Young Peoples' website.
36	Tennis Facilities Action: Identify and support opportunities for Tennis Clubs to develop integrated facilities that consider provision of infrastructure across 'districts' (hard courts, lighting) that increases participation and reduces operational costs (e.g. water, court maintenance).
38	Public Toilets (Provision and amenity) Action: Complete an audit of toilet facilities and develop a plan for upgrading, rationalising, co-locating with other facilities and/or relocating toilets facilities. (As part of assets audit)
43	Action: Prepare a plan for the provision of quality play spaces for ages 4-13.
46	Access to Waterways and Water bodies Action: Prepare a strategy that identifies recreation and related tourism opportunities associated with the Loddon River and other water bodies.
48	Access to Water Action: Identify opportunities for innovative water access, storage and usage strategies to maximise access to water for recreation and open space purposes.
60	Camping Grounds and Caravan Parks Action: Prepare a strategy to maximise opportunities and improve amenity relating to caravan and camping grounds/areas.
62	Small Business Development Initiatives Action: Support private providers/small business initiatives that aim at addressing service gaps in the recreation sector e.g. fitness instructors, child 'play therapists', gentle exercise for older adults.