

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
2013 - 2023





MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



Yarra Ranges is home to some of the most beautiful and unique open spaces in Victoria.

These places encourage people to be active and are integral to the health and wellbeing of our people, communities and environment.

As Mayor, I am delighted to present the new Recreation and Open Space Plan.

The plan sets out directions for creating healthy and active environments and services in Yarra Ranges.

It also provides a framework to guide future development and management of Yarra Ranges' recreation reserves, parks and community spaces.

The Recreation and Open Space Plan recognises the value of recreation and our open spaces and aims to encourage people to participate in sport, to socialise, play and relax in our parks, to engage in community activities and events and to connect with Yarra Range's natural bushlands and waterways.

My thanks to all those who helped shape the Recreation and Open Space Plan and I look forward to your continued support.

Councillor Jim Child
Mayor



HOW TO USE THE RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

The Recreation and Open Space Plan is a multipurpose suite of document. It contains a policy and strategy that is considered the guiding policy and framework for Yarra Ranges Council in creating healthy and active environments for its community.

The action sheets and implementation plan translate the strategic vision and framework into actions.

STRATEGIC VISION AND GUIDING FRAMEWORK

POLICY

The policy promotes how Yarra Ranges Council will create healthy and active environments for its community.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The strategic framework describes a planning framework for providing recreation and open space across Yarra Ranges communities.

OPERATIONAL PLANS THAT TRANSLATE POLICY AND STRATEGY INTO ACTIONS - TO BE REVIEWED ANNUALLY

ACTION SHEETS

The action sheets are focused on:

1. The issues facing Yarra Ranges (Issues)
2. The different recreation and open spaces we have (Themes) and
3. What is happening in our communities (Precincts).

They are designed so you can choose the topic you wish to know more about, rather than having to read the whole document.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan offers a prioritised action plan that will inform Yarra Ranges Council's future investment into recreation facilities and services and open spaces.

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VISION. TO HAVE A HEALTHY AND ACTIVE YARRA RANGES COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT.

Executive Summary

Yarra Ranges Council has a vast array of recreation reserves, parks, community spaces, sports stadiums and aquatic facilities, a network of off-road trails including the iconic and popular Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail, and some of the most significant and unique natural bushland reserves and biodiversity corridors in Victoria.

Our diverse park system is integral to the health and wellbeing of our people, community and environment. Parks encourage people to recreate and live a healthy and active lifestyle. They help people escape from the urban environment and reconnect with nature. Parks are the social hub of our communities. They help us learn. Parks protect significant natural environments, habitats and cultural heritage. They offer opportunities for the local economy and are the lungs of our cities.

Yarra Ranges Council is a signatory to the Healthy Parks Healthy People Melbourne Communiqué 2010 that acknowledges the intrinsic link between nature and people.

The Recreation and Open Space Plan reaffirms Yarra Ranges Council's commitment to the Healthy Parks Healthy People philosophy and our desire for our communities to enjoy the benefits of connecting with our diverse park system.

The plan considers the benefits' approach to recreation and open space planning. This approach aims to provide the varied range of benefits recreation

facilities, parks and community spaces provide to communities. Recreation and open spaces also help us embrace our communities' local identity through the expression of their sense of place and connection to heritage.

The plan is an overarching framework to guide Council's decision-making process in providing recreation and open space services and facilities in Yarra Ranges. It consolidates all recreation and open space strategies under one umbrella document and provides a tool to assist Council in assessing developing and managing recreation and open spaces.

The plan uses the tool and analyses the recreation and open space in the Yarra Ranges, identifying how we can improve it.

This plan will be used to inform Council's future investment into recreation facilities, parks and community spaces. Council annually contributes over \$1,500,000 into the capital improvements and \$1,500,000 into the ongoing maintenance and renewal of our recreation facilities, parks and community spaces.

The plan works collaboratively with other overarching corporate strategies that provide the strategic direction for improving services in Yarra Ranges. These include Vision 2020, the Housing Strategy, Community Wellbeing Plan, Economic Development Plan and Environment Strategy.

1.1 Benefits of open space

Sport, recreation and the outdoors form an integral part of the Australian culture and are recognised as an important part of a well-balanced, healthy lifestyle.

A range of social, environmental and economic benefits is derived from participating in sport and recreation and engaging with open spaces like parks and bushland.

Social benefits

Engaging in recreation and with open spaces encourages:

- Improved physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Facilitates community capacity and network building
- Escapism and relaxation from the urban environment
- A place for social gathering, community celebrations and opportunities for children to play together
- A venue for events.

Environmental benefits

Provision of quality open spaces ensures:

- Develops communities connection to nature
- Protects the unique natural environment, biodiversity corridors and landscapes of Yarra Ranges
- Mitigates the effects of climate change including enhancing air and water quality and encouraging biodiversity and habitat.

Economic benefits

Quality recreation facilities and open spaces results in:

- Higher valued properties
- Lifestyle benefits that attract employees to the region
- Nature-based recreation and tourism activities.

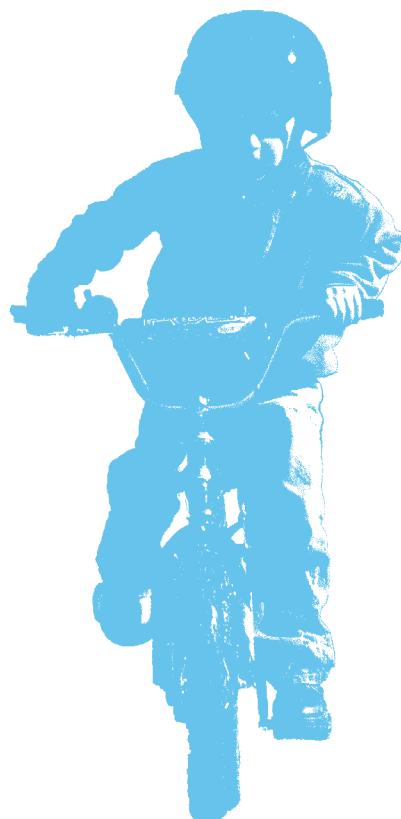
1.2 Purpose

The Recreation and Open Space Plan aims to support a diverse range of open space functions to the Yarra Ranges community and the social, environmental and economic benefits that flow from well-managed open spaces.

This plan is an overarching framework to guide Council's decision-making process in providing recreation and open space services and facilities in Yarra Ranges.

The objectives of the plan are to:

- Provide clear strategic directions for developing recreation services and facilities in Yarra Ranges
- Develop a network of recreation facilities and open spaces that provide a diverse range of social, environmental and economic benefits to the community
- Recommend precinct-specific actions for improving open space and recreation facilities
- Identify partnerships to improve the breadth and sustainability of recreation services and opportunities in Yarra Ranges
- Develop an implementation plan.



HOW DO WE CREATE A HEALTHY AND ACTIVE YARRA RANGES COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT?

Planning For an Active and Healthy Yarra Ranges Future

Yarra Ranges Council planning for a healthy and active community, ensuring access to the full range of benefits that recreation and open space can provide, now and into the future.

Quality and Diverse Sport and Recreation Facilities, Parks and Community Spaces

Yarra Ranges Council will provide access to quality and diverse sport and recreation facilities, parks and community spaces.

Activate our Community Spaces

Yarra Ranges Council will support community with the activation and improvement of their public spaces through Council programs, services and capital works.

Support the Sustainability of Local Sport and Recreation Clubs

Yarra Ranges Council will support sport and recreation clubs in being sustainable as key advocates for participation in our communities.

IT TAKES AN INTEGRATED APPROACH:

Protect Our Environment

Yarra Ranges Council will protect our significant and unique natural environments and landscapes, while exploring opportunities for people to experience and connect with nature.

Develop Effective Community and Organisational Partnerships

Yarra Ranges Council will establish effective partnerships with the community and industry organisations to develop and manage sport and recreation facilities, parks and community spaces for the municipality.

Support the Sustainability of Local Sport and Recreation Clubs

Yarra Ranges Council will support sport and recreation clubs in being sustainable as key advocates for participation in our communities.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.3 Methodology

Developing the Recreation and Open Space Plan involved extensive research and consultation. The methodology used five key investigation processes.

Investigation 1: Situation analysis:

Literature and policy review

Demographic analysis

Review of industry participation trends.

Investigation 2: Consultation process:

Extensive consultation process with community and key stakeholders including:

- interviews with peak recreation and sporting associations, neighbouring municipalities and Council departments
- community forums in Yarra Junction, Mooroolbark, Upwey and Healesville
- community focus groups with peak associations, schools, business and tourism associations, friends of and environmental groups
- householder survey of 1200 residences with 305 completed responses
- club survey of around 400 clubs with 106 completed responses
- school questionnaire of all schools with 34 completed responses
- Community Pulse survey with some 400 responses.

Investigation 3: Planning integration:

A planning framework used to classify open space and establish open space provision guidelines

Investigation 4: Open space analysis:

An open space and recreation facility inventory and mapping

Site inspections of key open space and recreation facilities

Open space supply assessment

Investigation 5: Action plan development:

Identified key issues and strategies for improving the provision of open space and recreation services and facilities

A ten-year action plan.

1.4 Yarra Ranges overview

The Yarra Ranges Council is located on metropolitan Melbourne's eastern fringe and covers an area almost 2500 square kilometres. The 2011 Yarra Ranges Council ID Profile data shows that Yarra Ranges recorded a population of 148,754 persons. The municipality is the seventh largest local government area in Melbourne in terms of population size and the eighth largest in Victoria.

The municipality has some of the most significant natural reserves in the state, including the Dandenong Ranges and the Yarra Ranges National Park and public land accounts for 65 per cent of the total landmass.

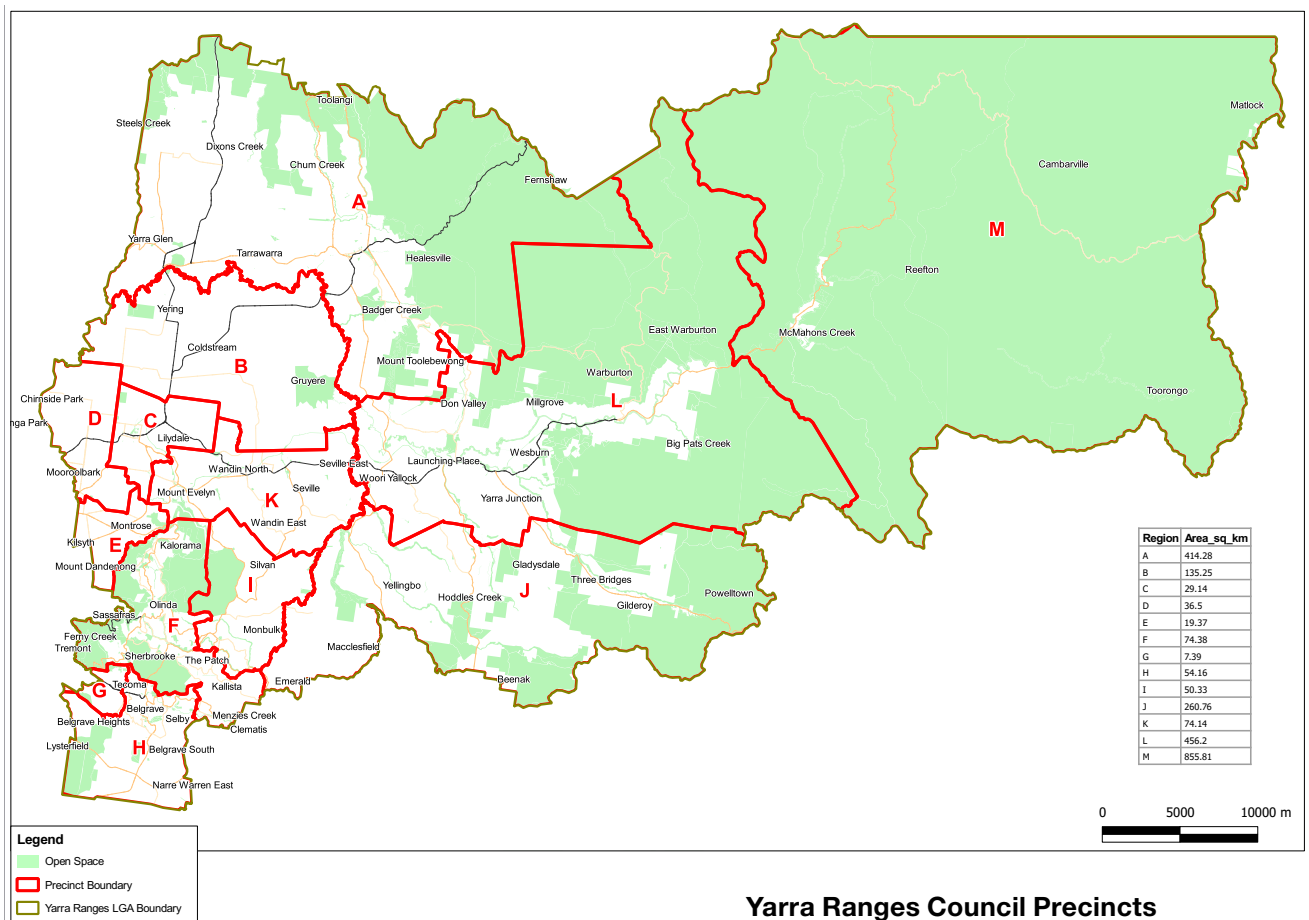
Yarra Ranges is made up of more than 50 townships with very different lifestyles and environments that reflect the culture of the townships and the people. There is a mixture of urban and rural communities. The number and range of suburbs, townships, small communities and rural areas within the municipality make it one of the most diverse of any municipality in the state.

Municipal precincts

The Recreation and Open Space Plan divides the Yarra Ranges municipality into 13 precincts.

The 13 precincts are:

- Precinct A** Healesville and Yarra Glen
- Precinct B** Gruyer, Coldstream and Yering
- Precinct C** Lilydale
- Precinct D** Chirnside Park and Mooroolbark
- Precinct E** Kilsyth and Montrose
- Precinct F** Hilltop, Kallista and Surrounds
- Precinct G** Upwey and Tecoma
- Precinct H** Belgrave Heights, Belgrave South, Belgrave and Selby
- Precinct I** Monbulk and Silvan
- Precinct J** Rural South
- Precinct K** Mt Evelyn, Wandin, Seville and Seville East
- Precinct L** Launching Place, Woori Yallock, Don Valley, Warburton, Yarra Junction, Millgrove and Wesburn
- Precinct M** Rural East.



Yarra Ranges Council Precincts

This map provides a visual overview of the open space in Yarra Ranges and the 13 precincts.

2 POLICY SETTING

2.1 Policy relationships

Recreation and open space document links

The Recreation and Open Space Plan consolidates all recreation and open space strategies into one umbrella document and prioritises the actions contained within these strategies.

Strategic recreation and open space documents consolidated in the Recreation and Open Space Plan

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN			
Aquatic Facilities Review	Active Participation Strategy	Regional Aquatic Facility Business Case	Regional Athletics Facility Feasibility Study
Hike and Bike Plan	Reserve Master Plans	Regional Soccer Facility Feasibility Study	Regional Netball Facility Feasibility Study
Skate and BMX Strategy	Regional Soccer Strategy		

Broader strategic links

The Recreation and Open Space Plan recommends different levels of open space provisions based on the settlement type and population projections.

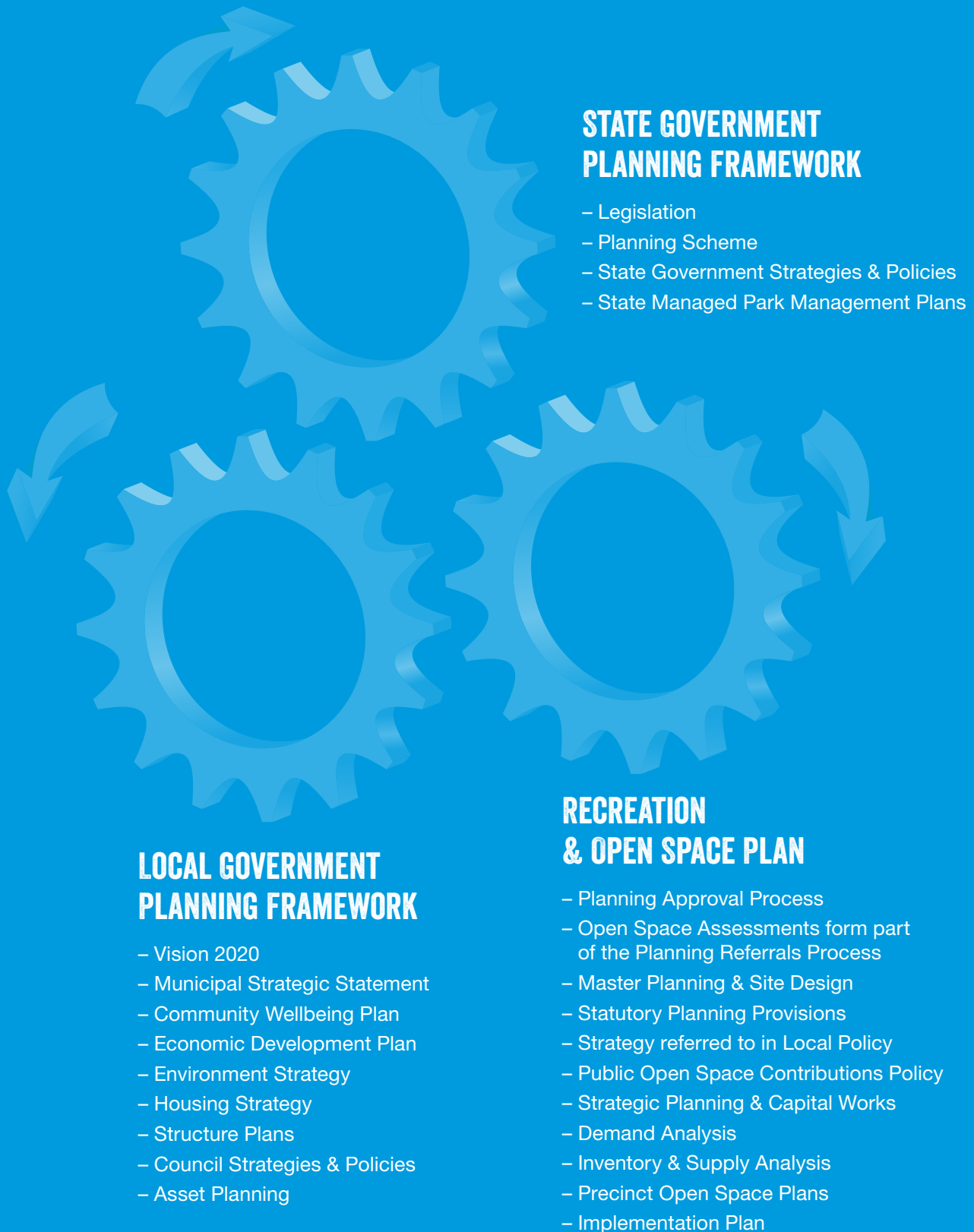
This plan links to the State Government planning policies; Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme and legislation governing public open space.

The plan also contains a set of Precinct Open Space plans that examine key open spaces and where there is a shortfall of open space. These plans identify priorities for precincts arising from recreation strategies and master plans conducted.

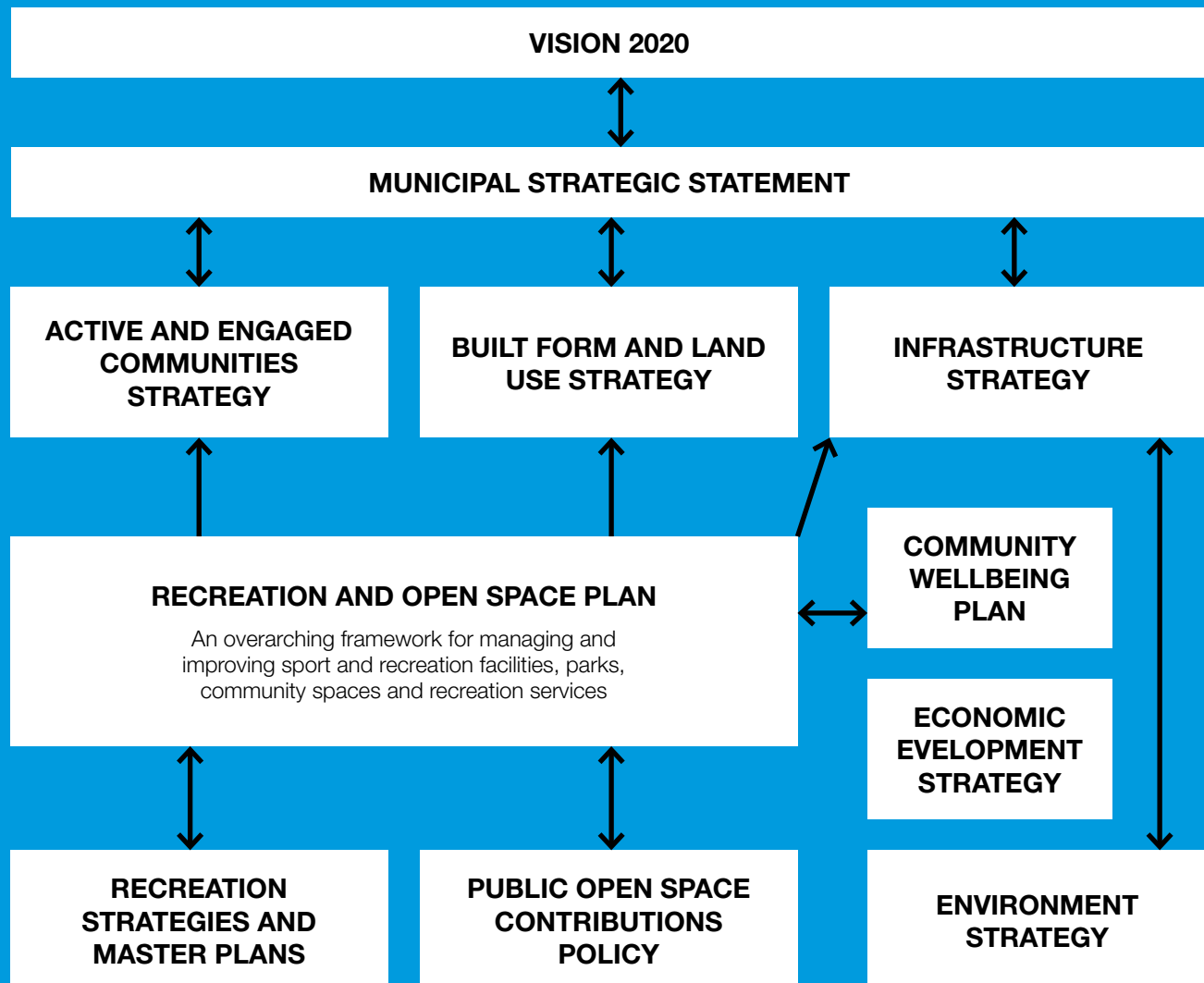
The continued roll out of lower level recreation strategies and master plans will support the precinct open space plans. These plans provide the detail for developing and improving works to a specific sports reserve park or community space in the future.

The plans strategically support a Public Open Space Contributions Policy that includes details on how to collect and distribute public open space contributions.

Policy links between the Recreation and Open Space Plan and state and local government policies



Policy links with local government policies



Vision 2020

Vision 2020 provides Council with a framework to guide decisions and actions to meet community aspirations and ensure a healthy and sustainable future. All Council's strategies stem from this Vision.

Themes relevant to the Recreation and Open Space Strategy are:

- Strong Healthy and Connected Communities
- Built Environment
- Local Economy and Tourism
- A Safe and Accessible Shire.

Community Wellbeing Plan

The Yarra Ranges Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013–2017 (Council's municipal public health plan) provides an overarching policy framework to guide the ways in which Council works to plan for enhanced health and wellbeing across the municipality.

The plan focuses on 4 priority areas.

- 1 Healthy people healthy places
- 2 Positive mental health and wellbeing
- 3 Services access for a healthier Yarra Ranges
- 4 A healthy start to life and early childhood as the foundations for lifelong wellbeing.

Key measure for consideration in the Recreation and Open Space Plan include:

- Key action goal one, increase participation in physical activity
- Key action goal four, create healthy places for people to live, work and visit.

Economic Development Strategy

The Economic Development Strategy 2012-2022 is the overarching framework for building and strengthening the Yarra Ranges local economy and communities.

The strategy includes a vision and ten policy objectives.

Key measures for consideration in the Recreation and Open Space Plan include:

- support the health sector to expand its business opportunities
- encourage tourism that provides long term sustainable employment opportunities and mutually beneficial co-existence between tourists and residents. It will ensure environmental, cultural and heritage values.

Environment Strategy

The Environment Strategy provides the overarching framework to guide future activities by Council, community and others in managing the environment.

Key measures for consideration in the Recreation and Open Space Plan include:

- integrate ecological sustainable development in planning
- ensure that tourism and recreation activities are complementary to the protection and enhancement of natural assets
- use energy and renewable sources with no or low emissions
- integrate water sensitive urban design in planning.

3 THE DEMAND FOR RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

3.1 Demographic profile analysis

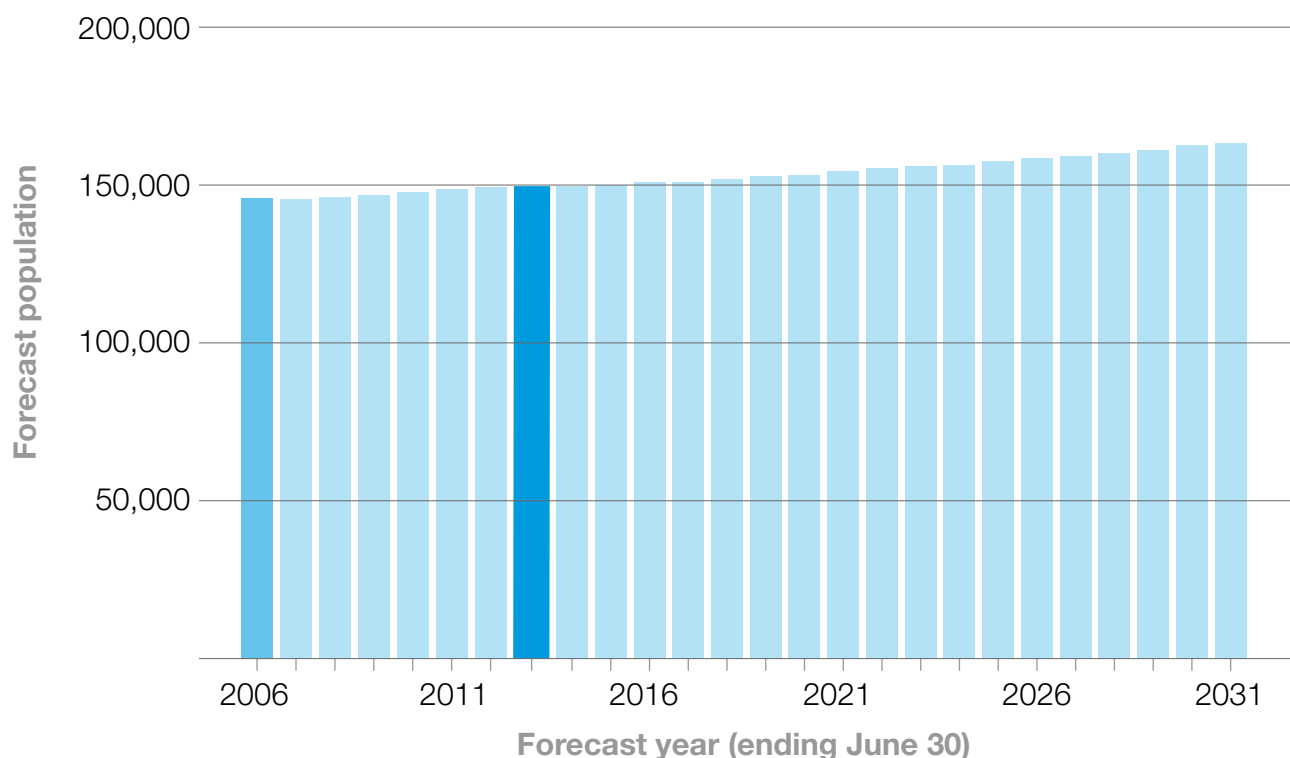
This section explores the current and future demographic implication on recreation participation and open spaces in the Yarra Ranges municipality. The most current data has been analysed, collected from Yarra Ranges Council's Community Profile Data (profile.id 2011 – ABS Census Data)

Key population and demographic characteristics influence participation in sport and recreation and have been summarised below.

The current population is estimated at 148,754 people (2011). A high proportion of the population live in the urban areas of the municipality that represents 3 per cent of its landmass. The remaining population is dispersed throughout the rural and hinterland areas of the municipality. There are 55 suburbs and townships in Yarra Ranges illustrating the municipality's diverse communities and broad range of issues and recreation needs.

The Yarra Ranges population is expected to grow steadily for the next 20 years. The population is estimated to increase from 148,754 people in 2011 to 163,075 people by 2031.

Figure: Forecast population, Yarra Ranges Council area



Yarra Ranges has similarities to most metropolitan Melbourne municipalities; however also key differences. These key differences show Yarra Ranges being an interface municipality on the fringe of metropolitan Melbourne and the urban

growth boundary. They also indicate a need to think differently in the way sport and recreation facilities and services, parks and community spaces are provided in Yarra Ranges.

3 THE DEMAND FOR RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Key similarities:

Despite a larger proportion of younger age groups in Yarra Ranges and a smaller proportion of people in the older age groups (60+), the large percentage of the population between 50–59 years shows a population ageing. It is expected that the older age groups (60+) will increase from 15.1 per cent to 25.2 per cent over the next 20 years. This means, accessible participation opportunities for older adults will increase in the future.

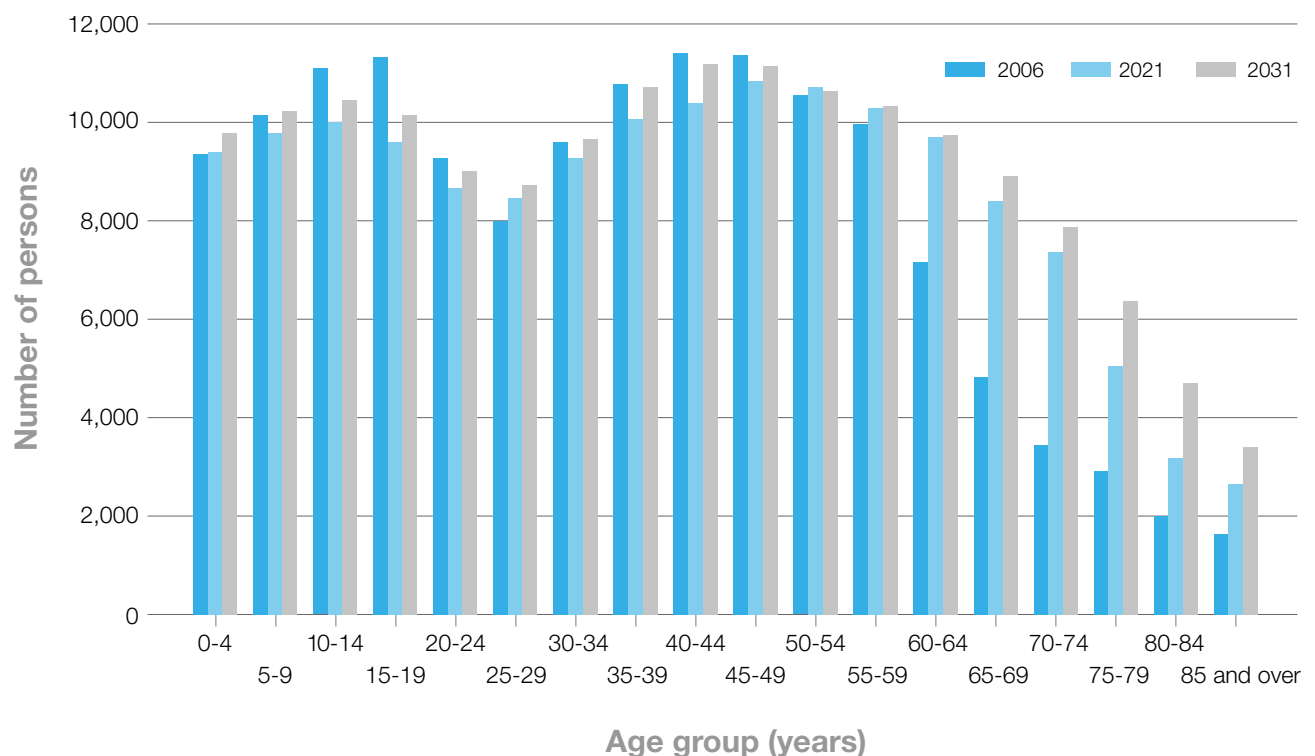
The total number of households will continue to increase, driven by a decline in household size and large residential development areas in Chirnside Park and Lilydale. Therefore a distribution of quality and diverse open spaces will be required in established and new development areas.

The number of people with disabilities is consistent with metropolitan Melbourne. Therefore, a continued demand for inclusive participation opportunities and club cultures for all abilities will be important.

Key differences:

Yarra Ranges can be characterised as a ‘young’ municipality with a higher than average proportion of the population aged between 0 to 19 years, compared to other metropolitan Melbourne municipalities. This age group is the most active age group and consequently mainstream sport opportunities will be maintained.

Figure: Forecast age structure, Yarra Ranges Council area (Persons)



Yarra Ranges have a higher proportion of couple families with children (37.1%) as well as a higher proportion of one-parent families (11.3%) when compared with 33.6% and 10.4% respectively for

metropolitan Melbourne. These statistics show that Yarra Ranges continues to accommodate young families and therefore family focused participation opportunities will be in demand.

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The statistics also show that when children finish school, they are migrating out of the municipality for work or study, a common trend in rural and regional areas and a challenge for providing sustainable sports clubs.

Despite Yarra Ranges having low numbers of indigenous people and considered less multicultural than most metropolitan Melbourne municipalities, there are pockets across the municipality. These include a significant indigenous community in Healesville and an emerging Burmese and Indian communities in the urban areas. Providing inclusive participation opportunities and club cultures that respect the cultural differences will be important.

There are a smaller proportion of high income households (14.9%) and low income households (18%) when compared with 19.4% and 19.2% respectively for metropolitan Melbourne. This means, affordable sport and recreation opportunities are important to encourage participation.

“PLANNING TO SUPPORT SPORT AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES SHOULD BE INCLUSIVE AND FINANCIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS.”

Implications for demand

The demographic profile has implications for providing recreation and open space.

Key points include:

- Catering for the high percentage of young people who use a range of both organised sporting facilities (i.e. playing fields, sports courts) and unstructured open space and facilities (i.e. skate and BMX facilities, half courts, play spaces, etc.).
- Providing a mix of activity spaces that encourage family participation including trails, social recreation parks, sports reserves, bushland reserves and public plazas.
- Ensuring that young people have access to open space and recreational facilities, i.e. close to public transport, safe pedestrian and bicycle access
- Planning and providing accessible recreation opportunities for the ageing population.
- Planning to support sport and recreation opportunities should be inclusive and financially accessible to all community members.
- Providing a range of flexible sport and recreation opportunities to suit the needs of residents with limited recreation time.
- Ensuring adequate distribution of open space and recreation services and facilities for the municipalities dispersed communities that is supported by multiple transport options where.
- The unique differences of Yarra Ranges communities and urban and rural areas will require a different mix of recreation facilities and open spaces.

3 THE DEMAND FOR RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

3.2 Recreation participation trends and consultation analysis

Participation trends

This section analysis participation trend data to identify how people participate in physical activity and the future trends and demands for sport and recreation activities in Yarra Ranges.

The Australian Sports Commission's (ASC) 2010 'Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey' (ERASS) identified the following key participation rates/trends for persons aged 15 years and over:

- An estimated 12.2 million people aged 15 years and over (69.4%) across Australia participated at least once a week in physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport. The participation rate drops when a higher frequency of involvement is considered – 8.3 million persons (47.7%) exercised three times per week or more, the recommended level of physical activity.
- Interestingly, people that are highly educated and females had higher regular participation rates in any physical activity.
- The top ten physical activities in 2010 in terms of total participation rate were walking, aerobics / fitness, swimming, cycling, running, golf, tennis, bushwalking, outdoor football and netball. An estimated 6.3 million persons (35.9% of the population) participated at least once in walking for exercise, recreation or sport in 2010.
- The total participation rate in non-organised physical activity was 70.8% in 2010. This represents an 11% increase since 2001 and occurred in both males and females. Also, regular participation in non-organised physical activity is gradually increasing with age, peaking at 55 to 64 years.
- The total participation rate in organised physical activity was 40% in 2010, representing a slight increase since 2001.
- The top ten club-based physical activities in 2010, in terms of total participation rate were golf, outdoor football, netball, Australian Rules football, tennis, outdoor cricket, lawn bowls, touch football, basketball and martial arts. All of which, except for tennis, experienced steady or an increase in participation since 2001. Tennis experienced a 13% decline in participation.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics; 'Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, Australia' (2012) identified the following changes in participation trends for children aged 5–14 years since 2003:

- Participation rates in organised sport remained steady (62% in 2003 to 60% in 2012) with the highest rates among 9 to 11 year olds at 66 per cent. More males 949,000 participated than females 727,000.
- Participation was higher for children born in Australia (61%) compared with those born overseas (52%) and higher for children in couple families (64%) compared with those living in one-parent families (48%).
- Most popular sport for males were outdoor soccer (309,700 or 22%) followed by swimming (16%), and Australian Rules football (15%). Swimming was the most popular sport for girls (256,900 or 19%), followed by netball (220,400 or 16%).
- In respect to recreational activities, children are spending more time on the internet, computers and games consoles when compared to 2009. However more children are also riding bikes, skateboarding and riding scooters.
- More than 35% or 980,700 children participated in at least one cultural activity (playing a musical instrument, singing, dancing, drama or organised art and craft) outside school hours. Dancing is most popular for girls whilst playing a musical instrument most popular for girls.
- 90% of children have access to internet in 2012, up from 69% in 2006.

The Future of Australian Sport report (2013) prepared by the Australian Sports Commission and CSIRO (2013) is the most recent report into participation trends. The following trends will influence how Yarra Ranges Council provides for sport and recreation:

- Participation rates in aerobics, running, walking, along with gym memberships have all risen sharply over the last decade while participation rates for many organised sports have held constant or declined.

3 THE DEMAND FOR RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

- Extreme sports to mainstream including skate, BMX, mountain biking and rock climbing have risen in popularity and are particularly popular with younger generations. These sports typically involve complex, advanced skills and have some element of inherent danger and/or thrill seeking. They have strong on line following and access via online.
- The emergence of electronic gaming – technological advances have allowed physical movement to be incorporated into electronic games, it is a growing alternative to light to moderate organised physical activity.
- In 2040 Australians will most likely still follow and participate in AFL, cricket, rugby, touch football, netball, sailing, soccer, swimming, basketball, lawn bowls and other sports on large numbers.

Barriers to participation in recreation and sport exist and it is important to understand these when planning and assessing facilities and services for communities. The Benefits of Leisure report (2003) prepared by Parks and Leisure Australia identify these barriers:

- Lack of knowledge of physical activity opportunities
- Perceived lack of safety either in the activity itself of the facility or neighbourhood in which the activity occurs
- Fear of injury or health problems
- Lack of self confidence
- Lack of facilities and poor design that doesn't welcome or inhibits access
- Inadequate transport, particularly in rural areas
- Lack of time or motivation, with people increasingly time poor
- Affordability, particularly where special facilities and support are required
- Lack of support, recognising that social encouragement is often required to participate.
- Lack of physical skills, where individuals have not had the opportunity to develop confidence in their skills to participate in physical activity.

Implications for demand

The participation statistics has implications for providing recreation and open space. Key points include:

- Sport and recreation participation trends in the Yarra Ranges reinforce general state and national trends for major participation sports and non-organised physical activities.
- There is a high level of participation in non-organised physical activity including those activities incidental to every day living e.g. walking and cycling.
- Extreme sports are increasing in popularity and have a growing demand for access to bushland, open spaces and facilities. Yarra Ranges bushland areas are opportunities to provide for these activities.
- There is a strong correlation between level of education, household income and structure and the participation rates. A focussed effort is needed to create targeted opportunities for traditionally disadvantaged groups.
- A focus on flexible opportunities for participation in physical activity will be attractive to those age groups not participating frequently, from 24 to 50 years.
- An ageing population is likely to result in greater demand for and participation in unstructured recreation activities.
- Inclusive and varied participation opportunities is important to meet participation trends in the future.
- People are fitting sport into their increasingly busy and time fragmented lifestyles to achieve personal health objectives.
- Access to technology is greater and therefore an effective promotional and communication tool is use of the internet.

Consultation findings

The consultation findings inform Council of the community preferences for recreation and open space in Yarra Ranges.

The development of the Recreation and Open Space Plan has been informed by research, review and evaluation and extensive consultation with key stakeholders such as land managers, state sporting associations, government departments, neighbouring municipalities, clubs and community organisations, schools and community.

3 THE DEMAND FOR RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Consultation for this project included:

- Interviews with peak recreation and sporting associations
- Interviews with neighbouring Councils
- Interviews with Councillors of the Yarra Ranges Council
- Community forums in Yarra Junction, Mooroolbark, Upwey and Healesville
- Community focus groups for: peak associations; schools; business and tourism associations; and friends of and environmental groups
- Council staff focus group
- Public submissions
- Household survey of 1200 residences with 305 completed responses
- Club surveys of 400 clubs with 106 completed responses
- School questionnaire of 72 schools with 34 completed responses
- Community Pulse survey (14 and 15 questions) with 400 responses.

Information collected throughout the consultation process indicates that participation in unstructured recreation activities is more common than participation in formal sporting or club activities. This reflects state and national participation trends and confirms the need to provide the community with access to a range of recreation facilities for informal and unstructured recreation including parks and open space.

Walking (41%) and swimming indoors (19%) are the most common recreation activities undertaken by residents of Yarra Ranges in the past 12 months. Barbecues/picnics, bushwalking and attending the cinema round off the five most popular activities.

Residents are also more likely to participate in unstructured recreation activities more frequently than structured sports and activities. In the household survey 97 per cent of respondents participated in walking on a monthly or greater basis. Visiting libraries/reading also rated highly (96%) as did yoga/meditation (93%).

Golf, Australian Rules football and tennis were the most popular organised sports undertaken in the last 12 months. When compared to other recreation activities they rated as 10th, 12th and 13th respectively in level of participation.

According to sporting clubs in Yarra Ranges, 45 per cent of clubs surveyed identified an increase in 'active playing members', and only 17 per cent of clubs indicated a decrease in membership. A decrease in senior male participation was more pronounced than any other playing group.

The key motivating factors for participation included 'participating with partner or friends', 'being part of my overall healthy lifestyle' and 'knowing the activity is doing me good'.

Barriers to participation in the Yarra Ranges are generally the same as those that exist for sport and recreation activities across Australia. 'Time constraints' and 'no facilities/nowhere to do it' were cited as the most common barriers, 'no equipment', 'access' and 'permission' were the least common barriers that residents identified.

Implications for demand

- The Yarra Ranges community are keen participants in a wide range of recreational activities and access to participation opportunities is important.
- Participation numbers are continuing to rise, increasing the demand for diverse recreation facilities and open spaces across the municipality.
- The popularity of unstructured and casual recreation will continue to put pressure on the quality of Yarra Ranges recreation facilities including the footpath and trail network, aquatic facilities, sports reserves and parks.
- There is support for continued investment in recreation facilities and open space.
- Sport and recreation participation patterns change over time. At present, walking and cycling are very popular unstructured activities and soccer is a significant growth sport in the municipality (recorded 30 per cent increase in participation over the last five years).

4 THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

4.1 A benefits planning framework

Best practice recreation and open space planning responds to the roles open space plays in communities and the benefits individuals and the community as a whole derive from it. These benefits include physical and mental health and wellbeing through: access to open space for sport, social recreation and play, relaxation; and access to quality natural environments and cultural heritage features.

Effective recreation and open space planning requires a strong working relationship with community as well as between the recreation and open space planners, strategic planners and Council departments and developers responsible for land-use planning. It should be integrated, holistic and respect the agendas and objectives from various planning disciplines including roads, transport, housing, biodiversity, agriculture.

A framework has been designed to support the Yarra Ranges communities access a range of benefits that recreation and open spaces can provide. The framework involves classifying recreation and open space by the: function or role it plays in the community; the setting or form it takes; the catchment it serves; and the nature of settlement it is located.

Design standards are then applied for: sport; social recreation and play; and trails. The design standards specify the size, quality and distribution of recreation and open spaces. Design standards are not required for flora and fauna conservation reserves because they are reserved and managed for their environmental or cultural heritage values alone.

This approach identifies gaps or overlaps in the facilities available for communities, overlaid with the density of the population which implies the level of need in an area.

The approach also allows us to identify opportunities for improving the access and diversity of recreation and open space to communities across Yarra Ranges. The aim is to provide a different mix of recreation and open spaces depending on whether it is a rural countryside precinct; urban suburbs; or a large rural township.

A classification of open spaces

FUNCTION (PURPOSE OF OPEN SPACE)	SETTING (FORM OF OPEN SPACE)	CATCHMENT (SPHERE OF INFLUENCE)	SETTLEMENT (NATURE OF SETTLEMENT AND DENSITY OF HOUSING)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sport• Social recreation and• Trail• Conservation – flora and fauna and cultural heritage• Civic and public celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parkland• Sports fields• Specialised sports facility• Bushland• Gardens• Riparian corridor• Streetscapes• Civic spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local• District• Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Urban• Rural Township• Rural Countryside

Providing recreation and open space in our rural countryside precincts

For rural precincts that includes small rural town, agricultural and bushland areas, this aim is to provide a centrally located sport and recreation reserve to accommodate the participation needs of the local community. This reserve should offer opportunities to play a variety of sports and provide areas for social recreation activities e.g. kick about space, play space, picnic, pathways and seating.

Providing recreation and open space in our urban suburbs

For urban areas such as Lilydale, Chirnside Park, Mooroolbark, Kilsyth and Montrose, the aim is to work towards providing the following mix of recreation and open spaces:

- A local park of approximately 1ha in size providing for social recreation and play, located within 400 – 500 m of where people live.
- A district park that is central to the main hub of activity in the area that provides for social recreation and is a venue for community events and activities.
- A district sports reserve within 2 km of where people live and includes multiple sporting opportunities.
- An off-road trail within 800 m of where people live that links with a network of footpaths.

**“YARRA RANGES
WILL AIM
TO PROVIDE
EQUITABLE ACCESS
TO RECREATION
FACILITIES AND
SERVICES.”**

Providing recreation and open space in our large rural townships

Within Yarra Ranges, there are large rural townships including Healesville, Monbulk, Belgrave, Olinda, Yarra Glen and Warburton that have a mix of urban and rural characteristics. For these areas a mix of the rural and urban areas formulas are provided.

A centrally located sport and recreation reserve as well as local parks for social recreation and play should be within 400 – 500 m of where people live. These townships should be linked by a primary off-road trail network e.g. Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail, where possible.

Within the constraints of the local topography and varied land uses, Yarra Ranges will aim to provide equitable access to recreation facilities and services. This will require a geographical and regional response to providing major recreational facilities such as aquatic facilities.

Other planning considerations

In addition to the application of the framework, it is also important to recognise the recreation participation demands and infrastructure needs of sport in our urban and rural areas are overlaid. Feasibility studies and master plans recognise the demand for recreation infrastructure locally and regionally.



5 APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK TO YARRA RANGES

5.1 Assessment

Yarra Ranges Council has over 65 playing fields and 40 pavilion spread over 47 recreation reserves; eight indoor sports stadiums including the regional Kilsyth Sports Centre and eight aquatic facilities; a network of off-road trails including the iconic and popular Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail; and some of the most significant natural bushland reserves and biodiversity corridors in the state including the Dandenong Ranges and Yarra Ranges National Park.

Rural Townships and Precincts

In most rural townships/precincts there is a centralised reserve that caters as both a sport and social recreation function. A program of master plans has been in place that identifies the potential development of these reserves to diversify recreation opportunities and develop facilities so they better meet user needs. Priority is to improve the quality of infrastructure and capacity of playing fields.

Urban Suburbs

In urban suburbs and areas there is a good distribution and quantity of social recreation parks and sports reserves, particularly in established suburbs. There will however be a shortage of open space for sport in Lilydale and Chirnside Park in the future with the population and housing density expected to increase in the future. Master plans have been developed for most reserves to diversify recreation opportunities and develop facilities so they better meet user needs. Priority is to acquire additional open space for sport as part of proposed development sites.

Aquatic Facilities

The provision of aquatic and fitness opportunities in Yarra Ranges needs to be improved through the consolidation of facilities and diversifying aquatic and leisure opportunities in the four districts of Yarra Ranges (Upper Yarra, Yarra Valley, The Hills and Urban). Providing a greater range of programs and activities and strengthening the presentation, positioning and access of facilities will be important for the overall viability and sustainability of aquatic facilities in Yarra Ranges.

Indoor Sports Stadiums

Stadiums are also well provided for with regional basketball, badminton and table tennis competitions focused at Kilsyth Sports Centre, Yarra Ranges Regional Indoor Sports Stadium. There are a number of smaller stadiums dispersed around the municipality that are well used, however also present opportunities for exploring other potential uses or users.

Sports Reserves and Facilities

Sports reserves and facilities are generally well provided for with an emphasis currently on regional sports facilities for sports traditionally under catered for in Yarra Ranges that have facilities in poor locations, or where the level of infrastructure does not support the potential of the sport in Yarra Ranges. These sports include soccer, netball and athletics.

Social Recreation Parks

The distribution of parks for social recreation purposes meets provision standards, however, the quality of the parks in most cases are poor. These parks, with limited or ageing infrastructure, have been developed in a piecemeal way and therefore have poor integration and access. A program is established and should be continued to renew local parks so they provide the full range of social recreation benefits including for play, walking, relaxing, ball games, socialising.

Streetscapes and Civic Spaces

The streetscapes and civic spaces in Yarra Ranges are community spaces offering an opportunity for community events and activities, encouraging walkable communities and places to picnic and socialise. Activating these community spaces will build community connectedness and resilience. It will also see communities celebrate their cultural heritage and identity.

5 APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK TO YARRA RANGES

Bushland Reserves

Yarra Ranges has unique natural characteristics with significant environmental, landscape and cultural heritage values. The valley, mountains ranges, river corridors and bushland areas are features that offer recreation, liveability and tourism benefits to the community and region. It is important for Council to collaborate and partner with other land authorities like Parks Victoria in protecting and managing these natural assets to the region, as well as protecting the environmental and landscape character. There is also opportunity to encourage nature-based recreation tourism activities and trail links that will provide a unique experience and community with an important connection to nature.

Trails

Paths and trails were repeatedly raised as a priority during consultation sessions, particularly opportunities to provide connections between significant parcels of open space. Council's Hike and Bike Plan provides a strategic direction for future development and expansion of the path and trail network in Yarra Ranges. Redressing the gaps in the footpath and trail network; and those trails that connect townships or open spaces, commercial and education precincts are priorities

5.2 Challenges to the provision of recreation and open spaces services

There are a number of challenges affecting the successful delivery of recreation and open spaces in Yarra Ranges. These include:

- The volume of diverse parks and reserves and recreation opportunities are ageing and require renewal.
- Some major participation sports are under catered for or have poor facilities that require either relocation or redevelopment.
- Declining participation in some sports, e.g. tennis, place pressure on viability and capacity of clubs to maintain facilities and memberships
- Rapid growth in participation of juniors and females are creating access issues for facilities and placing increased pressure on playing fields.

- The impacts of climate change present challenges for appropriate water use and management practices including seasonal impacts on sports field maintenance e.g. drought, floods and overuse. Council needs to explore climate change adaptation in addition to mitigation measures when planning open spaces.
- Streetscapes and civic places in Yarra Ranges are tired and car centric. A focus on turning these community spaces into pedestrian and community friendly places will derive important community benefits.
- Gaps in the footpath and trail network mean a disconnected community and a barrier to people commuting by walking and cycling.
- The preservation of natural bushland areas needs to be balanced with providing improved recreation and tourism activities.
- There is a challenge for Council in the allocating of resources equitably between structured sporting facilities and unstructured recreation facilities and open space.
- There is a rising expectations of clubs, associations and peak sporting bodies with regard to facility standards
- Recreation facilities, parks and open spaces need to respond broadly and locally to population and demographic changes.

“COUNCIL’S HIKE AND BIKE PLAN PROVIDES A STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.”

5 APPLYING THE FRAMEWORK TO YARRA RANGES

5.3 Opportunities for improving recreation and open space services

The following key points identify opportunities for improving how recreation and open space is provided in Yarra Ranges:

- Investment in the implementation of recreation reserve master plans and park management plans will create quality, sustainable and diverse recreation facilities and open spaces that meet user needs and promote the growth of sport and increased physical activity in communities.
- Development of regional sports facilities for soccer, netball and athletics is a priority.
- Strategic reviews of tennis participation and facilities; the need for skate facilities; priorities for play space developments; and demand for equestrian facilities and trails; sporting pavilion and aquatic facilities and service.
- Development of aquatic and leisure facilities to provide a greater range of activities, programs and experiences.
- Partner community and business in developing Yarra Ranges' streetscapes and civic places that encourage people to be active whilst embracing cultural heritage and identity and fostering community connectedness and resilience.
- Investment in priority trail and footpath projects that link communities and people to public transport, open spaces and commercial and educational precincts.
- Strengthen partnerships with other land authorities in Yarra Ranges to integrate planning and explore nature-based recreation tourism opportunities in natural areas.
- A master plan is being prepared for the Lilydale Quarry and Swinburne University sites for future development. With an expected increase in population of 5,000 to 10,000 and varied mix of land uses, providing recreation and open space is an important ingredient and opportunity for the new development areas and broader Lilydale.
- Review existing open space portfolio against the open space planning framework and design standard guidelines.

**“CREATE QUALITY,
SUSTAINABLE AND
DIVERSE RECREATION
FACILITIES.”**

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY

Catchment

An open spaces sphere of influence.

Flora and Fauna Conservation Reserves

Flora and fauna conservation reserves include national parks, bushland reserves, wetlands and waterway corridors. The reserves primary purpose is to conserve the values of the natural environment. The reserves may support nature-based recreation activities such as bushwalking and nature appreciation.

Function

The purpose of open space.

Setting

The form of open space.

Settlement

The nature of settlement and density of housing the open space serves.

Social Recreation Parks

Social recreation parks support areas for families and friends to meet and socially gather and offers environments for play, relaxation and informal recreation activities.

Sports Reserves and Facilities

Sports reserves and facilities support formal, organised participation in sport.

Trails

Trail can be off road and on road. Trails support recreation activities such as walking, running, cycling and horse riding.

Urban Suburbs

Suburbs include Lilydale, Chirnside Park, Mooroolbark, Montrose and Kilsyth.

Large Rural Townships

Townships include Belgrave, Upwey, Monbulk, Mt Evelyn, Wandin, Seville, Warburton, Coldstream, Yarra Glen and Healesville.

Rural Precincts

Small rural townships, agricultural areas and bushland reserves.

APPENDIX 2: OPEN SPACE DESIGN STANDARD GUIDELINES

FUNCTION: SPORT			
CATCHMENT	LOCAL (NEIGHBOURHOOD)	DISTRICT (TOWNSHIP / SUBURB)	REGIONAL (MORE THAN ONE TOWNSHIP E.G. UPPER YARRA, YARRA VALLEY, HILLS, URBAN REGIONS)
LOCATION, SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In rural zones, local sport is centralised to the nearest rural township or hub and not dispersed throughout the zone Provide open space for kick about/social or junior sports in conjunction with primary schools, where possible Generally one outdoor grassed playing field, and free access full-sized hard court for multiple space within 800 m of each household in an urban area or at every primary school in other areas Clubs facilities not associated with a school should have a minimum of two playing fields Sports fields should, where possible, be located on public transport routes, adjacent to schools and/or serviced by shared trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per local level provision Not to be provided on encumbered land Sufficient land to accommodate a core range of competition sports in one major sports reserve (i.e. minimum two playing fields) in addition to support building/pavilion and car park and ancillary space offering pleasant landscape settings for non-sporting recreation opportunities e.g. perimeter path, seating, play opportunities, etc. Multiple playing fields for the one sports code, in addition to support building Locate on prominent sites served by an off-road trail and public transport, where possible Co-locate new sporting facilities with new schools, where possible May also fulfil the role of a social recreation space for residents within 400 m An indoor multi-code sports court, in a hall/community, where possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per district level provision The codes/range of sports provided should be based on ABS participation data, local participation data, and local demand At a suitable distance depending on the activity from houses to limit impact from noise, car parking and lights Prominent site served by public transport, where possible Possibly provided in association with an indoor centre Equestrian sports should be catered for outside playing field spaces Infrastructure generally provided in part by other stakeholders
QUALITY AND DESIGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only basic turf quality unless otherwise required by shared club use No pavilions, and only basic support facilities such as toilets Ancillary space offering pleasant landscape setting, seating and shade 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playing fields are preferably at the same level and unfenced for flexibility Seating, shade and play, allowing contact with nature and environmental qualities to be retained Irrigated and drained sports playing fields to ensure quality of turf and support facilities determined by code and level of competition played. These may include onsite car park, training lights, shared pavilion, kiosk, toilets, shade, shelter at least minimal spectator facilities, seating, signage and rubbish collection system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher quality support facilities, playing surfaces able to be enclosed to take a gate, competition lights, pavilion, possibly including club and social rooms Onsite sealed car park. Some spectator facilities possibly undercover, public toilets, shade, seating, signage, and rubbish collection system May include a synthetic or specialised playing field such as hockey/, athletics, soccer, water sports, turf wickets, etc

APPENDIX 2: OPEN SPACE DESIGN STANDARD GUIDELINES

FUNCTION: SOCIAL RECREATION			
CATCHMENT	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
LOCATION, SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One social recreation area to serve each rural township Not on encumbered land In urban areas, provide within 400 - 500 m of every household (without having to cross a major road/railway or other major physical barrier) Centrally located in community activity node e.g. adjacent to sports, shop or community meeting facilities Minimum size of one ha Minimum dimensions of 70 m in any direction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per local level provision In rural zones the local social recreation will be met in the nearest rural township or hub – not dispersed throughout the zone One district social recreation park in each precinct plus local social recreation parks outside 400 m–500 m catchment or several with different landscape setting types to create diversity in park experiences. Not on encumbered land Preferably minimum size two ha Minimum dimensions of 70 m in any direction Locate so as to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be central to the population it serves be in a prominent community hub be larger enough to allow diversity of opportunity serve multiple age groups and abilities front houses preferably from across a road to maximise use maximise public surveillance and sense of community ownership minimise conflicts between users, and between reserve users and residents no more than two sides of the one urban residential property. Promote an interface with shopping centre and residential property Pedestrian access is encouraged. Access to the public park via street frontages and connecting to other footpaths is important May be in form of plaza or ornamental garden. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per district level provision Provide in each activity centre Provides a diverse mix of activities Served by a shared path or off-road trail.
QUALITY AND DESIGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes areas for cooperative play and games, range of surfaces, kick about space, loose materials/contact with nature, equipment for exercise, areas with places to hide and retreats from activity, screened from boisterous play, shade (either mature trees or some structure), seating and paths Caters to a range of age groups – families, children and older adults No BBQ or toilets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure core attributes include: large shady trees (or future provision for some), diversity of planting, a high standard of maintenance, seating or places to sit, paths suitable for walking, cycling, shade and shelter, drinking water, access to nature/loose materials, all accessible to people with a disability Some areas to have picnic/BBQ, toilets, additional facilities might include skate facilities, free access tennis and basketball courts, etc. Some to have high quality (irrigated) green lawns. Formed path (not necessarily sealed), lights and rubbish collection system. Preferably minimum size two ha. Provision of toilets (may be in conjunction with sporting fields) A large creative play space offering a range of play environments and ages. Link with picnic/BBQ and toilet facilities Find opportunities within the park to reflect the character of the township High quality housing fencing is encouraged for properties bordering the park so housing blends with the park. Fencing treatment should not wall in park but integrate with park If water treatment is required, consider wetlands or lake environments with boardwalks and landscaping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant planting and landscape elements, shade and shelter, seating, BBQ, public toilets. Fully accessible to people with disability, formed paths. Possibly access to refreshments and other commercial services A large play space offering the full range of imaginative and educative play environments and equipment for all ages. Link with picnic/BBQ, toilet facilities

APPENDIX 2: OPEN SPACE DESIGN STANDARD GUIDELINES

FUNCTION: TRAILS			
CATCHMENT	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
LOCATION, SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local circuits for fitness walking and jogging/dog walking and exercise: one circuit in every locality and could be provided in district and or regional sports reserves or social recreation parks In logical places that are now well used or along open space corridors Connect with destinations such as schools, community facilities, in pleasant landscapes, streets and parks Perimeter trails around large parks – with local links to sub regional and regional trails No corridor access way with a path should be under 10 m wide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per local provision As part of larger open spaces. Trails should complement not dominate the space Keep away from sensitive riparian areas/river banks Protection zone on either side of the tread way to insulate the trail user from activities detrimental to the viewed Trails between suburbs, along former easements and the rivers Preferred width of 2.5 m Off-road trail within 800 m of every house in urban areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per district provision One regional trail Good distribution of different types of trails: sealed for wheeling/skating, unsealed for park perimeters/jogging, and tracks for bushwalking and mountain biking Ensure all path and entry points at road intersections are signed and accessible by wheelchairs Trail networks to have directional, interpretative and information signs.
QUALITY AND DESIGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visually pleasant, linear or contiguous open spaces A hierarchy of paths in every new residential development; shared footways (connecting onto) the river/creek trails, etc. Basic level trail, may be foot tracks/mountain bike trails in rural or bushland areas Where corridors are not available, consider redeveloping selected streetscapes with wider curvilinear paths away from the building line Consider park furniture including seating and access to water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A trail network of defined pathways with opportunities to digress to view features. Access to seating and drinking water at nodes Formed paths including consolidated gravel pavement or granitic sand (not screenings or toppings) or asphalt, or concrete Instead of running a trail parallel along a significant waterway edge without a buffer, it should have a buffer and a single approach to the watercourse so there is only a single impact point. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional trail routes and connections to other municipalities Sealed trails to be a preferred width of 2.5 m with directional signage at nodes. Connect to social/family recreation spaces Provide activity hubs with toilets, car and bike parking and picnic tables at logical entry and exit nodes Wayside stops at key intervals for rest and break out activities.

APPENDIX 3: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

Purpose of public open space contributions

Through the subdivision approval process and Subdivision Act 1988, Council is able to levy public open space contributions, based on an amount of up to five per cent of the site land value. This may be in the form of either cash or land, or a combination of both, as decided by Council.

Public open space contributions cannot be used to pay for historical open space deficiencies for people living in the municipality. The monies received are spent on open space land purchases or capital improvements to open space.

Funds cannot be used for buildings where the use of such building facilities will be restricted to members, i.e. where there is a restriction on general public access; this covers the vast majority of Council recreation facilities.

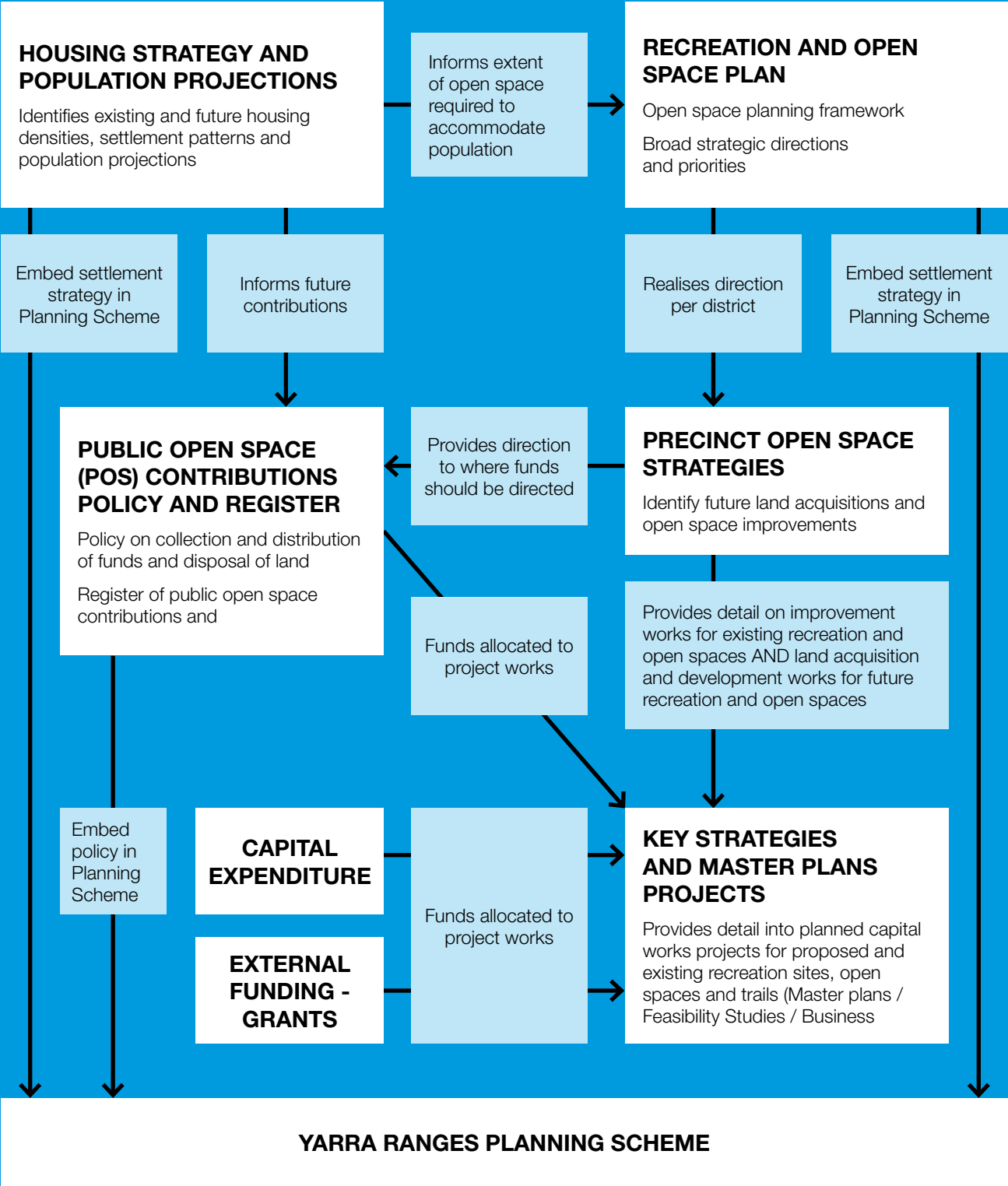
Similarly the same controls apply to the proceeds from the sale of surplus land if Council sells land that has been specifically reserved as public open space.

This Public Open Space Fund (POSF) Policy links to Council's Housing Strategy, Recreation and Open Space Plan, Precinct Open Space Plans and recreation strategies and master plans for recreation sites, open spaces and trails. The policy includes details on collecting, distributing and managing public open space contributions. Figure 1 demonstrates the policy links and relationships.

A POSF Register supplements this policy. The register identifies where contributions have been collected and allocates funds to where it is required for future land acquisition or open space improvements.

“THE MONIES RECEIVED ARE SPENT ON OPEN SPACE LAND PURCHASES OR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO OPEN SPACE.”

Figure 1: Policy relationships



APPENDIX 3: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

Open space and land use planning

The Recreation and Open Space Plan is a land-use planning tool that provides direction to Yarra Ranges Council on key issues and opportunities. The plan will be referenced in the Yarra Ranges Planning Scheme and inform the Municipal Strategic Statement in relation to open space planning.

The plan recognises that areas within the municipality will experience population growth and provides a framework for assessing the open space requirements in these areas.

The plan broadly identifies areas that are under-served by open space and that Council aspires to improve. This includes expanding the trail network, achieving critical open space linkages and realising major recreation facility objectives.

Following this plan, an investigation will be done into the suitability, diversity and quality of existing local social recreation parks.

One of Council's roles is to respond to planning referrals and manage public open space. An open space assessment of the demand and supply of open space in the area is provided, which lists capital improvement projects and plans for the future. Contributions collected through subdivision can be directed to these future projects. These assessments are continually reviewed as master plans and recreation strategies are conducted, and as actions are implemented.

Council currently relies on the Subdivision Act 1988 to justify the collection of public open space contributions. The plan provides the strategic justification for Council seeking the full five per cent contribution, recognising that future residents to Yarra Ranges will use the full network of open spaces including sports reserves and social recreation parks. The plan notes that in the urban areas of Chirnside Park and Lilydale there is an under-served level of recreation and open space that warrant a greater contribution.

A recent Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) decision in *Stupak vs Hobson Bay City Council* will act as a precedent for how public open space contributions are treated in Victoria.

The decision supports Council's approach as it links these contributions to the improvement of public open space; the decision supports no reduction in the maximum five per cent stated in the Subdivision Act if it can be demonstrated that Council has a plan for improving public open space. The decision comments that residents use a range of public open spaces across the municipality and that developers should contribute to improving the recreation opportunities available and quality of these open spaces.

The upper limit of five per cent of the Subdivision Act is outdated and has never been reviewed. The alternative methods, Clause 52.01 of the planning scheme or through a Development Contributions Plan Overlay, have historically been difficult to implement.

Currently, a DCP and a 5% public open space contribution through Clause 52.01 applies to the Chirnside Park Activity Centre which will provide a mechanism for new development to contribute to additional public open space in the Activity Centre.

The plan supports Council using the full range of mechanisms available in legislation and through the planning scheme to improve the provision of open space in Yarra Ranges. However, it also recognises that Council will need to take direct action to achieve major open space objectives such as attributing funds in the Capital Expenditure Program to the purchase of land.

Though the role of the Recreation and Open Space Plan on public open space is for recreation purposes, the strategy supports and links to Council's Environment Strategy and biodiversity offset management program. The offset management program aims to fund the development of open space sites that are significant for Council's to achieve its biodiversity objectives.

APPENDIX 3: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

The open space planning framework

A framework has been designed to support the Yarra Ranges communities access a range of benefits that recreation and open spaces can provide. The framework involves classifying recreation and open space by the: function or role it plays in the community; the setting or form it takes; the catchment it serves; and the nature of settlement it is located.

A classification of open spaces

Function (Purpose of open space)

- Sport
- Social recreation
- Trail
- Conservation – flora and fauna and cultural heritage
- Civic and public celebration.

Setting (Form of open space)

- Parkland
- Sports fields
- Specialised sports facility
- Bushland
- Gardens
- Riparian corridor
- Streetscapes
- Civic spaces.

Catchment (Sphere of influence)

- Local
- District
- Regional.

Settlement (Nature of settlement and density of housing)

- Urban
- Rural Township
- Rural Countryside.

Design standards are then applied for: sport; social recreation and play; and trails. The design standards specify the size, quality and distribution of recreation and open spaces. Design standards are not required for flora and fauna conservation reserves because they are reserved and managed for their environmental or cultural heritage values alone.

This approach identifies gaps or overlaps in the facilities available for communities, overlaid with the density of the population which implies the level of need in an area.

The approach also allows us to identify opportunities for improving the access and diversity of recreation and open space to communities across Yarra Ranges. We provide a different mix of recreation and open spaces depending on whether it is a rural countryside precinct; urban suburbs; or a large rural township.

Providing recreation and open space in our rural countryside precincts

For rural precincts that includes small rural town, agricultural and bushland areas, we provide a centrally located sport and recreation reserve to accommodate the participation needs of the local community. This reserve should offer opportunities to play a variety of sports and provide areas for social recreation activities e.g. kick about space, play space, picnic, pathways and seating.

APPENDIX 3: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

Providing recreation and open space in our urban suburbs

For urban areas such as Lilydale, Chirnside Park, Mooroolbark, Kilsyth and Montrose, we will work towards providing the following mix of recreation and open spaces:

- A local park of approximately 1ha in size providing for social recreation and play, located within 400 – 500 m of where people live.
- A district park that is central to the main hub of activity in the area that provides for social recreation and is a venue for community events and activities.
- A district sports reserve within 2 km of where people live and includes multiple sporting opportunities.
- An off-road trail within 800 m of where people live that links with a network of footpaths.

Providing recreation and open space in our large rural townships

Within Yarra Ranges, there are large rural townships including Healesville, Monbulk, Belgrave, Olinda, Yarra Glen and Warburton that have a mix of urban and rural characteristics. For these areas a mix of the rural and urban areas formulas are provided.

A centrally located sport and recreation reserve as well as local parks for social recreation and play should be within 400 – 500 m of where people live. These townships should be linked by a primary off-road trail network e.g. Lilydale to Warburton Rail Trail, where possible.

Within the constraints of the local topography and varied land uses, Yarra Ranges will aim to provide equitable access to recreation facilities and services. This will require a geographical and regional response to providing major recreational facilities such as aquatic facilities.

Other planning considerations

In addition to the application of the framework, it is also important to recognise the recreation participation demands and infrastructure needs of sport in our urban and rural areas are overlaid. Feasibility studies and master plans recognise the demand for recreation infrastructure locally and regionally.

Collecting public open space contributions

Yarra Ranges Council conducts an open space assessment when a planning referral for a subdivision is requested. The open space assessment analyses the surrounding open space and applies the open space design standards captured in the Recreation and Open Space Plan, as it relates to the property.

A recommendation will be made to levy a public open space contribution, whether cash or land, or a combination of both is required. The assessment provides justification for the recommendation.

APPENDIX 3: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

Distributing public open space contributions

Under the Subdivision Act 1988, there is an obligation on Council to expend the funds in the general area where they are being collected as the requirement for the levy relates to the need for additional open space or more intense use of open space, as a result of the specific subdivision the requirement is being placed upon.

VCAT has stated ... 'the trigger or the nexus for the 5 per cent open space requirement is the subdivision application, not the shortfall of open space in another part of the locality'.

However, large regional type projects like Lillydale Lake, Pinks Reserve, Morrison Reserve and Monbulk Soccer Centre could draw on funds from a more extensive area based on the overall catchments they serve, and the fact that the increased population will place greater demands on the regional facilities.

Proposals to spend the funds currently held in the POSF, should be done within a strategic framework so that the benefits of the contributions are maximised. The legal constraints of the Subdivision Act are complied with and it dovetails with Council's forward financial plan.

With respect to the conditions of the Subdivision Act and Council's policy, projects recommended for the POSF are to be linked to master plans/recreation strategies for recreation reserves and parks within each area. Figure 2 includes a list of master plans completed for each ward area.

Master plans/recreation strategies will be referenced and projects identified in planning referrals when a subdivision proposal is submitted. Then scoping documents are submitted for projects recommended in master plans/recreation strategies, into the Capital Expenditure Program Review for consideration.

APPENDIX 3: PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

WARD	MASTER PLANS AND RECREATION STRATEGIES						
BILLANOOK	Morrison Reserve Master Plan	Mount Evelyn Reserve Master Plan	Regional Athletics Facility Feasibility Study	Hike and Bike Plan			
CHANDLER	Wandin North Reserve Master Plan	Seville Reserve Master Plan	Hike and Bike Plan	Aquatic and Recreation Strategy Review	Monbulk Soccer Centre Feasibility Study		
CHIRNSIDE	Hike and Bike Plan	Kimberley Reserve Master Plan (Draft)	Aquatic and Recreation Strategy Review				
LYSTER	Menzies Creek Exit Strategy	Belgrave South Reserve Master Plan	Hike and Bike Plan	Birdsland Reserve Master Plan	Aquatic and Recreation Strategy Review		
MELBA	Melba Park Master Plan	Hookey Park Master Plan	Esther Park Master Plan	Lilydale Aquatic and Leisure Centre Business Case	Hike and Bike Plan	Aquatic and Recreation Strategy Review	
O'SHANNASSY	Warburton Reserve Master Plan	Warburton Caravan Park and Pool Precinct Master Plan	Wesburne Reserve Master Plan	Millgrove Reserve Master Plan	Hike and Bike Plan	Aquatic and Recreation Strategy Review	
RYRIE	Yarra Glen Reserve Master Plan	McKenzie Reserve Master Plan	Dixons Creek Reserve Master Plan	Don Road Reserve Master Plan	Queens Park Reserve Master Plan	Hike and Bike Plan	Aquatic and Recreation Strategy Review
STREETON	Olinda Reserve Master Plan	Kalorama Reserve Master Plan	Hike and Bike Plan	Aquatic and Recreation Strategy Review			
WALLING	Montrose Reserve Master Plan	Kilsyth Reserve Master Plan	Pinks Reserve Master Plan	Regional Netball Facility Feasibility Study	Hike and Bike Plan	Aquatic and Recreation Strategy Review	

Managing public open space contributions

As identified above, projects recommended for the POSF are identified in the planning referrals when a subdivision proposal is submitted.

When a subdivision is approved this information is recorded in a POSF Register. A consolidation of POSF is made at the end of each financial year and the balance of funds recorded for each ward forms the balance of funds available to be directed to projects identified in master plans/recreation strategies.

Planning referrals and master plans/recreation strategies for recreation reserves and parks are then considered for funds as part of the Capital Expenditure Program Review process.



Find out more about what is happening in your community?

The Recreation and Open Space Plan consists of this policy, a Strategic Framework and Action Sheets and Implementation Plan.

The plan summarises the research and consultation findings and consists of a number of action sheets.

The action sheets are focused on the issues facing Yarra Ranges, the different recreation and open spaces we have and outlines what is happening in your community.

Where can I find the Recreation and Open Space Plan?

The Recreation and Open Space Plan can be accessed on line at website:

www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

The Plan will be displayed at Community Links during the eight-week consultation period with the community.

Council will be hosting a number of community events at our sports reserves, parks and community spaces where the community can provide feedback on the Plan.

We look forward to receiving submissions via email:

mail@yarraranges.vic.gov.au

or post:

PO Box 105,
Lilydale VIC 3140

