



# ALICE SPRINGS SPORTS FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND STRATEGY - FINAL | JANUARY 2020



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. Alice Springs	4
1.2. Population	4
1.3. Purpose of the Plan	5
1.4. Facilities Included	5
2. SPORT IN ALICE SPRINGS	6
2.1. Summary of Sport Participation	6
2.2. Sporting Facilities	8
2.3. Unique Alice Springs	9
3. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT	10
3.1. Engagement Process	10
3.2. Community Feedback	11
3.3. Sport Club and Organisation Feedback	12
3.4. Government and Council	13
4. SUMMARY OF KEY STRATEGIC AND FACILITY ISSUES	14
4.1. Lack of Sports Fields/ Access to Fields	14
4.2. Legacy of Past Decisions and Need for Master Planning Precincts	15
4.3. Developing a Standard of Provision and Facilities Hierarchy	15
4.4. Priorities Emerging from a Standard of Provision Approach	16
5. RECOMMENDATIONS	17
5.1. Traeger Park	18
5.2. Jim McConville Park	19
5.3. Ross Park	20
5.4. Albrecht Oval	21
5.5. Rhonda Diano Oval	22
5.6. Flynn Drive Oval	23
5.7. Anzac Oval	24
5.8. Paul Fitzsimmons Oval	25
5.9. Alice Springs wide Recommendations	26
6. WARRANTIES AND DISCLAIMERS	28

# 1. INTRODUCTION



This Executive Summary provides an overview of the detailed investigation undertaken for the Alice Springs Sports Facilities Master Plan and summarises the recommendations for the included facilities.

This document should be viewed in conjunction with the Background Report, which contains the detailed analysis of the research, consultation, site assessment and rationale for the recommendations. The main report also contains an implementation plan for the recommendations.

## 1.1. ALICE SPRINGS

Alice Springs is located in the “Red Centre”, 1,500 km from Darwin, and 1,532 km from Adelaide, and less than 500 km from Uluru. This central Australian location, makes it a key regional centre for a range of key services, including sport. Alice Springs Town Council has a strong history in delivering quality sport facilities and securing major sporting events which benefit the community and the local economy.

## 1.2. POPULATION

The Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that in 2016 the population of Alice Springs was 24,753. The proportion of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in Alice Springs is 17.6%, slightly lower than the Territory’s proportion of 25.5%. The median age of Alice Springs is 35 years of age, which sits between the Territory median age of 32 years of age, and the national median age of 38 years of age. Without any major catalyst for growth, the township is expected to grow slowly and increase by about 1200 residents over the next 10 years.

### 1.3. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

#### Plan Vision

The Vision for sporting facilities in Alice Springs is:

*Building on our unique role and our past successes, Alice Springs will continue to develop our sporting groups and sporting facilities in a planned and sustainable way. Our aim is to provide a rich sport and recreation focused lifestyle for our residents that includes opportunities to compete at different levels and host high level competition in the township. The community's investment in our quality sporting facilities benefits the health and wellbeing of our community and strengthens our local economy.*

#### Guiding Principles

The Master Plan has been developed around the following guiding principles:

1. Maximising return on investment – ensuring all facilities are used to capacity.
2. Ensuring equity in provision.
3. Developing partnerships with other levels of government and other agencies.
4. Building on current strengths when considering new events or investment.
5. Ensuring sustainable investment.
6. Supporting emerging sports and junior sport.

### 1.4. FACILITIES INCLUDED

The following 8 sporting precincts are included in the facilities master plan.

Traeger Park	Jim McConville Oval	Ross Park	Albrecht Oval
Rhonda Diano Oval	Anzac Oval	Paul Fitzsimmons Oval	Flynn Dr Oval

## 2. SPORT IN ALICE SPRINGS



### 2.1. SUMMARY OF SPORT PARTICIPATION

As part of the Sports Participation Levy, clubs and organisations are required to report to Council their annual membership data. Table 1 details the latest available participation data by sporting code.

Table 1: Sports Participation

SPORT	MEMBERSHIP COLLECTION YEAR	SENIORS	JUNIORS	TOTAL
<b>FIELD SPORTS</b>				
Football (Soccer)	2018	375	567	942
AFL	2018	523	417	940
Cricket	2018	228	120	348
Touch	2017	200	75	275
Baseball	2017	89	134	223
League	2018	74	128	202
Union	2016	136	0	136
Hockey	2018	95	22	117
Athletics	2017	0	77	77
Softball	2017	50	8	58
<b>COURT SPORTS<sup>1</sup></b>				
Netball	2018	461	571	1032
Basketball	2018	146	240	386
Tennis	2018	86	110	196

<sup>1</sup> Court facilities are managed independently by each sporting association and not booked through Council.

Over more than 10 years of membership data the top four sports for participation appear to be (in order):



1. NETBALL



2. AFL



3. FOOTBALL (SOCCER)



4. BASKETBALL

Five-year membership trends (mostly 2014-2018<sup>2</sup>) were graphed for comparison across the sports and the following observations summarise:

- « Growth and shrinkage trends across five years tend to be similar so external factors such as sudden population growth or key events may be responsible.
- « AFL, Cricket and Netball have the most consistent membership.
- « Football (soccer) appears to have highly volatile membership.
- « Basketball appears to be in a general decline - however trend data is for the 2012-2016 period.
- « Tennis, touch, league and Union have declined marginally over the 5 years.

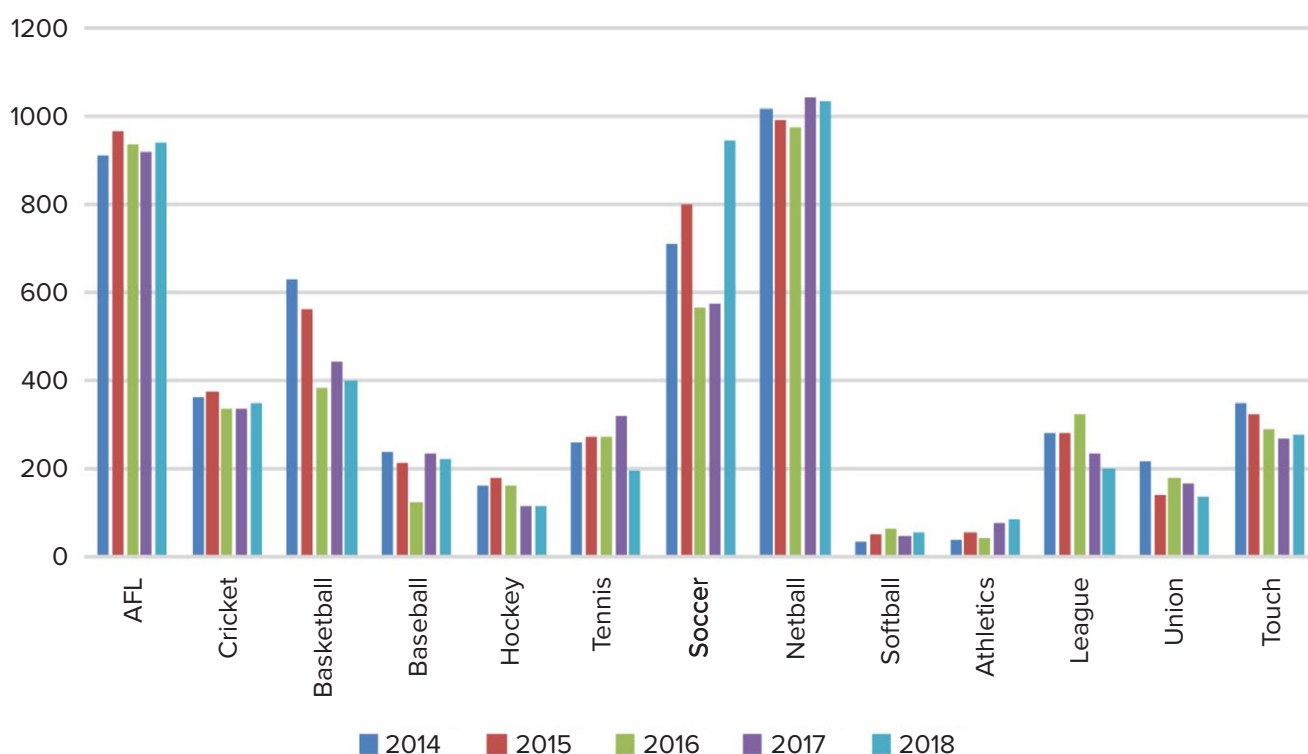


Figure 1 Five Year Membership Trends

Note: Basketball (2012-2016), Baseball (2013-2017), Softball (2013-2017), Union (2012-2016), Touch Football (2013-2017).

<sup>2</sup> Some used early 5-year cohort as that was the only available trend data

## 2.2.SPORTING FACILITIES

Compared to many towns of a similar population, Alice is very well supplied with sporting facilities. However, its status as the regional centre servicing Central Australia, means that there is a strong need for higher standard facilities to support regional competitions and events.

Across the eight sporting precincts included in this plan there are a total of 14 sport fields, 10 tennis courts, 4 outdoor courts and 7 indoor courts.

*Table 2: Available facilities in Alice Springs*

FACILITY TYPE	NUMBER OF FACILITIES IN ALICE SPRINGS	LOCATIONS
Ovals (Cricket and AFL)	7 (Including 3 turf wickets)	Traeger Park Jim McConville Park Paul Fitzsimmons Oval Albrecht Oval Flynn Drive Oval Ross Park Rhonda Diano Oval
Rectangle Fields (Soccer, Touch, League, Rugby)	7	Ross Park Flynn Drive Oval Anzac Park Rhonda Diano Oval
Outdoor Tennis Courts	10	Traeger Park
Outdoor Netball Courts	4	Ross Park
Indoor Courts (Basketball or Netball)	7	Ross Park Traeger Park
Diamonds (Baseball or Softball)	5	Traeger Park Jim McConville Park
Synthetic Hockey Turf	1	Traeger Park
Grassed Athletics Track	1	Rhonda Diano Oval



## 2.3. UNIQUE ALICE SPRINGS

Alice Springs poses a number of unique challenges that are rarely seen elsewhere in Australia. Alice Springs is a major regional centre with a relatively small population base, but servicing much of Central Australia, and is arguably one of the most important regional centres in the country. Compared with any other regional town of a similar population and with many larger regional towns, Alice Springs is the administrative centre for three levels of government servicing the centre of the country and supports a diverse range of sporting and other events.

This unique role means the town has a high level of service for sport facilities. Many regional centres of a similar size would only have one “premier” type sporting facility, whereas Alice Springs has several. The town’s isolation means that delivering higher level sporting opportunities requires the township to “bring the events to them “ and this requires a higher level of investment. This investment in sport facilities and event capacity is an investment in the health and economy of the wider region, not just the town.

Alice Springs has a strong history of attracting large events, that other towns of a similar size could only dream of attracting. It has been building its capacity and destination credibility in its ability to host sporting events through events such as the Alice Springs Masters Games which has the dual benefit of being good for the local economy and bringing competition to the township to expand the sporting experience of residents.

Alice Springs was compared with regional centres in Queensland and Western Australian that have similar populations and regional context. Table 3 highlights the unique situation Alice Springs is in, with access to quality facilities and ability to attract high level events.

Table 3: Other Councils compared to Alice Springs

LOCATION (LGA)	POPULATION	SPORTING FACILITIES	EVENT CAPABILITIES	REGIONAL CONTEXT
Alice Springs Town Council	24,753	Major facilities include: « TIO Traeger Park Stadium « Lyle Kempster Baseball Stadium « Pat Gallagher Netball Centre - A four court indoor Netball centre « A 3-court indoor basketball centre « Albrecht Oval « Anzac Oval « The Aquatic Centre	With the current standard of facilities, including ancillary facilities Alice Springs has a strong track record of attracting high level events to town, most recently, a WBBL match.	Located approximately 1,500 km from Darwin and Adelaide, Alice Springs is a major regional centre for 2 states, and supports a number of communities within the NT and SA.
Mt Isa City Council	21,000	6 facilities, mostly single field facilities. Major Rodeo and Equestrian Facility.	Similar to Alice Springs, Mt Isa is a regional town that services a large catchment. To date there are minimal sporting events that can be held within the township except for the Rodeo, Bull ride and Equestrian related events.	Located just to the east of the NT-QLD boarder MT Isa is key town in Western Queensland.
Western Downs Regional Council	34,467	33 facilities, across 14 townships. Within the main townships (Dalby) there are 12 facilities.	There are limited event capabilities within the region and Council is not currently seeking to attract any large sporting events.	Western Downs Regional Council covers 38,000 Km2 and with major townships of Dalby, Chinchilla and Tara.
Shire of Broome	17,251	3 sporting facilities, totalling 4 fields, an aquatic centre, indoor sport courts, 10 outdoor netball courts.	There are limited other ancillary facilities in Broome, and the recently completed Sports Master Plan did not identify any event capabilities for the existing facilities.	Broome is located approximately 2000 km from both Perth and Darwin, with a central airport.

### 3. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



#### 3.1. ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The engagement process was designed to build a strong understanding of current facility issues and organisational issues for sport, as well as increase the understanding of community views, issues and aspirations. This process included:

Workshops with  
Council Staff and  
SFAC

Meetings with  
key stakeholders

Community  
survey

Sport Club and  
organisation  
survey

Community  
workshops

Club and  
Organisation  
workshop

Site visits

Website  
information,  
project email

### 3.2. COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Community feedback was gathered from the survey, email submissions and the community workshops.

In total 71 survey responses were received, with the majority of respondents being male (60.5%) and aged between 30-49 (62%). Respondents also answered for others in their households, so the total number of residents covered by the responses was approximately 213.

Of the 19 individual facilities that were identified in the survey, 6 received an overall poor satisfaction rating (with at least 50% of responses being poor or very poor). These facilities were TIO Traeger Main Oval, Traeger Grassed Hockey, Jim McConville Diamonds, Flynn Drive Oval, Paul Fitzsimmons Oval, Alice Springs Basketball Stadium.

The community were asked to identify their priorities for sports facilities improvements. Some comments referred to improving amenities at sites where construction has begun on new amenities and these were excluded. The remaining priorities were:

1. Lighting of fields
2. Cycling Infrastructure
3. Improved Maintenance
4. Event Capabilities
5. Additional Rectangle Field

Respondents were also asked to identify perceived barriers to participation. These included:

- « Junior Baseball – lack of participation
- « Junior Cricket mid-week – lack of lit facilities
- « Social football competitions – lack of free fields
- « Indoor Cricket – lack of facilities
- « Pump track – lack of facility
- « Athletics – Lack a synthetic facility
- « Junior Hockey – lack of facilities



### 3.3. SPORT CLUB AND ORGANISATION FEEDBACK

For sporting groups there were multiple opportunities to identify concerns including the club survey, stakeholder meetings, SFAC feedback, Workshops and email responses. Concerns included issues impacting individual clubs and those impacting the delivery of sport in Alice Springs.

#### Key Issues

The key issues raised were:

- « Need for improved spectator amenities, particularly shade.
- « Turf and playing surface maintenance including the practice of harvesting turf from one venue to fix another.
- « The need to increase multi-use and sharing of facilities across sports.
- « The need to upgrade club and player facilities and public amenities at some facilities particularly Netball.
- « Lack of car parking and other access issues at several facilities.
- « Access to drinking water at all sports precincts needs to be investigated to ensure there is suitable drinking water access, especially for junior sports.
- « Across the various sites there are canteen concerns, especially with the increasing workplace health and safety requirements and demand on volunteers.
- « Difficulty of access to fields or facilities for new or emerging sports.
- « Poor communication between sports around availability of spaces and opportunities to share.
- « Several observations were made about how existing facilities could be better utilised to provide synergies between sports without duplicating existing facilities.
- « Concerns that “traditional” larger sports, who have successfully attracted large events continually require increased investment to continue to host events and that this is at the expense of smaller sports. This expectation for increased investment could be at the expense of other facilities and opportunities to increase diversity of facilities.
- « Clubs would like to see more investment in non-council land (such as schools), however, they understand that any investment would need to be after an agreement to ensure community access.
- « There were suggestions to look at the role SFAC plays in Alice Springs, and whether they should have a more proactive approach to facility management and supporting development of clubs.

- « There was a desire for better communication across all levels including with Council, SFAC, NTG, peak sporting bodies and between individual user groups in Alice.
- « A number of specific facility and playing surface issues were raised and these are considered under each of the eight precincts.
- « Club sustainability and capacity concerns were raised including:
  - Availability of coaches/ instructors.
  - Declining membership.
  - Increasing competition from other sports or activities.

#### Sports Facility Advisory Committee (SFAC)

##### Feedback

SFAC identified similar issues to those raised by sporting groups. The key themes were:

- « A lack of lighting or suitable lighting for playing areas was a major constraint on maximising use of fields and constrained access for training.
- « The importance of continued investment in higher level facilities was emphasised to ensure that Alice Springs stays in a position to attract high level events. However, balance is required so that local competitions are not adversely affected. The competing uses of Anzac Oval was highlighted as an example, emphasising the need for a second field with rugby league/ union goal posts so that both local sport and events are supported.
- « The potential for improved communication between the sporting organisations to assist in providing additional training space and identifying opportunities to share resources.
- « Improving communication between the users within individual precincts, in particular when development of infrastructure was being planned to capitalise on opportunities for multiple use and ensure a positive outcome for all users of the site.
- « The importance of a strategic framework, for planning and prioritising investment in sporting facilities, supported by both Council and the sporting clubs. This needs to ensure that sporting facilities are managed sustainably, used to capacity, planning isn’t undertaken in “sport silos” and capital spending isn’t based on wish-lists.

### 3.4. GOVERNMENT AND COUNCIL

#### Department of Sport and Recreation

The Northern Territory Government recognises the importance of Alice Springs as a key regional location for Central Australia. Sport and Recreation observed that while the capital investment for facilities from Territory and Federal sources is often welcome there are challenges for the Town Council and local sports who remain responsible for the ongoing maintenance and operating costs.

Sport and Recreation identified that school facilities were an 'untapped' resource in Alice Springs and recognised that while supportive government policy is required, the negotiation of agreements is usually left to individual councils to manage and develop. The current model operating between Council and Charles Darwin University was seen as a positive advance and that should be investigated further as a possible model for other education facilities in Alice Springs.

#### Alice Springs Town Council

The key considerations from a Council perspective were:

##### Alice Springs is Unique

For its population size, Alice Springs has a very high level of service, and "punches well above its weight" in reference to its ability to attract high level events to the town. This however has led to a growing level of community expectation around the standard of facility that should be provided in Alice Springs. The Town acts as the "capital" of Central Australia and services a large region. Its unique status means that it can often attract good levels of support from federal and territory governments.

##### Impact of Success

Hosting elite sport and the high levels of participation in Alice Springs while a success, has also led to overuse of some facilities, due to demand for the higher quality facilities. This has created issues around facility condition and maintenance scheduling, for example: Traeger Park. Overall, funding maintenance is Council's main concern, including Council's ability to continue the current level of service across all sites.

#### 'The Gap'

Council also recognise that there are existing community concerns in reference to facility development south of 'the gap' and travel distance. Past proposals to develop additional sports field capacity or relocate sports south of 'The Gap' have largely been unsuccessful. However existing facilities in the locale have been building profile and utilisation as locations for horse sports, difficult to locate sport and major events. As a future growth area, forward planning needs to ensure that a sufficient area is set aside for field sports to service Kilgariff.

#### Demand and Utilisation

It is recognised that not all facilities are currently being used to capacity. However, there are a number of constraining factors limiting hours a specific field or oval can sustain. These include, playing surface condition, size, access and location, and lack of or poor quality of, lighting available at fields.

#### Developing a Strategic Approach

Council's priority is to ensure that the existing facilities are maintained to a suitable standard, however, defining the standard can be complex within the aspirations of individual sports, high expectations of the community and the financial constraints that council must acknowledge when considering operating costs of sport and recreation facilities. A key issue is that external funding for capital works can often be found but the recurrent costs of maintaining facilities is left solely with council and user groups. It is important any new development is part of a larger plan for strategic investment and is at a scale that is sustainable for council and the community.

## 4. SUMMARY OF KEY STRATEGIC AND FACILITY ISSUES



The development of this masterplan has considered the mix of issues and aspirations identified by the stakeholders. It has also looked at each facility and the objective information around use, perceived needs and what might be sustainable opportunities for the township. The key issues driving the development of the plan are detailed in the following section.

### 4.1. LACK OF SPORTS FIELDS/ ACCESS TO FIELDS

A number of field sports raised the issue of access to fields that were suitable for training and in some cases possible expansion of competition. The full Background Report investigated the perceived needs of individual sports and the data around field use. While potential growth in demand was identified as one of the drivers for needing additional field space, there is currently little indication that this increase would come from population growth. Participation levels are strong and while growth in some sports will mean decline in others there are trends, such as increasing female participation in some field sports, that suggests demand for field space will continue to be strong.

Population growth alone will not generate sufficient demand for additional field capacity. However, where growth occurs is an issue and if areas such as Kilgariff do grow then it is reasonable to consider provision of parks and sporting space to service that community. In considering formal sport provision, south of The Gap, the existing supplies of land at Blatherskite Park and the Racecourse should be considered in meeting many needs. The development of a multi-use oval and rectangular field sporting area for community and sporting use should be prioritised as part of the future residential area at Kilgariff.

Use and demand analysis and the draft Standard of Service has indicated that an additional rectangular field, able to be used by football, league and union is a

priority. To meet training needs and provide a second competition field for league and union, this field should have appropriate goal posts for these codes.

Investigation of potential responses to field needs and current levels of use have indicated:

- « The current booking system and use charge (levy) does not link field hours used to fees paid. The operation of the system may cause inequity in the level of subsidy individual sports receive. The current approach has no incentive “to only book what you will use”. Considering a different charging system may enable improved scheduling and free up some field hours for other sports.
- « Some locations such as Flynn Drive are heavily booked and heavily used and if all the booked hours are used – the level of winter use is possibly unsustainable.
- « A key issue for AFL and Cricket is that there are no facilities with two ovals at the same location making it difficult to run a more efficient model for training and competition.
- « While cricket has one of the highest levels of booked hours per player, it is a summer sport and has less competition for field hours than those operating in winter.
- « Football locates much of its use at Ross Park for training and competition. The main field is only used for competition, meaning the “back” fields are supporting training three nights a week. On weekends the whole site supports competition and is booked 9 am-8.30 pm both days.
- « Options for increasing capacity include lighting additional fields and developing additional fields for training use. Potential locations for a new field include the proposed use of land owned by the Desert Life Church opposite Ross Park, community access to school fields or school land for development of a field; or, conversion of other space to a field. The main demand appears to be for a rectangular field.

## 4.2. LEGACY OF PAST DECISIONS AND NEED FOR MASTER PLANNING PRECINCTS

Many of the key sites involved in this master plan appear to have been planned around individual facilities and not around an overall precinct master plan. This means that opportunities to allow for future growth, chances for shared infrastructure and overall efficient use of space have been lost or constrained.

Traeger Park, Ross Park and Jim McConville are the three locations that would benefit from a master plan. However, there is some interaction between sites as the potential to consolidate some sports in a single precinct should be considered. In addition, some surrounding issues (such as parking at Traeger and the nearby hospital) suggest that a new approach could have multiple benefits.

## 4.3. DEVELOPING A STANDARD OF PROVISION AND FACILITIES HIERARCHY

The analysis of issues and concerns identified an emerging concern around inequity in terms of the approach to facility planning and levels of provision. Regardless of the issues around access to field hours or facility space, the overall strategy for sport facilities should consider what the standard and hierarchy of provision might look like and how it could be applied to forward planning.

The proposed hierarchy of provision for field sports is:

- « A “premier” competition facility able to support high level competition and visiting Territory or National teams and major events.
- « Second tier competition venue to support local competition and training.
- « Access to additional training fields/ spaces as needed to meet demand.

A standard of provision should be confirmed regarding the level of embellishments provided at different facility hierarchies:

Table 4: Possible Provision Standard

FACILITY ELEMENT	PREMIER VENUE	SECONDARY COMPETITION AND TRAINING	TRAINING
Playing surface	High quality surface, suitable for Territory Level competition and compliant with relevant sport standards.	Well maintained surface suitable for high use for competition and training.	Basic grass field/ training area, meeting training needs. Most often multiple use space.
Lighting	Lighting sufficient for competition play at night. Lux levels specified for different sports.	Lighting sufficient for training use at night. Minimum lux specified.	Lighting optional - could be provided at training standard if use is higher than 25 hours / week in winter.
Player Facilities	Full change facilities with hot showers for both teams, officials' room, first aid, drinking water.	Change and shower facilities, multi-use space for officials or other club use, first aid room, drinking water.	Access to toilets, drinking water.
Irrigation	In ground irrigation	Irrigated	Irrigated
Spectator amenity	Public toilets, drinking water, spectator stands, shaded areas, food and beverage outlets, dedicated hospitality spaces (e.g. for sponsors or media).	Shaded stands, perimeter shade, toilets and drinking water. Kiosk space.	Shaded areas/ perimeter shade. Drinking water.
Storage	Storage spaces for resident sports provided.	Storage space for resident users and seasonal users.	No on site storage.
Parking	Parking sufficient for larger events. Player and official access direct to facilities.	Off street parking.	Off street or on street parking/ informal parking.
Outside Broadcast Capability	Optional	No	No

*All facilities to provide unisex player facilities or both male and female change and shower.*

If we consider the current provision for sports included in this strategy the following general assessment identifies shortfalls in planning according to a hierarchy. However, it should also be noted that if there is no demand from the sport for multiple facilities or high-level competition facilities then provision is not warranted. In addition, some sports such as netball or basketball could meet all needs in a single multi-court facility.

The following assessment could be used to determine priorities for future investment.

*Table 5: Nominal Assessment of Sports Against Facility Hierarchy*

SPORT	PREMIER VENUE	SECONDARY VENUE AND TRAINING	TRAINING
Netball	Yes - partial	Yes- main facility	Yes
Football (Soccer)	Yes - partial	Yes - partial	Yes
AFL	Yes	Yes	Yes
Basketball	Yes - partial	Yes - main facility	Yes
Cricket	Yes	Yes	Yes
Touch Football	Yes - could use Anzac	Yes	Yes
Baseball	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rugby League	Yes	No	Yes
Tennis	No - regional facility not up to standard	Yes - main facility	Yes
Rugby Union	Yes	No	Yes
Hockey	Yes - partial	No	Yes
Athletics	No	Yes - partial	Yes
Softball	Yes	Yes	Yes

Another way to consider the above is to confirm a minimum standard for provision for sports is to have a facility capable of supporting competition use supported by additional training capacity at the main or other facilities.

#### 4.4. PRIORITIES EMERGING FROM A STANDARD OF PROVISION APPROACH

In considering the provision shortfalls the following priorities emerge:

- « Paul Fitzsimmons Oval (CDU) provision of shade, drinking water and toilets (this is complicated by the ownership of the site being CDU).
- « A second competition capable field for rugby union and league.
- « Consideration of the need for an improved regional tennis centre.
- « Confirmation of Anzac Oval as the main premier “rectangular sport” venue and forward planning to enhance the facility for use by football, rugby league, rugby union and possibly touch football.
- « Improvements at Ross Park Main oval for player and spectator amenity. Developing an additional field.
- « Improvements for Netball Centre to better meet spectator and player needs.
- « Improvements for the Basketball Centre to provide spectator facilities and amenities.
- « Improvements for Rhonda Diano Oval to meet spectator and player needs as a second-tier venue. Further investigation of the need for a premier venue.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS





## 5.1. TRAEGER PARK

### Users



AFL



Basketball



Tennis



Cricket



Baseball



Hockey

### Key Issues Raised

- « Currently only allows single provision of larger fields.
- « Court facilities are land locked within limited option for growth.
- « Tennis has the inability at this site to meet the new facility standards for hosting regional competition without the loss of courts.
- « Parking and access within the site are not designed for a multi-user precinct.
- « The site is poorly planned and planning in the past has occurred in individual 'silos' or on a sport by sport basis.

### Recommendations

#### SFAC Priorities

SFAC have identified the following as their priorities for Traeger Park:

- « Hockey – Clubhouse Facility Upgrade
- « Increase Lux Levels - Traeger Park Main Oval
- « Increase Lux Levels – Lyle Kempster Baseball Diamond
- « Refurbish/ Improve Basketball toilets
- « Refurbish/ Improve Baseball Toilets
- « Baseball Shed/Scorers Box
- « Repair Fence at Hockey
- « Hockey Shed
- « Upgrade Traeger Park Change rooms
- « Additional Shade at Traeger – Retractable
- « Traeger Main-Upgrade AFL Office and Change rooms
- « Refurbish Tennis Toilets
- « Resurface Tennis courts
- « Develop new Tennis Canteen

#### OPG Recommendations

- « The long-term strategic option would be to redesign Traeger Park to become the home of AFL, Cricket, Hockey and Basketball, while also providing the only

venue in Alice Springs with multiple oval fields. This “big picture” option does require some significant decisions. To achieve this outcome both Tennis (new location to be determined) and Baseball (to Jim McConville Oval) would need to be relocated.

- « Tennis NT to work with council on investigating the feasibility of planning, funding and operating a regional tennis centre. If a new regional facility is considered viable then a number of locations could be investigated. Some of these are discussed in the Background Report.
- « Undertake a site master plan to improve the overall precinct, including consideration of:
  - Consolidation of the multiple storage sheds into a single facility located in the south east corner and aligned to minimise the current sterilisation of space required for access to the various current sheds.
  - Additional roadside parking along speed street made possible by the above.
  - Relocating the practice nets to reduce the impact on the useable space.
  - Remove the caretakers house for tennis and reconfigure the tennis courts to provide a better show court and address the non-compliant run-off issues. The level of remote security now available should be sufficient to manage perceived security risks for the site and the increased use from upgrading the facility may help the sport grow.
  - Install rugby league posts on the southern end of grassed field to provide an additional training space.
  - Establish a long-term plan for hockey, with consideration of converting back to a grassed field when the current synthetic reaches end of life. The issues with synthetic fields are that there are limited multiple use opportunities and if hockey has low numbers then the space is not able to be used. With a well-maintained grass field (maintained to hockey standard) other codes including cricket and rectangular sports can use the space.



## 5.2.JIM MCCONVILLE PARK

### Users



Baseball &  
Softball



AFL



Cricket

### Key Issues Raised

- « Current layout has a significant amount of used land around the boundary.
- « Current layout also limits opportunities for expansion of any facilities without impacting on other users.
- « There is limited off-street parking available within the site.
- « Concerns regarding the material used for the skins on the diamonds.
- « Any 'closing' of the site would reduce the available public space to the community.

### Recommendations

#### SFAC Priorities

SFAC have identified the following as their priorities for Jim McConville Park:

- « Install a fence around playing oval.
- « Additional improvements to the Softball Diamonds and Grassed Field playing surfaces.

#### OPG Recommendations

- « The long-term strategic option for Jim McConville is the development of a Diamond Sports Precinct- creating the home of baseball and softball while retaining the AFL/ cricket oval. This would only be pursued if baseball was willing to relocate and consolidate and therefore is considered in conjunction with the future of Traeger Park. It would be important for that the main diamond was a suitable standard for higher level competition and if an ABA team was to be based in Alice Springs, it would need to meet their standards.
- « Open negotiations with the Education Department and Centralian Middles School regarding options to access available land for additional sporting facilities. Ideally the land adjacent to the school bus drop if area would work well and negotiations could include the use of this

parking area for events and competitions out of school hours. The space could be used for an additional rectangular field or even a new home for a regional tennis centre allowing the school to become a school of tennis excellence.

- « In the short term prioritise the following site improvements:
  - Enhance the spectator facilities around the oval with additional shade plantings and provide additional water stations.
  - Consider some “hard stand” areas to support relocatable stands for when the oval or diamonds are used for competition.
  - Install low fencing around the oval and improve perimeter bollards to ensure no vehicles can get on site.
  - Consider lighting the oval for training use by AFL.
  - Retain community access for recreation and consider marking a running loop around the perimeter to provide an activity/ exercise opportunity for sports, running groups and residents.
  - Consolidate built player and club facilities around the new building.
  - When refurbishing the diamonds, replace the skinned area with a more suitable material.



## 5.3. ROSS PARK

### Users



Football



Netball



Cricket



Schools

### Key Issues Raised

- « A key issue for netball is the poor condition of existing player facilities (change rooms), outdoor public amenities and the current sports administration, meeting and kiosk facilities. the facility does not have the capacity for the current demand and is very old. A replacement facility is recommended over refurbishment.
- « There is very limited parking for netball and traffic and pedestrian movement is a major concern.
- « Netball's outdoor courts were identified as needing resurfacing, shade and better lighting.
- « Across the site there is limited shade for players and spectators.
- « Football have indicated that the fields are at capacity and an additional field is required.
- « There is limited communication between Netball and Football, and like other precincts in Alice Springs, planning has occurred at a sport level and not at the precinct level.

### Recommendations

#### SFAC Priorities

SFAC have identified the following as their priorities for Ross Park:

- « Full upgrade to old/existing netball changeroom and clubhouse, plumbing not sufficient to handle volume of use and regularly block during events/times of high use.
- « Increase number of Male toilets at Netball.
- « Shade for spectators - tree or shade shelter.
- « Shade Over outdoor courts.
- « Resurfacing outdoor courts.
- « Increase Lux Levels – Ross Park Main Pitch.
- « Lighting – Netball Car Park.

### OPG Recommendations

- « Ross Park has been identified as a critical precinct that would benefit from an overall site master plan. The long-term strategy should be to redesign the site with a view to optimising field layouts, providing additional parking and improving pedestrian circulation. In addition, there is a lack of spectator facilities to support this as the “premier” field for football. Possible options are discussed further in the Background Report.
- « In the short term continue with the plan to lease land from the Desert Life Church to develop an additional training field. This should include ensuring additional parking is developed adjacent to the field.
- « Begin planning for the redevelopment of netball's administration buildings. Netball, SFAC and Council have all confirmed the need to improve the provision of administration and amenities facilities. It is recommended that a new facility be developed to provide:
  - Administration facilities
  - Meeting room/training room
  - Canteen
  - Changerooms
  - Public Toilets
  - First aid room
  - Storage
- « Consider a reconfiguration of the northern fields into 3 senior fields of about 90m x 55m width and 5m buffers.
- « Undertake the following improvements to the precinct:
  - Improving spectator amenity shade and stands for the main field.
  - Consolidate storage and plant sheds to the central service precinct (where the new amenities have been built) and free up additional parking space.
  - Relocating the cricket wicket if needed to sit between two of the three northern fields.
  - Relocating the cricket practice nets.



## 5.4. ALBRECHT OVAL

### Users



Cricket



AFL

### Key Issues Raised

- « This is a single site facility, located 10 minutes from the Centre of Town, the furthest of all of Councils facilities.
- « Limited community access in an area lacking in access to large park areas.
- « Currently being improved as the second-tier competition facility for AFL and Cricket.

### Recommendations

#### SFAC Priorities

SFAC identified a number of priorities including lighting and amenities which are being implemented in the current project.

#### OPG Recommendations

Council are currently in the process of improving the lighting, developing new change rooms and amenities on site. Across the life of this plan maintenance of the facility to the new standard is likely to be the main priority.

- « Consideration could be given to providing a local park and play area on the south-east corner of the park where the old nursery was. Additionally, pedestrian access to the grounds for use when it isn't booked could be investigated. Albrecht is currently open for informal active recreation between 5 am and 6 pm, when not booked for formal sport. The Larapinta residential area surrounding the oval, is not well supplied with parks and open space. For homes close to Albrecht, there are limited opportunities for outdoor recreation and limited access to developed parkland.



## 5.5. RHONDA DIANO OVAL

### Users



Football



AFL



Athletics



Cricket

### Key Issues Raised

- « Field lighting needs to be upgraded to support training use.
- « The site is essentially land locked, limiting potential improvements.
- « Additional spectator amenity is required.

### Recommendations

#### SFAC Priorities

SFAC have identified the following priorities:

- « Field Lights.
- « Increased Shade.
- « Synthetic track facilities including a straight and curve.

#### OPG Recommendations

- « It is recommended that as part of a Council wide lighting audit, investigations be made to increase the lighting levels at Rhonda Diano Oval, to ensure it is of a suitable level for training for athletics, football, AFL and cricket.
- « Improve spectator shade around the oval with tree planting.
- « As a longer-term strategy, undertake a feasibility assessment for the proposed synthetic track elements. This should investigate the benefits, costs, maintenance, and impacts on other sports.



## 5.6.FLYNN DRIVE OVAL

### Users



Rugby Union



Touch



Football



Cricket

### Key Issues Raised

- « Flynn Drive Oval is one of the most heavily used facilities in Alice Springs, primarily for touch football, football (soccer) training during the winter season, and cricket and touch in Summer. This has led to concern the site is being overused.
- « Facility bookings indicate that the site is used for approximately 39 hours per week in winter which is a very high rate of use.
- « The close proximity to a supermarket/ corner shop will limit the viability of any canteen facilities on site.

### Recommendations

#### SFAC Priorities

SFAC have identified the following as their priorities for Flynn Drive Oval:

- « Reducing the amount of use to a sustainable level.
- « Increase Lux Levels – Flynn Drive Oval.

#### OPG Recommendations

- « Lighting of other fields to support night use is a priority to reduce overuse on this site. While other sporting grounds in Alice Springs remain unlit, Flynn Drive will be in demand, particularly for training during the week.
- « The installation of goal posts at one end to support training for Rugby League and Rugby Union could be considered, if training use from some sports (e.g. football when the additional field at Ross Park is developed) is relocated.



## 5.7. ANZAC OVAL

### Users



Rugby League & Rugby Union

### Key Issues Raised

- « Due to uncertainty around the future use of the site the amenities and supporting infrastructure at the site are not up to contemporary standard.
- « This is the only site with rugby league/ rugby union goal posts, increasing the importance of the site.
- « The site is also considered a public space, which means that it is available to be used by any member of the community, between 6am and 10pm. This had led to the site becoming popular for outdoor boot camps and personal training classes, due to the proximity to surrounding facilities, quality of the surface and the grandstand.
- « The site is also a popular venue for large community events displacing sporting users who have no alternative facility for competition or training (with goalposts).

### Recommendations

#### SFAC Priorities

SFAC have identified the following priorities:

- « Both Rugby Union and Rugby League would like to have access to other facilities to spread the load from Anzac Oval, while also providing an alternative option in case of events at Anzac Oval.
- « There is a need for increased investment in Anzac Oval now the future of the site is clearer.
- « Increase Lux Level of lights.
- « Scoreboard improvements.

#### OPG Recommendations

- « Anzac Oval should continue to operate as the premier rectangle competition field venue, due to the proximity to the CBD and surrounding services. This should include additional investment in upgrading the amenities and support infrastructure.
- « 2Review use of the site by fitness groups to understand the level of existing usage and potential measures to reduce damage to the game day facilities while enhancing and supporting this use.
- « 3There is a need for additional training spaces for Rugby League/ Rugby Union in Alice Springs, the installation of goal post sleeves at another site would offer an opportunity to provide a secondary competition venue when needed.



## 5.8. PAUL FITZSIMMONS OVAL

### Users



Cricket



AFL

### Key Issues Raised

- « The site is owned by CDU not Council, limiting what investments Council is willing to make.
- « The site has poor access to shade and water and no access to change rooms and amenities.
- « This site is poorly signed, with limited wayfinding signage to the facility.
- « Parking and access to the site are limited.

### Recommendations

#### SFAC Priorities

SFAC have identified the following priorities:

- « Develop CDU Oval into a user-friendly Oval - include toilets, change rooms, umpires' rooms, storage, canteen, power, shade, water.

#### OPG Recommendations

- « If an appropriate long-term tenure agreement can be reached, plan for the development of an amenities building. The level of summer use at this oval supports the need for investment to meet minimum standard for player amenity. However, the certainty of tenure and ownership by CDU are problematic. The development of a amenities building providing toilets and water at the least should be a priority.
- « If a suitable agreement regarding tenure cannot be reached, seek agreement for a demountable amenity block to be located on the site.
- « Implement the following site improvements:
  - Signage identifying the facility along Stott Terrace
  - Consideration of roadside parking along Stott Terrace and constructing a pedestrian access to the oval over the gully.
  - Continue negotiations for a better player and spectator amenity on the site including shade and drinking water. At the least negotiate some on site storage for pop-up shade structures and installation of a water point.



## 5.9. ALICE SPRINGS WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

### Finalise and Adopt a Desired Standard of Provision and Maintenance

As detailed in Section 4 provide an objective basis to prioritise investment in existing facilities by adopting a Desired Standard of Provision in partnership with Sports Facilities Advisory Committee (SFAC).

This standard will cover three key areas:

1. The preferred facility hierarchy to apply to each sport.
2. The standard of development for facilities according to hierarchy.
3. The maintenance standards to be provided for different facility hierarchies.

### Implement a Lighting Audit and Upgrade Program

A clear theme across consultation was the community's desire for increased lighting across Council's facilities. This will increase the capacity of some venues and in turn reduce the pressure on others, especially for training use. Lighting of facilities will also provide increased opportunities for night use, which is increasingly required for social and formal sport in response to climate and participation trends.

As part of the development of the Desired Standards of Provision an audit of the existing lighting quality should be undertaken. Following the audit, Council and SFAC should work together to identify:

- « Facilities which should have lighting upgrades as a priority to meet minimum provision standard.
- « Facilities which could increase capacity if lit to provide more training capacity.

Lighting of fields has been a policy priority for the Territory Government and has been identified by federal agencies such as SportAus as important investments for sport and active recreation.

However, not all fields should be lit as the power costs may not be supported by the use benefit achieved. In addition, reviewing the access and charging mechanisms for sports fields should retain the transfer of costs for power consumption to users.

From the work undertaken for this plan the following priorities are suggested:

- « Rhonda Diana Oval (training)
- « Additional lit field at Ross Park (training)
- « Jim McConville Oval (training)
- « Upgrading outdoor netball court lighting at Ross Park to competition standard on at least 2 courts.

### Review of Access and Charging for Sports Facilities

As detailed in Section 6.9 of the Background Report the current policy approach may not be conducive to efficient use of fields, with no inbuilt incentive for user groups to minimise hours booked. In addition, when viewed in the light of facility use and contribution to costs it is inequitable across the sports with some sports receiving a greater subsidy than others.

It is acknowledged that the sports levy is not strictly formulated as an access charge and the purpose is to build a fund for facility improvements administered by SFAC. However, the impact of this approach should be considered in the broader context of access, utilisation and equity.

While the policy basis of heavily supporting sport through subsidised use should not change, the approach to charging could be reviewed to improve equity and to encourage less "over booking", potentially freeing up some field hours for other users.

The aims of the review should be to:

1. Improve equity in regard to the how sports book facility hours and pay for access to fields and facilities.
2. Review how bookings are made with respect to the actual use required. Avoid booking of whole fields if only a part of a facility is required.
3. Set the objective rate for the level of subsidy to apply to use of different facilities and develop an access charge to replace the current membership levy. In other words, a more direct link between use and fees.
4. Alternatively, consider a hybrid model where a reduced levy per member is still charged and nominal fees for field bookings are linked to use hours and applied. Fees charge could still go into a fund for facility improvements.
5. Consider the retention of access fees towards the facility improvement fund overseen by SFAC, but for expenditure to be guided by the proposed Desired Standards of Service and the recommendations of this plan.
6. Improve effective use of sporting facility assets.
7. Investigate an online booking system that reduces workload for staff and simplifies bookings for sports.

Consideration regarding any fee set would need to ensure that the sports with a lower membership base are not priced out of field access, while also ensuring fields are used as booked and maintenance to fields reflects the level of use.

### Long Term Planning for Additional Sports Fields

Population growth within the life of this plan is not expected to require additional land investment for sporting fields, outside of the facilities outlined in section 8.5-8.8. However, it is important to consider sport facility planning for new residential areas such as Kilgariff and the importance of securing suitable land for sport and recreation as part of the overall planning.

It is recommended that a “basic sports unit” be provided, which consists of two rectangle fields side by side and an oval field overlay and a wicket between the rectangular fields. The layout is discussed further in the Background Report and around 5 Ha should be secured. Planning for the site should include provision of toilet and change facilities.

In addition, Council should continue investigating the potential for new fields on Bradshaw Drive.

### Developing an Events Strategy

In the past a number of sporting events have been held in Alice Springs, including most recently the WBBL match between the Adelaide Strikers and Perth Scorchers in January 2019. However, this event was marred by the poor condition of the outfield at Traeger Park, resulting in the relocation of the WBBL match to Albrecht Oval, and the loss of the scheduled BBL match. There is a strong desire from the community and clubs to bring more events to Alice Springs, as an economic boost and potential to increase participation in that particular sport.

However, there is a need to be strategic in the events that are sought and hosted and to ensure any investment

to support and event will benefit ongoing sport in Alice Springs. It is important to manage the expectation of the community and clubs in regard to council's capacity to support new or upgraded facilities required for events and the ability of council and the community to resource ongoing maintenance.

It is recommended that council develop a detailed Events Strategy to guide:

- « The types of events that Council can host with a focus on existing strengths.
- « The current capacity of the various facilities and level of event they can host without significant investment.
- « The main sporting event targets for Alice Springs and the strategic investment required to consolidate hosting or staging rights.
- « Emerging sports (such as Mountain Bike Riding, Trail Running and endurance events), that can be leveraged to establish the destination for signature events.
- « The maintenance standards required for specific events and strategies for dealing with displacement impacts on local sports.
- « A transparent process that is clear for both Council and sporting groups in regard to selecting events to bid for and the support available for hosting.

### Increasing Use of School Facilities

Consultation with the schools identified that there are a number of schools that allow community access to their courts and ovals however they have had limited interest from the sporting organisations to date. It is recommended that Council works with schools and clubs to identify possible opportunities to increase use of existing school facilities to accommodate training needs. A potential focus could be to establish particular partnerships between a school and a sport.

To reduce the risk in this approach support from NTG Sport

and Recreation should be sought to develop agreements with schools that protect access for clubs for a reasonable level of time. Council could agree to contribute some maintenance costs similar to the CDU agreement. In addition, discussions with Education should seek certainty of tenure and could highlight the 337 hours used by schools on council facilities.

A priority opportunity identified was with Centralian Middle School who indicated a willingness to hand over space for a new sports field and relocate fencing etc to facilitate this (as long as the school can use the field for free during school hours if needed). The school campus has a large amount of excess space. However, any agreement involving development of a new field and relocation of fencing would require the departments approval. The development of a rectangular field or possibly a new regional tennis centre are possibilities here.

An additional opportunity might exist at East Side Sadadeen, OLSH Sadadeen Campus possibly providing a rectangular field to support training uses.

## 6. WARRANTIES AND DISCLAIMERS



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