

# Hindmarsh Shire Council Sport and Recreation Strategy

**2025 – 2035**

*Adopted 17 December 2025*





Hindmarsh Shire Council acknowledges the  
Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia  
and Jupagalk Nations as Traditional Owners  
of Country.

We recognise the important ongoing role  
that Indigenous people have in our  
community and pay our respects to their  
Elders, past and present.

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# Introduction.

Welcome to Hindmarsh Shire Council's Sport and Recreation Strategy 2025–2035.

We're excited to share our plan for the future of sport and recreation in Hindmarsh Shire!

Sport and Recreation play a vital role in fostering healthy, connected and vibrant communities and this 10-year strategy sets out how Council, along with local clubs, groups, and community partners, will work together to make sport and recreation more accessible, inclusive, and enjoyable for everyone. Whether you're a seasoned athlete, a weekend walker, or someone looking to try something new, this Strategy is designed to ensure that all community members regardless of age, ability, background or location have equitable access to quality sport and recreation opportunities.

We aim to improve Community health and wellbeing and connectedness by encouraging physical activity through sport and recreation.

## Our Profile.

Hindmarsh Shire Council (**Council**) is situated in the Wimmera region of Western Victoria. We are governed by 6 elected Councillors from three wards - the North, West, and East wards.

Council takes pride in developing and strengthening our economic profile as well as the health, wellbeing, and safety of our community, for both residents and travellers. We are committed to using our resources and influence to make positive changes in the community and continue to support and celebrate the diversity of our landscape, opportunities and people.

We provide social, regulatory, infrastructure, development, tourism and an abundance of other services to residents and visitors to the region.

Hindmarsh Shire has four main towns - Dimboola, Jeparit, Nhill and Rainbow. We are a closely linked community of approximately 5,698 people (2021 Census), with a median age of 50 years.

Hindmarsh Shire is rich in natural attractions that support physical activity, such as the Wimmera River and Lake Hindmarsh, Pink Lake and Lake Albacutya. The economy is largely dependent on agriculture (primary and secondary), health services, manufacturing and retail. The median average weekly household income is \$1,159 with the median monthly mortgage repayments being \$750 and median rent \$180 per week.

**5,698** population total, 50.1% male, 49.9% female.



**14.9%**  
0-14 years



**56.9%**  
15-64 years



**28.2%**  
65+ years



**3**

secondary schools



**7**

primary schools



**4**

outdoor pools



**4**

skate parks



1.6% of Hindmarsh's population are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, with the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagalk Nations being the recognised Traditional Owners of Country in the Wimmera region.

21.3% current smokers (daily and occasional)



15.2% consume sugar-sweetened soft drinks daily



57.5% do not meet dietary guidelines for either fruit or vegetable consumption



Source: West Wimmera Health Service, Community Health and Wellbeing Profiles – Jeparit, Nhill & Rainbow, 2023

## Physical Activity – a Gender-based Lens.

Women’s participation in physical activity is impacted by both gender expectations and biological factors. Women face numerous barriers to being physically active including: caring responsibilities; body image issues; fear of judgement; perceptions of safety; and lack of sporting facilities tailored to women. In Australia, 46.9% of adults describe their day as mostly sitting (sedentary); with males aged 18–64 years more likely than females to report mostly heavy labour or physically demanding work (19.4% compared to 6.8%). In Hindmarsh, 47.5% of women and 50.8% of men met daily physical activity guidelines, with only 55.2% of women, compared to 93.2% of men, feeling safe walking alone at night.



# Fair Access Principles.

The Fair Access Principles were developed by the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, Sport and Recreation Victoria and VicHealth, in consultation with representatives from local government and the state sport and recreation sector. This Policy and any resultant action plan are based on six principles of inclusivity, full participation, equal representation, encouraging and supporting user groups, and prioritising user groups committed to equality.

1	Community sports infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcoming, safe, and inclusive
2	Women and girls can fully participate in all aspects of community sport and active recreation, including as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator
3	Women and girls will have equitable access to and use of community sport infrastructure: a. of the highest quality available and most convenient b. at the best and most popular competition and training times and locations c. to support existing and new participation opportunities, and a variety of sports
4	Women and girls should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles
5	Encourage and support all user groups who access and use community sport infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement gender equitable access and use practices
6	Prioritise access, use and support to all user groups who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to gender equitable access and use of allocated community sport infrastructure



# Strategy Structure.

To help guide our work, the strategy focuses on six key areas:

- 1 Vision and Goals**  
Vision and Goals – What do we want sport and recreation to look like in the future, and how do we get there?
- 2 Understanding Community Needs**  
What facilities do we currently have? What's working well, and what do people want to see in the future? What are the roles of Council, the community, sporting clubs and other bigger agencies?
- 3 Setting Priorities**  
What actions and projects should we focus on and when?
- 4 Funding and Resources**  
How can we find the resources we need to bring this strategy to life?
- 5 The Strategy**  
What will we do and how will we track our progress and make changes if needed?

## Definitions.

This Strategy uses a lot of different terms to discuss the ways that people are active in Hindmarsh Shire. We've listed some definitions below, but also explain other terms as we use them in the Strategy.

Having a hit of tennis with a friend on a Saturday morning is **informal sport**, but playing every Saturday morning as part of an organised pennant competition would be **organised sport**. Informal sport is sometimes also called **social sport**. Both formal and informal sport focus on participation, fun and sometimes competition.

Going for a bike ride, swimming, dancing, or yoga for exercise or enjoyment is **active recreation**. Riding to or from work is **active transport**.

Sport, active recreation and active travel are all types of **physical activity**. Integrating physical activity as part of an active approach to life is often called **active living**.

*Source: Active Victoria 2022-2026, Victorian State Government*

# Our Vision and Goals.

## Vision.

A vision has been developed that reflects the aspirations of the community, clubs and sporting stakeholders:

*To ensure that facilities, programs and services reflect community needs and enable everyone equal access and opportunity to participate in a range of sport, recreation and leisure activities that bring people together, support mental and physical health and reflect the values and strengths of our rural communities.*

These will be developed, operated, managed and financed through shared responsibilities and partnerships between Council, other levels of government, regional and local organisation, clubs, community groups and users.

## Goals.

Community and stakeholder feedback is detailed in the next section of the Strategy. We have developed these following set of goals based on what was identified as being most important to sporting clubs, individuals and other sports and recreation stakeholders.

- Our clubs, parks, spaces and competitions are accessible and inclusive, creating opportunities for people from all ages, backgrounds and abilities to participate.
- Options for physical activity, organised sport and active recreation are diverse, growing and reflective of the interests and preferences of our community.
- Sports and recreation infrastructure, including grounds, public parks, facilities and playing surfaces, are well maintained and resources are allocated based on best value for the community.
- Our communities become places that support holistic health and wellbeing, acknowledging the connection between mental health and physical health.
- Regional stakeholders know what Hindmarsh's priorities are and are working for and with us to deliver on our community and club's vision, goals and plans.





Photo provided by Peter Doxey



Photo provided by Peter Doxey





# Understanding Community & Stakeholder Needs.

## Roles.

### Who Plays a Role in Sport and Recreation?

Creating strong, active communities is a team effort. This Strategy recognises the unique and important roles played by Council, local sporting clubs, individuals, and stakeholders like leagues, government agencies and regional sporting groups. Working together, we can grow participation, improve facilities, and play sports and recreation more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

#### Council

Council plays a key leadership and support role by:

<b>Facility Management Categories</b>	Managing and maintaining Council-owned facilities and open spaces, ensuring they are safe, functional, and fit for community use.
	Supporting leases and User Agreements with clubs and Organisations.
<b>Planning</b>	Planning for the future through the Council Plan and other long-term strategies.
	Developing policies and procedures relating to sports, recreation and facility management
<b>Funding</b>	Prioritising investments that reflect community needs and available resources.
	Providing financial and practical support through community grants, subsidies, and in-kind support to help clubs grow and deliver services.
	Advocating for the region to attract external funding and partnerships from state and federal government bodies.
<b>Service Provision</b>	Promoting inclusion and access by making sure inclusive principles are embedded in policies, partnerships, and programs.
	Strengthening relationships with sporting clubs.
	Events and Activities
<b>Advocacy</b>	Advocating for the region to attract external funding and partnerships from state and federal government bodies.

## Local Sporting Clubs and Community Groups

Local sporting clubs are the heart of community sport. Their role includes:

Delivering grassroots programs, competitions and events that encourage participation across all ages and abilities.

Managing Council sporting assets through user agreements and leases or as Community Asset Committees.

Managing club-run facilities and equipment, often through volunteer efforts.

Creating environments that support inclusion, diversity, and positive club culture.

Create a sense of belonging and connection.

Developing skills, helping pathways to higher levels and creating positive role models.

Promoting physical and mental health.

Providing opportunities for volunteering and leadership roles.

Advocate for community needs and be the voice within the sporting community.

Support the local economy through events/sponsorship.



## Community Members

Everyone in the community has a role to play in supporting and participating in local sport and recreation:

Taking part in activities - whether through organised sport, informal recreation, volunteering, or simply encouraging others to get involved.

Providing feedback and ideas to help shape Council's priorities and programs.

Supporting inclusive and respectful environments at clubs, facilities, and community events.

Being a positive role model.

Being a leader/coach/referee/committee member/or a supporter.

## The Big Players

Peak sporting bodies, regional associations, and state and federal agencies support the local system by:

Providing guidance, resources, and governance support to local clubs and volunteers.

Collaborating with Council and clubs to align regional development priorities and funding opportunities.

Advocating at a state and national level to ensure rural communities are considered in broader sport and recreation policy, grants and investment.

Oversee Rules and Regulations.

Promote integrity in sport through fair play policies.

Advertise and campaign for healthy and active lifestyles.

Boost promotion of sport and recreation through media and broadcasting.

Support Community Initiatives.

Health Services to promote health benefits and injury prevention and recovery.

Sponsorship/advertising/equipment.



# Consultation & Feedback.

## Clubs and Stakeholders

Council sought targeted feedback from local clubs and sports and recreation stakeholders through in-person visits and online consultation surveys. The following table summarises the feedback received under key areas and themes.

<b>Participation and Membership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clubs vary widely in size, from fewer than 10 to more than 200 members.</li><li>• Membership is male-dominated, with adult and junior males making up most participants. Female and non-binary participation was minimal across surveyed clubs.</li><li>• Some clubs identified membership growth and retention as key challenges.</li></ul>
<b>Services and Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A diverse range of activities is offered, including AFL, cricket, lawn bowls, netball, aerobics/fitness, and health centre-based programs.</li></ul>
<b>Facility Conditions</b>	<p>Facility quality is mixed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Playing surfaces (ovals and competition pitches) generally were rated good to very good.</li><li>• Clubrooms and change rooms were often rated poor to satisfactory.</li><li>• Lighting (particularly for courts and pitches) was frequently rated poor or very poor.</li><li>• Accessibility and parking were rated satisfactory to very good.</li><li>• Overall appearance of facilities received strong positive feedback (all “good”).</li></ul>
<b>Facility Tenure and Usage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most clubs operate under Committee of Management (Council or Government) or lease arrangements.</li><li>• Venues are currently used for local and regional competitions, though clubs aspire to host higher-level events (state or national) in the future</li></ul>
<b>Future Plans and Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 60% of clubs have plans (master plans, feasibility studies) for facility improvements.</li><li>• Top priorities include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ New or upgraded clubrooms, change rooms, and toilets.</li><li>◦ Irrigation and surface upgrades.</li><li>◦ Lighting improvements.</li><li>◦ Accessibility upgrades (all-abilities access, ramps, disabled toilets).</li><li>◦ Canteen and electrical upgrades.</li><li>◦ Membership growth initiatives.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Governance and Capacity</b>	<p>Governance policies are inconsistent across clubs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High adoption of Play by the Rules, Fair Play Code, and Code of Conduct.</li><li>• Lower awareness or adoption of Member Protection, Safeguarding Children, and Safe Use of Facilities policies.</li><li>• All clubs surveyed are registered for the ASC Game Plan, though 60% expressed interest in further support to use the tool effectively.</li></ul>



# Community Members

The community snapshot shows a highly engaged core of club-affiliated residents, steady informal participation (walking, casual sport, active living), and clear facility priorities: pool maintenance and change-rooms, clubroom upgrades, walking-track upgrades, and better program variety for children and youth. Respondents identify time, cost and awareness of programs as main barriers; social connection, mental health and being outdoors are major motivators.

## Feedback Summary

- **Age & gender:** Majority of respondents are aged 26–65 (most common groups 36–50 and 51–65) and gender balance is reported across options.
- **Club membership:** 82.6% of respondents are currently members/involved in a club (participant, coach, admin).
- **Most frequently used formats:** High regular/casual use for walking, active living, casual sport and informal active recreation; formal club sport also regularly used by many.
- **Top activities reported:** Walking, fitness/gym, tennis, swimming (recreation), netball, football - walking had the largest spread of participation locations.
- **Swimming pools:** several rate as excellent/good but there are multiple serious maintenance issues.
- **Walking/cycling paths & open spaces:** Generally rated okay-good, but multiple comments ask for maintenance and upgrades.
- **Indoor courts, gymnasiums, and skate parks:** Many respondents selected “don’t use” or “okay” - opportunity to raise awareness / access.
- **Barriers to participation:** Most common: cost (can’t afford / too expensive), lack of local options, not enough time, and not familiar with services/programs.
- **Motivators:** Improve mental health & wellbeing, socialising, being outdoors, general health & fitness - social and wellbeing drivers dominate.

## Strategic Implications

- *Leverage strong club networks.*
- *Prioritise targeted facility upgrades that unlock participation.*
- *Address access & affordability.*
- *Create programs to keep children and young families local.*
- *Maintain and expand walking/cycling infrastructure.*



# Benefits of Sport and Active Recreation.

## SOCIAL BENEFITS

- Greater sense of community
- Stronger, more self-reliant communities
- Greater social and friendship networks
- Improved livability of an area
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour and vandalism
- Helps to develop shared attitudes, values and codes of behaviour in the community (cohesion)
- Breaks down barriers between different sectors of

## HEALTH BENEFITS

- "Protects against cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, musculoskeletal impairments, obesity, some cancers and poor mental health."<sup>1</sup>
- Improved balance and coordination, resulting in fewer falls
- Stronger muscles, joints and bones
- Improved confidence and self-esteem
- Improved body image
- Improved motor skills
- Less likely to suffer from depression and anxiety
- Greater sense of achievement
- Reduced stress levels
- Higher energy and concentration levels
- Reduction in incidence and severity of illness and disability
- Increased life expectancy.

## ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- Encourages a greater appreciation and awareness of the natural environment (i.e. develops environmental stewardship)
- Encourages the protection of areas of conservation or cultural heritage value
- Reduces carbon emissions, air pollution and noise pollution (through activities such as active transport, e.g. walking and cycling in place of vehicular transportation)

## ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- Attracts visitors and generates tourism
- Attracts businesses and creates employment
- Creates higher market value of properties near public open space
- Improvements to local business viability through sale of sport and recreation equipment, services and programs
- Physical inactivity costs the Australian economy \$805 million annually - \$640m in direct costs (healthcare expenditure) and \$165m in indirect costs (loss in productivity) (2013 figures)
- Physical inactivity causes an estimated 16,000 premature deaths a year.<sup>2</sup>
- Productivity loss due to physical inactivity is estimated at 1.8 working days per worker per year.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> VicHealth (2015) Promoting equity in physical activity: An evidence summary

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

# Mental Health.

Participation in sport and recreation plays a vital role in supporting mental well-being across all age groups.

For young people, involvement in these activities can reduce behavioural issues, build resilience, and enhance academic performance. Among older adults, recreational participation has been shown to delay cognitive decline and lower the risk of dementia. For individuals experiencing mental illness, structured physical activity programs can complement traditional therapy and medication, contributing to better overall outcomes.

Regular engagement in sport is also linked to significant reductions in psychological distress - by 34% for those participating one to three times a week, and by 46% for those participating four or more times weekly. Furthermore, studies in rural and regional Victoria have revealed strong links between social isolation and lower mental health scores, highlighting the importance of community-based recreation for mental well-being.

<b>Improved Mood and Reduced Stress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical activity stimulates the production of endorphins, dopamine and serotonin - neurochemicals that promote feelings of happiness and reduce stress.</li><li>• Engaging in sport or recreation can provide a natural way to manage anxiety and depression.</li></ul>
<b>Social Connection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Team Sports and group activities foster social interaction, friendship and a sense of belonging.</li><li>• These social bonds help combat loneliness, which is a known risk factor for poor mental health.</li></ul>
<b>Routine and Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular participation in sport provides structure, goal-setting, and discipline which help with mental health issues like depression and ADHD.</li><li>• Having Consistent activities can add purpose and motivation to daily life.</li></ul>
<b>Self-Esteem and Confidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Achieving physical goals like learning a new skill or running a certain distance can boost self esteem.</li><li>• Recreational and competitive sports help build confidence, especially in young people.</li></ul>
<b>Cognitive Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exercise improves memory, focus and sleep quality all of which are good for mental functioning.</li><li>• Enhances concentration, mental clarity and motivation.</li></ul>
<b>Coping and Emotional Regulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sport can teach healthy coping mechanisms for dealing with stress and emotions</li><li>• Many people use recreational activities like hiking, swimming, walking, running, yoga as a way to regulate emotions.</li></ul>

# Funding and Resources.

## Council's Budget and Staffing Resources

Every year, Council allocates funding on a needs and priority basis to facilities and spaces that support sports and active recreation. This could be through maintaining facilities, undertaking upgrades, or committing an allocation as a co-contribution to a grant-funded project.

Council also has staff that are committed to community wellbeing, this includes staff who work directly in the sports and recreation space, as well as those who work with youth, asset management and positive aging. All of these roles, as well as most roles across Council, work together to support the health and wellbeing of our community.

### Funding – The Reality

When looking at external funding opportunities, there are things that we need to take into consideration:

- **Competition & matching co-contribution requirements:** Many infrastructure grants are competitive, and some require local or partner contributions (in money, land, in-kind support).
- **Eligibility varies:** Not all programs are open to every group. Some are specifically for rural/regional areas, some for state peak bodies, some for schools or local government.
- **Focus on inclusion & equity:** Many programs have specific goals around inclusion (gender equity, people with disability, diversity, regional communities) so aligning with those aims helps applications.
- **Timeframes & rounds:** Grant rounds close at set times; applications need to be prepared well in advance.
- **Scale:** Some grants are very small (e.g. equipment replacements or vouchers), others fund major infrastructure. Understanding the scale of the project will help target the right funding source.

### Working Together

#### User Agreements, Asset Committees and Leases

User Agreements, Asset Committees and Leases enable clubs and groups to manage or occupy sports and recreation facilities and spaces either on Council's behalf, collaboratively, or as sole users. This is always with the intended outcome that the asset is maximised for whole of community benefit. This also enables greater investment in facilities, as groups take on some or all of the operational costs.

#### Co-contributions

Council has a policy that sets the thresholds for when community groups and organisations will contribute to projects auspiced or delivered by Council. This ensures community buy-in, increases the chances of success with grant applications, and enables Council's resources to be distributed fairly.

#### Identifying Priorities

When resources are limited, Council relies on genuine relationships and collaboration with the community, club and other stakeholders to identify priorities and enable action to be taken in these areas. We can't always do everything, but prioritising means we can focus on what is most important.

# The Strategy.

## Target Areas.

The Strategy considers 5 target areas that acknowledge the different needs, aspirations and resourcing identified for each group. For each action, we've listed which group/area it applies to.

- 1 Priority Precincts** - are the major sports and recreation 'precincts' in our townships that host multiple sports competitions and regional league competitions. This includes the Davis Park Recreation Reserve, Rainbow Recreation Reserve, Jeparit Riverbank Precinct and Dimboola Recreation Reserve. Smaller precinct areas include the Nhill Tennis Club (also host to the Cane Ball Court and near to the Dog Park) and the Jeparit football and netball Recreation Reserve.
- 2 Major Sporting Clubs** - major sporting clubs are those that have significant membership, host multiple sports and participate in various district leagues. They have a higher standard of governance than minor clubs and play a significant role in promoting active health and recreation and social connection and inclusion.
- 3 Single Sport Clubs and Groups** - single sporting clubs are those that run one sport (may be across multiple grades, abilities or genders). These are normally run by a small group of volunteers and are often connected to a peak body/association.
- 4 Informal Sports and Recreation** - informal sport and recreation is all the types of physical activity that happen outside of organised sport. This includes things like park run, aerobics groups, gyms, walking and cycling and swimming.
- 5 Advocacy** - these are the items that are outside of Council's direct control, but where we can play a role in advocating and representing the community in promoting policy change, enabling opportunities and seeking funding.

## Timelines.

**Business as Usual (BAU)** - These are things that Council will continue to do as normal, but that underpin our key strategic priorities identified in this Strategy

**Short Term** - These items can be commenced in the next 1-2 years with funding and/or resources that Council and/or the community already have.

**Medium Term** - These items can be scoped, planned, investigated and commenced in the next 3-5 years, as they are larger-scale projects where the Council, funding and community resources may not be readily available.

**Long Term** - These are big ticket items that require considerable strategic planning and a large investment from Council and/or the community and contributions from external funding bodies.

# Planning Principles.

To assist with strategic planning, the following set of planning principles have been developed to guide Hindmarsh Shire Council and the community when considering new programs or services or developing facilities that relate to sport and recreation.

Principle	What does this mean?
<b>Promotes and encourages physical activity, liveability and connections</b>	<p>The program, service or facility is likely to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• get more people more active, particularly those who are currently inactive</li> <li>• provide physical activity opportunities for all for life</li> <li>• provide a diversity of physical activity opportunities</li> <li>• create more attractive, functional and liveable communities</li> <li>• create opportunities for people to connect to one another, make new friends and networks and develop a sense of belonging within their community</li> </ul>
<b>Demonstrated by an evidence base and community need</b>	<p>The need for the program service or facility has been demonstrated through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion in relevant strategic reports and documents (Council Plan, community action plans, master plans, strategies, etc)</li> <li>• Expressed community needs (e.g. community engagement feedback, surveys), assessed against what may be available within close proximity, or what may be provided as part of a network of facilities in an area</li> <li>• Expressed needs from sport and active recreation clubs and organisations</li> <li>• The need to comply with various regulations and standards (e.g. playground safety standards and female change facility standards)</li> <li>• Building condition reports or fitness for purpose assessments</li> <li>• Broader sport and active recreation trends (e.g. move towards more individual sport and active recreation participation).</li> </ul>
<b>Builds community capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The activity increases inclusive participation, encourages community ownership, and engages a diverse range of people and volunteers in meaningful ways.</li> <li>• The activity develops leadership, builds individual and organisational skills, and provides opportunities for training and knowledge transfer within the community.</li> <li>• The activity strengthens social networks, fosters partnerships between groups, and enhances participants' sense of belonging and connection to their community.</li> <li>• The activity supports the growth and sustainability of local organisations through improved governance, collaboration, and resource sharing.</li> <li>• The activity contributes to stronger community leadership, resilience, and self-organisation, and aligns with broader local government and community priorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable</b>	<p>The program, service or facility is likely to be sustainable from the following perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Financial</b> – facilities are financially viable to construct, operate and maintain, and are considered against all other Council priorities. Whole of life costs are clearly understood and appropriate budgets set aside for maintenance and renewal. Community subsidy levels and cost sharing arrangements will also be taken into consideration. Programs and services are financially viable to operate, although there may be a level of subsidisation if warranted to enable increased participation by traditionally disadvantaged groups.</li> <li>• <b>Participation</b> – there are likely to be sufficient people to utilise the program, service or facility on a regular basis, i.e. enough for a team, enough to make a program worthwhile, enough volunteers to manage the program, service or facility.</li> <li>• <b>Environmental</b> – any facility is designed according to Environmentally Sustainable Design features such as solar panels, passive heating and cooling and use of recycled materials. Any programs or services minimise their impact on the environment and enhance understanding of the environment where possible.</li> </ul>

Principle	What does this mean?
<b>Equitable</b>	Across the municipality, within a reasonable walk or drive from people's homes, there will be a network of quality physical activity environments. Within these locations, there will be range of different opportunities available to meet the diverse sport and recreation needs of the community.
<b>Accessible and inclusive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs, services and facilities will be inclusive and accessible to people of all: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ages</li> <li>◦ Abilities</li> <li>◦ Genders</li> <li>◦ Cultural and multicultural backgrounds</li> <li>◦ Socio-economic circumstances</li> <li>◦ Life stages</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Universal Design principles will be embedded in planning and delivery.</li> <li>• Consideration will be given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Physical access and appropriate supporting infrastructure</li> <li>◦ Affordability and cost</li> <li>◦ Scheduling and timing</li> <li>◦ Transport and travel options</li> <li>◦ Childcare needs</li> <li>◦ Communication and promotional tools</li> <li>◦ Community attitudes and perceptions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• All members of the community will be welcomed and included in sport and active recreation opportunities.</li> </ul>
<b>Optimisation of community infrastructure</b>	Prior to the investment in new community infrastructure, the maintenance, renewal and upgrade of existing community infrastructure will be explored as an alternative. For sport and active recreation projects, the aim is to maintain or increase physical activity and participation, while improving liveability and community connectedness.
<b>Partnerships and collaboration</b>	Program, service or facilities may be delivered in partnership with other relevant organisations, groups, clubs, businesses and stakeholders as appropriate. These partnerships may include community, cross-sector and inter-governmental partnerships in order to deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• integrated planning</li> <li>• implementation of shared priorities</li> <li>• equitable outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Safe</b>	The program, service or facility will increase existing safety levels of participants (as per regulations or standards, such as a netball court run-off area) or will be developed to ensure that safety of participants is maximised.

Principles adapted from the Golden Plains Shire Council Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2020-2023 (2020)

# Strategy 1 – Big Picture Planning

Action	Description	Target Group	Timeline	Council's Role
Relationships	Build and document relationships with key stakeholders that enable continuity of planning, alignment of goals and aspirations and clear delineation of responsibilities.	1-5	BAU	Lead
Master Plans	Develop and or collect (where produced by external club or organisation) master plans for priority precincts across the Shire to ensure coordinated strategic planning and investment.	1	Long Term	Lead/Coordinate
Project Pipelines	Maintain an up-to-date register of project pipelines that reflect current and future funding opportunities and priorities identified in master plans, community plans, the Council Plan and from other community and/or club input.	1-5	BAU	Lead
Facility Audits	Develop and undertake an Audit Plan for Council-owned/managed sporting and recreation facilities that considers; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriateness for current and future use</li> <li>• Safety and amenity</li> <li>• Access and inclusion</li> <li>• Projected costs for any identified works</li> <li>• Opportunities to expand functionality and or utility</li> </ul>	1-4	Medium Term	Lead/Coordinate
Partnership Mapping	Create a live directory of stakeholders who provide sport and recreation opportunities in Hindmarsh Shire, both for internal use and to enable signposting for community members interacting with Council.	2-5	Medium Term	Coordinate

## What is a Master Plan?

A master plan for sporting facilities is a comprehensive, strategic road map that guides the long-term structural use and development of sports land, considering factors like user needs, environmental connections, and financial practicality. It defines the facility's future vision by outlining land use, infrastructure, landscaping, and potential cost estimates to ensure sustainable growth and successful implementation of projects

## What is a Project Pipeline?

A project pipeline is a visual framework and process for managing multiple projects, showing each project's journey from idea to completion through various defined stages. It serves as a road map for a project portfolio, helping organisations to plan, track, prioritise, and assign resources to projects, thereby ensuring alignment with strategic goals, improving communication, and providing a clear overview of all ongoing and upcoming work.

## Strategy 2 – Inclusion and Participation

Action	Description	Target Group	Timeline	Council's Role
<b>Increase Participation at Clubs</b>	Support major sporting clubs and single-sport clubs to identify tailored participation targets and strategies relevant to their sport/s and communities.	2-3	Medium Term	Support
<b>Strategies for Diversity</b>	Develop targeted strategies that address inclusion for vulnerable, underrepresented and diverse groups in Council's sphere of influence.	2-4	Medium Term	Deliver
<b>Increase Opportunities</b>	Promote, deliver and support opportunities for people to participate in diverse sports and recreation activities, including come and try days.	2-4	Medium Term	Support/ Coordinate
<b>Decrease Barriers</b>	Support initiatives that reduce barriers to participation, including cost, proximity, access and play/training timing.	1-4	Medium Term	Support
<b>Safe Sports</b>	Work with clubs to encourage the delivery of safe sports initiatives that consider violence, drug use, community safety and injury prevention.	2-3	Short Term	Support/ Collaborate
<b>Gender Equality</b>	Continue to support programs such as This Girl Can to encourage more girls and women to be physically active	2-4	BAU	Deliver
<b>Facility Design</b>	Ensure that an all ages and universal design lens is placed over facility developments and upgrades, services and communications so that the needs of older adults are addressed	1+-5	BAU	Support/ Collaborate
<b>Asset and Initiative Promotion</b>	Promote free and low-cost initiatives available in the community such as walking and cycling paths, playgrounds, parks, skate parks, outdoor fitness equipment	4-5	Short Term	Support/Deliver
<b>Data Analysis</b>	Collect Participation data annually to measure growth or decline in participation levels and see where the support is needed and there is a community need.	2-3	Short Term ongoing	Coordinate/ Support

## Strategy 3 – Funding and Investment

Action	Description	Target Group	Timeline	Council's Role
<b>State and Federal Funding</b>	Monitor and prepare for funding opportunities for both Council and community sports organisations by identifying priority projects that are 'shovel ready'	1-5	Medium-Long Term	Support/ Coordinate/ Advocate
<b>Governing Body funding</b>	Liaise with Sporting Bodies regarding funding opportunities and potential investments in clubs and priority precincts to ensure that Council and community organisations are best-positioned to be successful with an application	1-5	Medium-Long Term	Support/ Coordinate/ Advocate
<b>Council Funds</b>	Identify projects to be considered in the Council Plan Annual Actions and budget development process	1-5	Medium-Long Term	Deliver
<b>Private Sector</b>	Encourage clubs and assist with applications for sponsorship and grant funding through private sector businesses	1-5	Medium-Long Term	Support/Advocate
<b>External Funding</b>	Seek additional external funding to secure the resources to develop and upgrade paths and trails	4-5	Medium-Long Term	Coordinate/ Advocate
<b>Cost Reducing</b>	Seek opportunities to reduce the cost of children's sport by partnering with sponsors to develop junior programs, equipment donation schemes or other innovative programs/grants	1-5	Short-Medium Term	Support/ Advocate/ coordinate
<b>Feasibility</b>	Conduct a feasibility study prior to developing any new major facilities to ensure that there is demand and that the facility is likely to be well utilised and viable and ensure whole of life costs are identified	1-5	Medium Term	Advocate/ Coordinate
<b>Financial Sustainability</b>	Investigate and identify methodologies for small and large sporting clubs to be financially sustainability, including reserving funds to be used as co-contributions for grants	2-3	Long Term	Support

## Strategy 4 – Asset Management

Action	Description	Target Group	Timeline	Council's Role
Use Allocation	Ensure that all Shire owned facilities have up-to-date and effective User Agreements, leases and licenses for use of Council facilities for sport and recreation.	1-4	BAU	Collaborate
Maintenance Priorities	Design and deliver a formal facility maintenance procedure that is consistent across all user groups and facilities.	1-4	BAU	Collaborate



## Strategy 5 – Advocacy

Action	Description	Target Group	Timeline	Council's Role
Key Priorities	Advocate for identified projects, funding, opportunities and policies through lobbying, local government networks, relationships with state and federal representatives and through Council publications	1-5	BAU	Advocate
Parks and Open Spaces	Advocate for community-informed management of public parks, facilities and open spaces managed by other government agencies.	1-5	Medium Term	Advocate
Appropriate Funding	Advocate for funding streams that suit the financial design of local government and rural/regional sporting clubs.	1-4	Long Term	Advocate
Upskilling/ Training	Advocate for governing sports bodies to come to Hindmarsh Shire to deliver coaching, umpiring and committee volunteer courses that build the capacity of our clubs.	2-5	Medium Term	Advocate

# Monitoring and Reporting.

## Tracking Progress and Being Flexible.

Council is committed to ensuring the Sport and Recreation Strategy remains a living document that guides decision-making, investment and partnerships over time. To ensure the Strategy remains relevant and responsive, Council will continually monitor its implementation and progress, and adapt as community needs and priorities evolve.

Key actions include:

- **Ongoing monitoring** of progress against strategy actions through regular internal reporting and collaboration across Council departments.
- **Annual reporting to Council** on achievements, challenges and progress against the strategy's key actions and outcomes.
- **Regular engagement with community and stakeholders** to identify emerging trends, needs and opportunities in sport and recreation.
- **Formal review of the strategy at key intervals**, or sooner if required, to ensure it remains aligned with community priorities, sector trends, and available resources.
- **Flexibility to adjust actions** and priorities in response to changes in demographics, participation patterns, funding opportunities, or other relevant factors.

This approach will ensure the Strategy continues to reflect the needs of the community and supports active, healthy lifestyles for all.





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