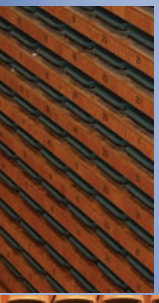
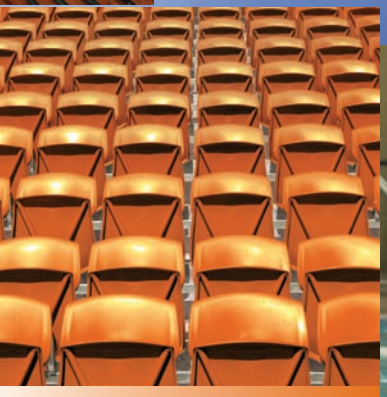
Needs Assessment Guide

SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES

MARCH 2007

2nd EDITION





A guide for sport and recreation facilities owners and managers

Department of Sport and Recreation
Government of Western Australia

Needs Assessment Guide

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Disclaimer

This recourse contains comments of a general nature only and is not intended to be relied upon as a substitute for professional advice. No responsibility will be accepted by the Department of Sport and Recreation for loss occasioned to any person doing anything as a result of any material in this resource.

This booklet was prepared with a view to outlining the Department of Sport and Recreations' requirements for a Needs Assessment. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are guidelines only and should not be expressly relied on by project proponents.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 WHAT IS A NEEDS ASSESSMENT?

The first stage in the planning of a successful sport and recreational facility is the identification of the needs of the community.

A Needs Assessment is a comprehensive information gathering process to identify and analyse whether a new facility is required or whether the need can be satisfied in some other way. If it is determined that a new facility is required, the Needs Assessment will provide clear direction with regard to the most appropriate scope, scale, component parts and the timing of the proposed facility. Such a concept can then be tested in a feasibility study which is the second stage in the facility planning process.

A Needs Assessment study will essentially be undertaken to determine:

- The potential need for a project which has been proposed or is being discussed within the community.
- To assess the sport and recreation needs of a community within a particular area. The size of the area being studied may be a single suburb, a local authority or a region comprising several local authorities.

1.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Too often the planning for a facility commences on a whim or at best a perception that a facility is required without any assessment of whether it is in fact needed by the community it is intended to serve. This often results in facilities that are inappropriate, are a financial burden or worse still, not required by the community. A Needs Assessment is therefore a vital first step in the facility planning process.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Policy changes and trends also emphasise the importance in undertaking a Needs Assessment in the facility planning process. These include:

CHANGING ROLE OF SPORT AND RECREATION

Sport and recreation is no longer an '*add-on*' to the social fabric of society but a necessary and essential component in the enhancement of the community's lifestyle. A Needs Assessment will identify the real needs of a community and thus will ensure that the community's lifestyle is enhanced in the best possible way.

ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

The need to ensure that facilities are accessible to all members of the community and any special needs are catered for are now fundamental in the design of facilities. This will require clear identification of needs at the earliest opportunity.

SUSTAINABILITY

Strong vibrant communities are essential to maintaining lifestyles now and into the future. *Hope for the Future: The Western Australian State Sustainability Strategy* is an essential guide that will provide a positive impact on issues relating to society, economy and environment. A Needs Assessment will need to consider these three elements as they will be required to form a strong basis to any facilities planning framework.

AGEING POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of Western Australia is predicted to increase by 49 per cent by 2051 compared with a predicted national growth rate of 34 per cent. The Perth and Peel region is expected to grow to approximately 2.3million people by 2031 which represents a 52 per cent increase over 2001 (Western Australia Planning Commission population projections for 2004–2031, Western Australia tomorrow 2005).

The population of Western Australia, indeed Australia, faces significant change over the next two decades. Not only do some parts of the country face negative population growth in this period but the world-wide trend of ageing populations also affects Australia.

It is critical that facility planners and developers consider these issues when undertaking their needs assessment.

EFFECTIVE USE OF RESOURCES

The need to effectively use available resources, either existing or proposed is now paramount in the provision of facilities. The under utilisation of facilities requires consideration in the identification of needs as well as sharing of facilities, partnerships and general cost reduction models.

CLIMATE CHANGE

There is clear evidence of the impact of climate change across the world. including impacts on sport and recreation.

These impacts include changes in rainfall patterns, temperatures, flooding, water levels (sea) and cyclones.

Effective facility planning must consider these impacts.

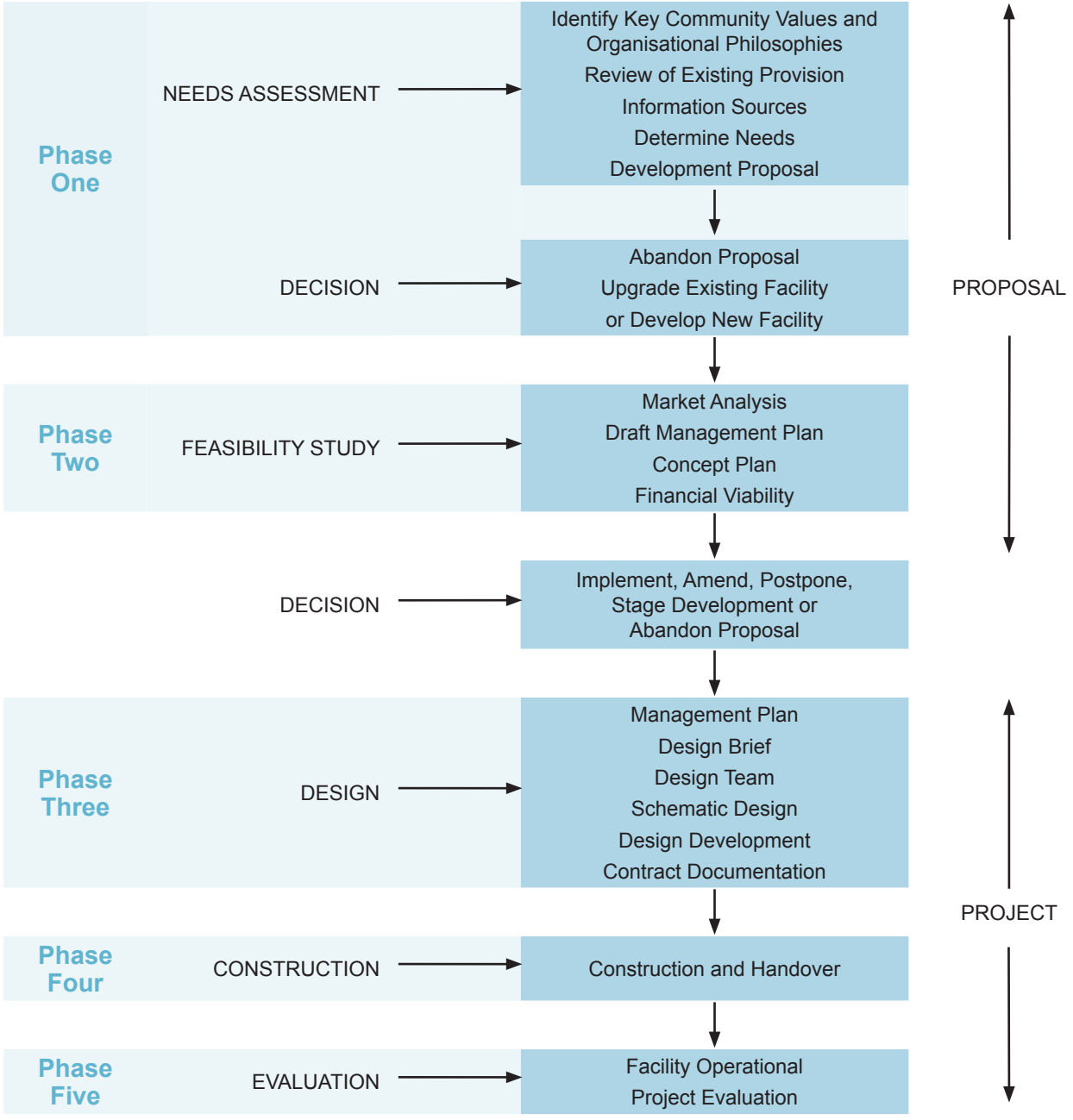
1.3 THE BENEFITS OF A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Undertaking a Needs Assessment will provide benefits to both the community and the providers of facilities. The benefits will cover a range of economic, social, political and democratic issues, such as:

- Provision of facilities which are appropriate to the needs of the community
- Provision of facilities which are sustainable
- Unnecessary duplication or over-provision of facilities and programs will be minimised
- Involvement of the community in the needs assessment process will foster the ownership of facilities and programs which are ultimately provided
- New opportunities may be identified which will enhance the lifestyles of persons within the community
- Orderly municipal development of facilities prioritised according to the needs of the community
- The community will be aware of the capital costs and financial commitment including on-going operational costs needed before the facility is developed

2.0 Needs Assessment in the Facility Planning Process

The five key phases in the Facility Planning Process for a sport and recreation facility:



This guide addresses the first phase of the Facility Planning Process being Needs Assessment. **A thorough assessment of needs is fundamental to the success of the entire process and any facility which may ultimately be developed.**

Insufficient allocation of resources at this stage is a false economy and may jeopardise the long-term success of the project. For example, it may result in the development of facilities which are inappropriate for the community they are intended to serve.

3.0 Where Do We Start?

Prior to the commencement of any Needs Assessment it is important to clearly identify the parameters within which the study will be undertaken. Matters such as the purpose of the study, preparation of study briefs, the extent of study required, the resources required and who should undertake the study should also be addressed.

3.1 DEFINING THE PURPOSE

The purpose and reasons why the Needs Assessment is being conducted should be clearly defined at the commencement of the study. This should include precisely defined objectives which identify the overall aims of the study.

For example, "To examine the aquatic recreational needs of the southern suburbs of the City of …"

Clearly identifying the purpose is crucial to ensuring the appropriate methods and extent of information collected is relevant.

3.2 PREPARING STUDY BRIEFS

A study brief should be prepared which identifies the extent of tasks to be undertaken in order to fulfil the defined objectives.

The Study Brief contents should include:

- The reason and background underlying the perceived need for the study
- The overall study purpose, aims and objectives
- The extent of community participation required
- The scope of planning including services, programs and facilities
- The timing and phasing of the study
- Method and frequency of reporting
- Areas to be addressed in the final report
- Budget and project costs
- Support available
- Existing information and availability

Note: Refer to Appendix A for an example of a Needs Assessment study brief.

3.3 EXTENT OF STUDY REQUIRED

The extent of the study can vary, according to the facility or service required.

Obviously, an extension to a clubroom or the lighting of an oval will not require the same level of study as a major recreation or aquatic centre. However, the extent of study required is not merely determined by the capital costs involved.

A preliminary assessment of a number of key factors will assist in the determination of the extent of the study. These factors include:

- Location
- Size, access and scope of the proposed development
- Potential social, economic and environment impacts
- Demographics
- Planning Policies and other legislation

For example, a large aquatic centre will require detailed Needs Assessment as the potential impacts (both positive and negative) may be significant. Also, the nature and scope of the proposed development may vary significantly depending on the outcomes of the Needs Assessment. The proponent may even decide not to proceed with the project.

It will be necessary to clearly define what should be addressed in the study as this will affect the extent of the study required. Be selective about the information that is gathered. For instance, there is little gained from compiling a detailed comprehensive facility inventory if the study is only focussed on the aquatic needs of the study area.

3.4 RESOURCES REQUIRED

Once the extent of the study has been determined it will be necessary to determine the availability of staff, expertise, time and financial resources needed to complete the study.

A budget should be determined which allows for community consultation, marketing, purchase of Australian Bureau of Statistics information, engagement of consultants etc.

Timeframes should be agreed upon which will assist in determining who is in the best position to undertake the study in relation to other work commitments.

3.5 WHO SHOULD UNDERTAKE THE STUDY?

You will also need to decide who will manage and undertake the study. Local government commonly uses one of the following options:

- **In-house Recreation Officer** as part of their normal duties
- **In-house Recreation Planner** as part of their normal duties
- **In-house Team** selected from relevant departments and undertaking tasks as a team
- **In-house Contractor** who is employed on a short-term contract as an employee to undertake tasks
- **Consultants** who are selected to undertake the tasks following assessment of submissions
- **Academic/Student Assistance** involving academic staff and/or students to perform tasks related to specific expertise and level of competence
- **Community and Sporting Representatives** having relevant skills and knowledge may be engaged to undertake the tasks, either in an advisory capacity or to undertake specific tasks
- **Combinations** of the above in which case the overall coordination of the process becomes important

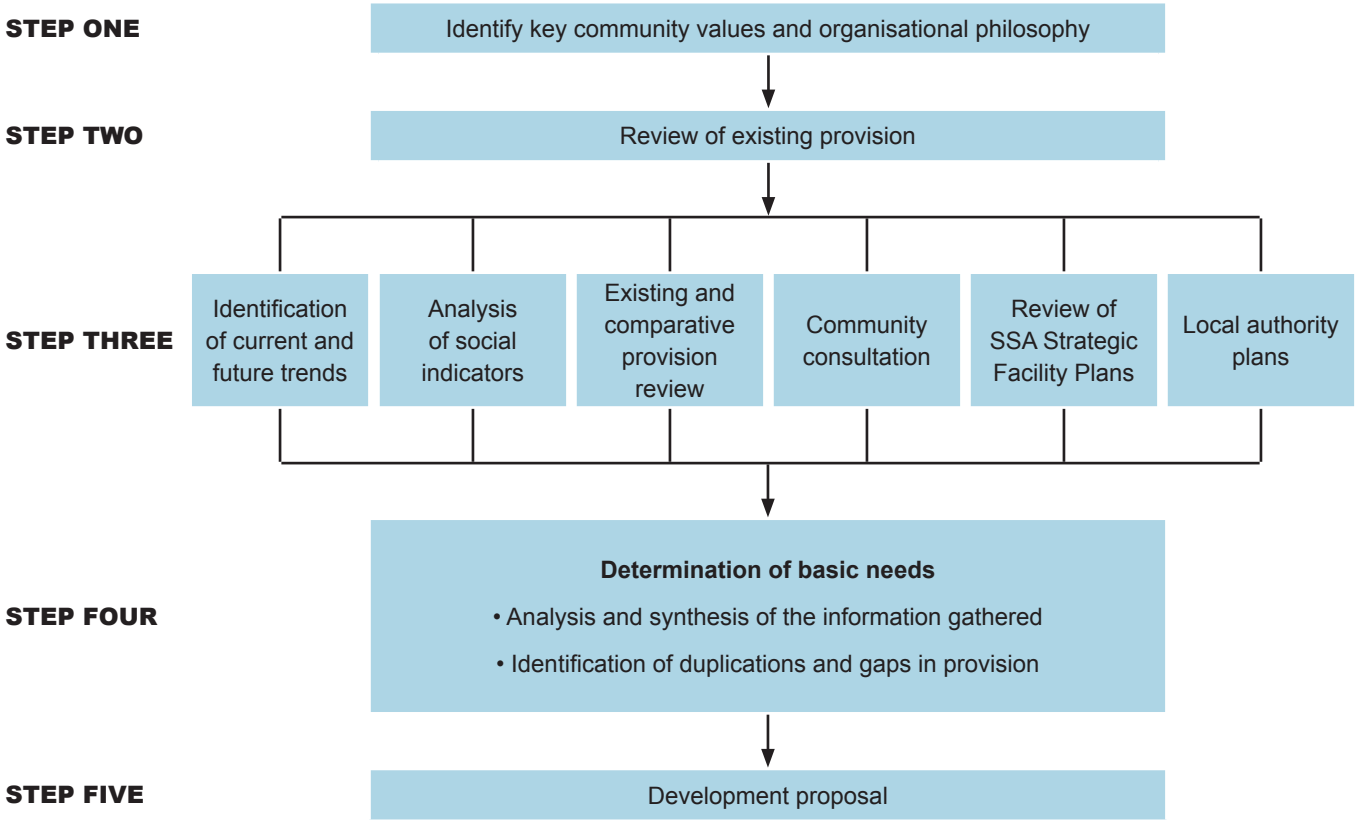
Note: The Department of Sport and Recreation will only provide financial assistance where external resources are involved.

Information dealing with the appointment of Consultants can be found in the Department of Sport and Recreation's publication "Design Consultancy Guide."

4.0 The Needs Assessment Process

A Needs Assessment should be undertaken in stages to ensure that all possible factors are considered. A simple five-step process, which covers all aspects of the study, is illustrated below.

THE FIVE STEP NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS



STEP ONE – IDENTIFY KEY COMMUNITY VALUES AND ORGANISATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The values that influence sport and recreation provision in a community may differ between the local authority, community groups and other key stakeholders.

It is vital to determine and agree upon common values and philosophies at the beginning of a study.

The values identified may relate to:

- Equity
- Access and availability
- Participation
- Integration
- Cultural relevance
- Quality
- Efficiency and effectiveness
- Flexibility

Useful information which could be used to determine these values include:

- Sporting clubs and or association's development and marketing plans
- Local authority's principle activity, corporate and business plans

These documents will provide base value starting points to enable common ground to be defined and areas of conflict to be resolved.

STEP TWO – REVIEW OF EXISTING PROVISION

A review of previous reports and related material is essential at the commencement of the study. An understanding of what has occurred previously will help provide an understanding of past decisions and the basis for those decisions. It will also provide information which can be of assistance in understanding the issues raised. In essence, previous reports provide background information on current issues and the community to be studied.

Previous reports and information which may be appropriate to the Needs Assessment may include:

- Council files and reports
- Previous recreation reports relating to policy, utilisation and trends
- Recreation plans prepared for the adjoining local authorities
- Reports from regional planning studies
- Commercial planning studies
- Academic studies and thesis
- Land use and statutory planning policies
- State government plans/policies
- Structure plans
- Sport Strategic Facility Plans

Additional to these formal documents, a scan of issues in the local newspapers may also provide useful supplementary information.

STEP THREE – INFORMATION SOURCES

Identification of Current and Future Trends

The trends in sport and recreation need to be identified. Changes in trends of sport and recreation activities will obviously affect the demand for facilities.

Analysis of Social Indicators

Community Profiles

A community or population profile is an outline of those demographic, economic and social characteristics of a community which are likely to influence demands for facilities. It is used as a base against which community needs and the assessment of services can be measured. The profile may be of the whole community or of a particular subgroup of the community, depending on the scale of needs assessment required.

The characteristics used in the profile can be grouped into the following three categories:

- Broad population groups that are likely to have specific needs, such as groups at various stages in life and special needs groups (e.g. migrants or single parents for who access to services should be a consideration)
- Functional categories of needs, such as education, housing, and ethnicity
- Geographical areas in which specific needs can be identified and satisfied

The profile normally includes the following information:

- A description of the demographic, economic and social characteristics of the population
- An analysis of trends, over time, of these characteristics
- Projections of population size and age structure including anticipated changes in economic and social characteristics in the future

The major characteristics of interest are:

- The size and spread of the population
- The age/sex structure
- Ethnicity
- Mobility
- The family structure
- Education
- Housing

Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey

The Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) is a joint initiative of the Australian Sports Commission and state and territory departments of sport and recreation. ERASS collects information on the frequency, trends, nature and type of activities of persons aged 15 years and over for exercise, recreation and sport. The survey is conducted quarterly throughout Australia.

Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) 2003
http://www.ausport.gov.au/scorsresearch/erass2003.asp

Data Analysis

Data should only be collected if it is directly related to the study purpose. For example, there is little value in providing detailed information on community composition if the study is determining the need for a bore on a reserve. However, the age composition of a particular location becomes vital when considering the development of a bowling club.

It is important to analyse and provide brief written commentary on relevant statistics. Matters to be considered include the following:

- **Identify significant characteristics**
  For example: "Over 52 per cent of the population is under 25 years of age."
- **Identify significant trends**
  For example: "The 0–14 aged group has declined consistently over the 1995–2005 period while the over 55 age group has increased consistently."
- **Provide reasons for an apparent situation**
  For example: "The population density is centred in the western half of the study area. This is due to the Industrial Park occupying the eastern sector."
- **Indicate factors which may cause changes to present patterns**
  For example: "The population base is currently quite small being only 6,500, but the recent approval for a high density subdivision in the area is expected to increase the population which will have a significant impact on the future needs of the community."
- **Draw comparisons of data**
  For example: "The population statistics of the City of … indicate there is a high concentration of 10–14 year olds when compared to the overall state demography."

- **Identify any problems with the data**
  The Australian Bureau of Statistics collects census data every five years. Publication of this information is released over a period of 18 months. Therefore, if studies are undertaken towards the latter end of a census period, the situation may change considerably in some areas.

  In smaller communities be aware that a high percentage increase in population may not increase the facility needs of that community.

  In conclusion, the development of a community profile provides valuable information about the study area but it should not be the only source of information about the community. In most cases the information obtained should be supplemented with some form of community consultation.

Existing and Comparative Provision Reviews

Inventory of Existing Facilities and Services

The Facilities Mapping Project developed by the Department of Sport and Recreation should assist in this process.

Preparing an inventory essentially involves gathering information on the availability and usage of services and facilities provided for the community. The primary function is to allow an assessment of the adequacy of existing provision. Once existing provision is known and recorded and potential demand identified from the community profile, it is then possible to determine:

- Areas of need for which there are no or few services provided
- Special needs groups for whom there are no or few services provided
- Any imbalance in the distribution of services in respect to potential need

What to include in the Inventory

All services and facilities relevant to the study brief and available for use by community groups and individuals should be included. Those services and facilities, that are located outside the area but cater for the local community, should also be included.

The multiple use of facilities is common and all activities must be identified. Some inventories identify only the primary use of a facility and thereby risk omitting small but important service provision.

The following details may be obtained for each service or facility depending on the nature and scope of the study.

- Name
- Address
- Contact person and telephone number
- Sponsor or provider
- Type of service provided
- Type and components of facility
- Age groups catered for
- Geographical area covered
- Opening times
- Cost to user
- Frequency of use
- Staffing levels, paid and voluntary
- Source of funding
- Building capacity
- Building condition
- Level of accessibility

Proposals that are likely to go ahead in the foreseeable future should be noted.

The Scope of the Inventory

Preparing inventories is a resource intensive exercise. Information should be collected only on services and facilities related to the proposed project.

The need to create a full inventory will only be necessary when undertaking a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment.

Comparative Assessment

A comparative assessment is based on participation trends in other comparable communities or facilities to that being considered. For instance, when considering the use of recreation facilities within a community of 10,000 it would be appropriate to consider a comparative assessment of other communities of a similar size and nature, also taking into consideration the financial performance of their facilities. Care should be taken to ensure that the nature is indeed similar *i.e. variations such as coastal versus inland can make a significant difference.*

Two reasons for using comparative information are:

- It will assist in providing an understanding of the likely behavioural patterns in a particular community
- It will help to confirm the accuracy of participation trends identified through consultation in the study

Standards Assessment

Standards are generally developed on an historical basis which is unlikely to reflect actual or future need given all of the other changes in the community. They do not usually provide an adequate basis for planning.

Standards should be used with caution as they do not recognise facilities provided in an adjoining local authority which may be located within the catchment of the facility. Also, there may be numerous other factors which may influence the use of a given facility in a given area.

They should never be used in isolation or as absolutes.

Geographic and Facilities Information Systems

Major developments in collating inventory information have emerged over the past few years with the advent of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Facilities Information Systems (FIS).

Two of the most widely used GIS systems are *MapInfo* and *ArcInfo*. Both are computer-based tools for recording and mapping a wide range of information, including recreation provision, which will assist planners and managers with their work.

A GIS has considerable potential as a planning tool, especially for municipalities with a large diverse range of opportunities or where identifying regional patterns of provision is important to making effective planning decisions.

Computer based GIS systems require resources including the cost of installing and maintaining large integrated systems, the need for considerable user training and a commitment to regularly updating information.

While it is recognised that GIS and FIS systems may not have an application in the 'small' Needs Assessment, the existence of these tools for large complex studies and their importance to regional planning should not be overlooked.

In addition, the Department of Sport and Recreation in partnership with the Department of Land Information (DLI) has developed a sport and recreation based Facilities Mapping Tool. The Facilities Mapping Tool may assist in selecting locations for new facilities, map and report on parks and recreation sites, display and analyse land use data, population analysis, update land development and boundary data as well as provide information on user groups utilising the facilities. This source will require regular information updates from local government authorities to ensure its relevance.

Community Consultation

Community consultation is a vital and integral part of the Needs Assessment process. Involving the community in the process is almost as important as the outcomes and should not be underestimated in its ability to be used as a tool in the community development area.

No one consultative technique is likely to provide all the answers. A range of techniques should be used in conjunction with information gained from literature reviews, community profiles, inventories and other relevant data.

An important task in Needs Assessment is separating '*wants*' from '*needs*'. In many facility developments it can be seen that sometimes the 'wants' have been translated into a need that has not been tested and examined fully, leading to under-utilised, costly and/or poorly located facilities.

Through an extensive consultation phase, many of the identified '*wants*' can be tested against community values and desired futures. That is, what may be a need of one individual or group can be questioned and analysed against other identified need in order to determine the priority of a community.

Methods of consultation include the following:

- Public meetings
- Community surveys and questionnaires
- Consultative groups/charettes
- Press releases and advertisements
- Interviews
  - individual
  - telephone
  - group
  - service providers
  - key community members
- Observations
- Search conference
- Steering committee

Refer to the Department of Sport and Recreation's publication, "*Community Consultation Guide*".

Review of State Sports Associations (SSA's) Sport Strategic Facility Plans

Beginning in 2003 a number of sports that are large consumers of facilities are being progressed through a Strategic Facility Planning process. These plans will evolve in effectiveness over time as a useful planning aid.

The plans seek to challenge existing facility provision, especially in the context of demographic and planning policy changes. They also challenge sports to consider future needs in outer growth areas and develop better partnerships with local and state government. Facility planners and project proponents should refer to these plans where they exist.

Local Authority Plans

Legislation requires Local Government Authorities to produce leisure or activity plans. These plans should assist facility planners to ascertain a framework and the future direction of facilities planning within in the local authority.

STEP FOUR – DETERMINATION OF BASIC NEEDS

Analysis and Synthesis of the Information Gathered

The information collected during the Needs Assessment is of little use unless it is effectively analysed. This means identifying trends, patterns, relationships and themes running through the information gathered.

It is at this stage that the '*wants*' identified in the community consultation are assessed in relation to the other information gathered and the 'needs' are identified.

These findings must be assessed in the context of the purpose of the study and the corporate and community values identified in Step 1 of the Needs Assessment Process.

Identification of Duplication and Gaps in provision

A number of differing methods can be utilised to analyse the information gathered. The analysis must ensure the study's purpose is to the forefront and avoid over-analysing the data.

Some analysis methods, which have been found to be useful, include the following:

- A simple totalling of facilities by numbers and type
- The plotting of facility catchment areas on a map
- An analysis of the '*mix*' of services available at each facility
- The geographic assessment of duplications and gaps
- The distribution of facilities by other characteristics such as cost, management, flexibility in program delivery and land availability for redevelopment
- Examine the appropriateness of facilities and programs to the community in which they are located, i.e. a sporting facility located in an aged community may be more appropriate to convert to a seniors centre

It is important that assessments are undertaken within an appropriate catchment. They should not be restricted by local government boundaries.

The information gathered should be presented in a clear and concise manner. The listing of 200 or even 20 facilities and their services in a table form will have little impact on the reader who may not have the time to consider the detail.

A more appropriate method would be to graphically depict the information on a study area map thus clearly showing the spatial relationship of one facility to another.

STEP FIVE – DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

It is important to keep an *'open mind'* to the possible outcomes of the Needs Assessment process. The Needs Assessment should not be undertaken with the preconceived idea that a facility is needed. A number of options might be identified which meet the needs of the community. These options could include:

- The development of a new facility
- The upgrading of existing facilities
- Providing new programs at existing facilities
- Increasing the advertising of existing programs regarding costing
- Nothing is required

The Needs Assessment should provide as much detail as possible with regard to any new facilities, services or programs which are being proposed. This will assist planners in the concept development stage of the Feasibility Study, which is the next phase in the Facility Planning Process.

5.0 The Needs Assessment Report

Once the analysis of the information has been completed it will be necessary to consider how to present the findings. Presentation formats include reports, submissions, speeches and information papers.

The main difficulty in any form of presentation is trying to include too much data.

In all cases a written report will be required and a few basic principles should be followed.

5.1 PLANNING THE REPORT

When planning the report it is important to answer the fundamental questions raised in the study brief which may include:

- **Where are we now?**

  This question leads into what facilities and services are available at present and whether they fulfil the needs of the community.

- **Where would we like to be?**

  What has the community consultation identified as needs and what facilities and services are required to meet these needs?

- **How do we get there?**

  What is to be provided and how will it be best achieved and when?

5.2 REPORT OUTLINE

A report outline should be prepared which provides for a logical reporting of the data and information. The outline should consist of:

- A title that is precise, concise and contains all information necessary to clearly identify what is contained in the report
- A clear statement of purpose and aims so that information gathered and reported on can be tested against the purpose and aims
- The ordered arrangement of headings and sub-headings for each area of analysis and reporting

The contents of the Needs Assessment report may include the headings listed below:

1 Introduction
2 Executive Summary
3 Recommendations
4 Study Brief
5 Methodology
6 Community Profile
  6.1 Current Population
  6.2 Projected Population
  6.3 Summary
7 Organisational Philosophy
8 Review Literature
  8.1 Statistical Reports
  8.2 Planning Policies
  8.3 Policies
  8.4 Facility Plans
9 Facilities and Programs
  9.1 Community Facilities/Programs
  9.2 Commercial Facilities/Programs
10 Consultative Process
  10.1 Questionnaire
  10.2 Public Meeting
  10.3 Submissions
  10.4 Summary
11 Analysis and synthesis of information
12 Identification of Duplication and Gaps in provision
13 Development Proposal
14 Attachments

5.3 WRITING THE REPORT

Analytical writing rather than creative writing is generally used in a report. The basic qualities of analytical writing include:

- Precision
- Conciseness
- Clarity
- Objectivity

The common errors to be avoided include:

- Ambiguity (more than one meaning)
- Circumlocution (roundabout expression)
- Verbosity (wordiness)
- Tautology (writing the same thing twice)
- Clichés (stereotyped expression)
- Jargon

5.4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The executive Summary is usually found at the beginning of the report or may be presented as a separate document. It should be able to stand alone from the rest of your report. After all, it may be the only information that is read.

The executive summary should include:

- An overview of the outcomes
- A summary of the major findings
- A suggested future direction and proposed actions
- Recommendations

The recommendations should not only be transparently obvious given the information received during the planning process, but also achievable. The recommendations should also clearly address the issues raised and should provide direction and strategies to achieve them.

Recommendations need to:

- Be consistent with the organisation's philosophy
- Be achievable within the political, economic, social and environmental constraints relevant to the situation
- Have measurable outcomes that are reviewed regularly
- Identify responsibilities, timing and resources

If it is concluded that a new facility **is required**, the recommendations should provide clear directions with regard to the scope, scale, possible component parts and timing for consideration in a feasibility study.

Alternatively, if it is concluded that a new facility **is not required**, the recommendations should provide clear directions with regard to the alternatives available.

6.0 Conclusion

The Needs Assessment should be the first stage of any facility planning process. It provides the basis on which the needs of the community are determined.

The process involves a logical accumulation of facts in terms of the communities expressed needs and the existing provision of facilities and services.

The extent of the study will vary depending on factors such as:

- The location
- The size and complexity of any proposed development
- The potential social, environmental and economic impacts of the proposed development
- The level of access to the proposed facility

Regardless of the extent of study required, a Needs Assessment should be undertaken for all proposed facilities and services to ensure the development is needed and that it will be appropriate to the real needs of the community.

A Needs Assessment will not guarantee a successful sport and recreation facility. However, the lack of a Needs Assessment will definitely limit the opportunities for success.

7.0 References

Total Facilities Management, Second Edition 2005, Brian Atkin and Adrian Brooks

Facilities Management: Towards Best Practice, Second Edition 2003, Peter Barrett and David Baldry

Recreation and Sport Planning and Design, Second Edition 2000, Jim Daly

Recreation Planning Guide, First Edition, 1997, Department of Sport and Recreation Western Australia

Recreation Planning in the 90's – An Integrated Approach, Sport and Recreation Victoria

Municipal Recreation Planning Guide – Second Edition 2005, Sport and Recreation Victoria

Strategic Asset Management Framework, 2005, Department of Treasury and Finance, Western Australia

Appendix A

EXAMPLE OF A NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY BRIEF

Following is a brief overview of some of the pertinent matters which should be included in a Needs Assessment study brief.

1 Background

Enter a brief description of the area to be studied including demographic trends, infrastructure etc.

For example: "The City/Shire of … is a major regional centre situated 30kms from the centre of Perth. The area has long supported a diverse community with rural population towards the east and new residential subdivisions to the west. The City/Shire of … has experienced an annual growth rate of 6.2 per cent over the past ten years and its population now stands at 45,640.

The City/Shire is aware of the impacts on its current facilities and programs of this population growth and is now in a position to undertake a Needs Assessment for its community."

or

"The need for a new aquatic facility (or bowling green, tennis court etc.) has been raised on a number of occasions in recent times. The purpose of this study is to determine whether a new facility of this nature is required or whether existing facilities can be modified to meet the perceived demand."

2 Study Purpose, Aims and Objectives

Specific aims and objectives to direct the study outcomes

For example: "The Study's main objectives are to:

- identify the sporting and recreational needs of the community; and
- determine the need for a multi-use indoor recreation centre in the City/Shire of …"

3 Community Participation Approach to be Taken

Details of specific consultation methods and/or key identified people

For example: "It is recognised that the involvement of the community in this study is vital and as such consultants are expected to undertake extensive community consultation.

Methods of consultation are to be included in the consultant's submission. It is expected that a Community Workshop will be held at an appropriate time during the study.

The City/Shire of … is committed to ensuring that the consultation is transparent throughout all phases of the study."

The Department of Sport and Recreation's publication *Community Consultation Guide* will assist with the various techniques available.

4 Scope of Planning including Facilities, Services and Programs

A brief outline of the study methodology expected.

For example, the study should:

- identify key community values and organisation philosophy
- provide a review of previous reports
- provide an analysis of social indicators
- include existing and comparative provision reviews
- incorporate community consultation
- identify gaps and duplications in provision
- include an analysis and synthesis of the information gathered
- provide a range of development options

5 The Timing and Phasing of the Study

The commencement and completion dates

For example: "The study is to commence on … and take … weeks to complete with the final report being provided by …"

6 Method and Frequency of Reporting

Specify what is expected of the consultant in terms of formal reporting structures.

For example: "The consultant shall report to the Project Officer (name of Project Officer) on an agreed frequency (weekly, fortnightly, monthly) and attend steering group meetings at least three times during the project to present progress reports."

7 Budget and Project Costs

Specify the maximum funding available if known.

For example: "The City/Shire of … has allocated a total of $20,000 to complete this study.

Submissions from consultants are expected to clearly state their total costs to complete this study.

It should be noted that … copies of the final report are required by the City/Shire of … and the successful consultant must allow for the cost of printing the reports within their quotation."

8 Support Available

Identify who will provide support and to what level

For example: During the study period, assistance and enquiries will be handled by the Project Officer. It is expected that the successful consultant will have all the resources necessary to undertake the study.

9 Existing Information Available

Identify any relevant documentation which must be considered.

For example: "Other reports which will be made available are:

- Ward Structure Plan 2004
- The City/Shire of … Corporate Plan 2000–2004
- Recreation Services Business Plan 2000–2005
- Population Grown in the City/Shire of … 2004"

10 Submission Deadline and Lodging Details

List what is required to be addressed in submissions and where and when the submission should be sent.

For example: "Submissions to undertake the Needs Assessment should include:

- an outline of the relevant experience of the consultancy and consultants
- the methodology to be used including time frames for each stage
- the demonstrated understanding of the issues and process necessary to complete the study
- the proposed fee to undertake the study, broken down by task
- the names and contact details of at least two referees familiar with the consultant's relevant work within the past two years
- provide schedule of current workload

Submissions addressing this brief must be received at the City/Shire of … no later than (date and time). Submissions sent by facsimile will not be considered for appointment.

Canvassing of Councillors or City/ Shire employees will disqualify."

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