



# Northern Grampians Shire Council

open space and active transport strategy | 2023-2033

## DRAFT FOR REVIEW

This report has been prepared for:



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

**Northern Grampians Shire Council acknowledges the Barengji Gadjin (the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples), the Dja Dja Wurrung peoples and the Eastern Maar peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands throughout the Northern Grampians Shire and pays our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.**

This report has been prepared by:



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# Executive summary

The Northern Grampians Shire Council is committed to working collaboratively with businesses, government agencies, community members and visitors to preserve and enhance the lifestyle on offer in the townships and communities within its Council area.

The Northern Grampians Open Space and Active Transport Strategy is one of two complementary planning documents aimed at contributing to Council's goal of supporting the liveability of its townships and communities over the next 10 years.

*"Liveability is an assessment of what it is like to live in a place."<sup>1</sup>*

The attributes that make somewhere a good place to live - or liveable - can be broadly categorised as:

- feeling safe
- affordable and decent housing
- high quality health services
- access to the natural environment
- reliable and efficient public transport.

The Strategy aims to contribute to the liveability of the Council area by guiding the provision of, and standards for, public open space and active transport infrastructure to meet the needs of the community.

The vision of the Strategy is:

*...to create a vibrant and connected community in the Northern Grampians Shire Council area, where residents and visitors can enjoy a sustainable, accessible, and integrated network of public open spaces and active transport options. We envision a future where our natural landscapes are preserved, and our towns and villages are seamlessly linked, promoting health, wellbeing, and a strong sense of belonging for all.*

Development of the Strategy involved researching Council's existing planning and policy framework, relevant legislation and research, current open space, recreation and sport trends, analysing data gathered through an audit of open space across the Shire, and extensive community consultation.

People living in townships and communities across the Shire area have access to natural areas, recreation parks, and sport parks providing them with opportunities to participate in a diverse range of leisure, recreation and sport activities.

Consultation outcomes revealed the importance of public open space with almost 95% rating open space as important or very important. The popularity of walking on local footpaths, shared paths, and bushwalking tracks was revealed as the highest activity participated in, making a strong case for increased focus on active transport infrastructure over the next decade. The community highly values natural areas and gave Council a positive scorecard overall for provision and maintenance of parks.

The Strategy includes walking and cycling (active transport) network plans for each township and community within the Shire. A matrix for decision-making details the function of proposed infrastructure, design considerations, and preferred facility types.

The Strategy applies a standards-based approach to assess the provision of public open space in the main population centres of Stawell and St Arnaud. Additional parks in Stawell and facility enhancement at existing parks will support healthy development of young children and teenagers, as well as ensuring equitable distribution across the urban footprint.

Smaller communities scattered across the Shire were subject to a needs-based approach confirming that residents have sufficient access to recreation and sport parks.

The Open Space and Active Transport Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Northern Grampians Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2023. This is particularly important for actions relating to individual park development and embellishment.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Curriculum



# Glossary

TERM	EXPLANATION
Active recreation	Active recreation refers to activities undertaken during leisure time that requires physical exertion. It includes organised forms of passive (non-sport) recreation activities such as Parkrun, yoga and pilates, gym workout and group fitness, for example.
Active transport	Active transport is physical activity undertaken as a means of transport. It includes travel by foot, bicycle, and other non-motorised vehicles. Use of public transport is also included in the definition as it often involves some walking and cycling to pick-up and drop-off points.
Core open space	Core open space is active (sport) and passive (non-sport) open space that meets Council's requirements specified by its Desired Standards of Service (DSS). This is particularly important to ensure equitable distribution and quality open space across planning areas, as well as ensuring development contributions are calculated and captured accurately.
Encumbered open space	Encumbered open spaces are areas of land unsuitable for urban development that may be integrated into the open space network. They include areas that have the primary function of drainage, flood protection and mitigation, wetland protection, water management, coastal buffers and contaminated land.
Levels of Service	Levels of Service (LOS) is an asset management term and for this Strategy refers to the type and amount of service the system (public open space / active transport) provides to its customers relative to the assets provided.
Micromobility	Micromobility is a term used to describe transportation using lightweight vehicles such as bicycles or scooters, especially electric ones that may be borrowed as part of a self-service scheme in which people hire vehicles for short-term use within a town or city.
Non-core open space	Non-core open space includes active open space areas that are privately owned or operated and that are not freely available for public use, and passive open space areas where appropriate recreation use is typically a secondary use of the land. The primary use of non-core passive open space can be for a range of uses including conservation, stormwater management, utility reserves and amenity.
Open space	Open space is land that provides recreation and leisure benefits, although that may not be its primary purpose. It can include beaches, parks, natural areas, utility and drainage corridors, and conservation areas.
Passive recreation	A range of unstructured activities and social interactions undertaken for enjoyment, relaxation, physical and mental health. Passive recreation can be undertaken in all forms of open space (parks and natural areas) and may include walking, cycling, children's play, picnicking, fishing, kayaking and relaxing in nature.
Play elements	'Play elements' include man-made items such as play equipment, as well as natural items such as boulders and logs, sand, planting, earth forming, and sculptures., which typically have other purposes and sources, but have been brought into a play space to support and enhance children's play. In this context they become play elements
Play space	'Play space' has been generally applied to any purpose built settings for children's play. Play spaces frequently include play equipment and their accompanying areas of soft fall (impact absorbing surfacing), but they may also include, (or solely consist of) play elements such as trees, boulders and logs, sand, planting, earth-forming, sculpture, musical items or other natural or man-made elements provided for the purpose of play. The play space can also include open areas of lawn, a small forest, hard or soft surfaces for ball games, ping pong tables, and mounds or walls if these are provided in the context of a park or children's play setting.
Private open space	Private open space refers to all open space areas that are exclusively for use by occupants of a dwelling, or all private land, distinguished from areas that are common space or public land.
Public open space	Public open space is land that is set aside for public recreation or as parkland, or for similar purposes. Public open space incorporates active and passive open space. The terms park and/or reserve are also used interchangeably with public open space.
Recreation park	Settings for passive recreation and social activities. Parks provide a range of embellishments such as play equipment, kick-about areas, picnic facilities, formalised walks, gardens, landscaped areas, access to water bodies and car parking
Sport	A range of structured activities capable of achieving a result requiring physical exertion and skill, that is competitive or training for competition
Sport Park/Facilities	Designed to primarily support a range of active recreation activities for training and competition. These sports parks are designed to accommodate the playing surface and infrastructure requirements of specific sports. Sports facilities are further broken down into a number of categories

### Road types and responsibility

ROAD TYPE	COORDINATING ROAD AUTHORITY	RESPONSIBLE ROAD AUTHORITY
Freeway (except privately operated)	VicRoads	VicRoads
Freeway (privately operated)	Varies	Melbourne CityLink Transurban Eastlink ConnectEast Peninsula Link Southern Way
Arterial (urban)	VicRoads	VicRoads (through traffic) Council (service roads, pathways, roadside) (1)
Arterial (non-urban)	VicRoads	VicRoads Council (service roads, pathways) (1)
Municipal	Council	Council
Non-arterial State	e.g. DELWP, Parks Victoria (VicRoads for small number of these roads)	e.g. DELWP, Parks Victoria (VicRoads for small number of these roads)

For additional information refer to the *Code of Practice for Operational Responsibilities for Public Roads*.



# Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

The Northern Grampians Shire *Open Space and Active Transport Strategy 2023-2033* provides a strategic framework that guides the provision, management, programming, and investment in public open space and active transport infrastructure.

## 1.2 Vision

The vision for open space and active transport in the Northern Grampian Shire Council for the next 20 years is:

*Our vision is to create a vibrant and connected community in the Northern Grampians Shire Council area, where residents and visitors can enjoy a sustainable, accessible, and integrated network of public open spaces and active transport options. We envision a future where our natural landscapes are preserved, and our towns and villages are seamlessly linked, promoting health, wellbeing, and a strong sense of belonging for all.*

The vision underpins Council's commitment to deliver quality public open space and active transport facilities that positively contribute to the quality of life of residents, workers and visitors to the Northern Grampians Shire.

The vision recognises the contribution that quality community infrastructure makes to the character of the Northern Grampians Shire and the positive experiences and memories people make as they live their lives. Current residents have a custodian role to fulfil to ensure places and facilities are managed and maintained to ensure they are retained for future generations.

## 1.3 Methodology

Development of the Strategy involved several steps, detailed in Figure 01.

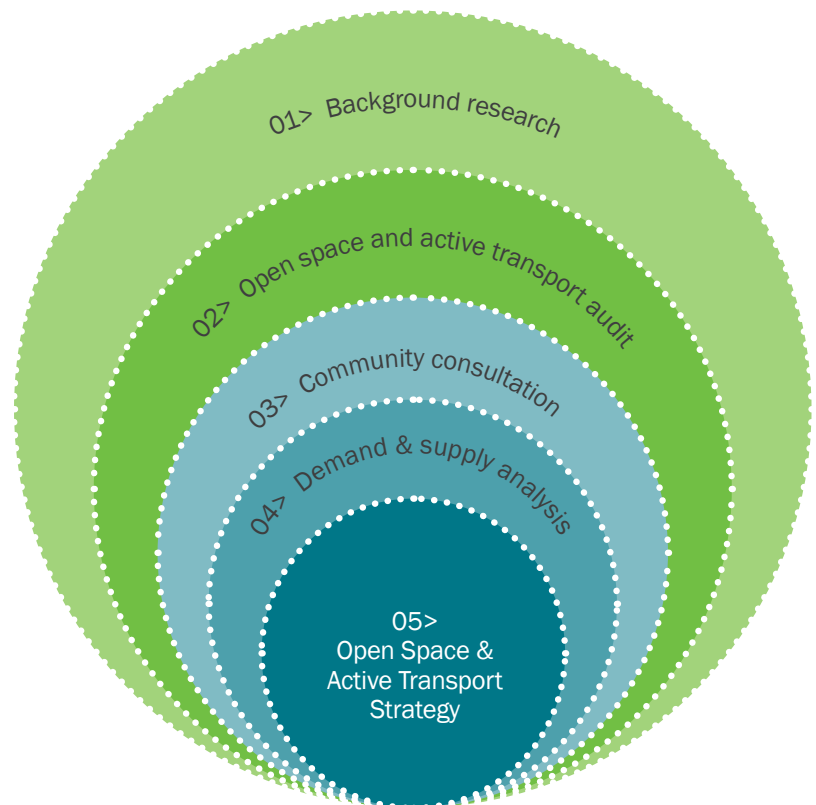


Fig. 01 Open Space & Active Transport Strategy methodology



## 1.4 Strategic objectives

Through the Strategy, Council seeks to progress toward the following strategic objectives:



### Increase participation opportunities through the provision and activation of open space and active transport infrastructure

- identify opportunities for programming and activation in public open space to encourage community use and ownership
- ensure the provision of equitable access to nature, sport and recreation opportunities
- understand the current catchment, hierarchy and provision of the Shire's open space and active transport infrastructure
- create a continuous open space network by identifying potential connections or linear open space for walking and cycling.



### Improve participation of under-represented groups and improve physical and mental health and wellbeing in communities

- understand community needs and expectations around open space and active transport
- support gender equality and inclusive participation of women and girls in public open space by investing in well-designed and high quality space and facilities
- support accessibility initiatives that provide improved opportunities for people living with a disability.



### Support strategic planning to ensure infrastructure investment is sustainable and identified early

- identify potential future open space in areas where the land is unlikely to be subject to structure planning, to ensure that piecemeal subdivisions do not result in a fragmented public open space network
- identify where future recreational spaces may be required and provide justification for a contribution rate to be applied, to ensure adequate open space is supplied
- identify minimum land size and development requirements relative to a hierarchy of open space to ensure functions identified in planning are fulfilled



### Ensure efficient and sustainable infrastructure is planned and delivered

- consider shared use/co-location of open space, and facilities and develop appropriate procedures and management requirements
- consider asset costs, maintenance requirements, and whole of life costs.



### Consider shared outcomes with five key themes of the NGSC Municipal Health and Wellbeing Strategy

- improving mental health and wellbeing
- increasing access to health services
- reducing family violence
- increasing healthy eating and active living
- act on climate change.

## USE OF THIS STRATEGY

The Strategy is to be used as a mechanism to prioritise future investment and development of the Shire's public open space network and active transport infrastructure and to identify the relative merits of the use of space by various user groups and the population. The Strategy should be applied as part of the Shire's Community planning and policy framework that includes the 20-year Community Vision, 10-year Economic Strategy, Strategic Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Community Access Plan, Youth Strategy, Housing Strategy, Capital Works Plan, Operational Plan and Long-Term Financial Plan.



# Planning framework

## 2.1 Northern Grampians Shire character

The Northern Grampians Shire area is characterised by its diverse and rugged landscapes. The area is dominated by the Grampians mountain range, which boasts towering peaks and scenic valleys that are covered with native bushland and dotted with waterfalls. The Grampians are a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts, offering opportunities for hiking, rock climbing, camping, and wildlife viewing. The area is home to a range of native flora and fauna, including rare and endangered species, and is considered to be of significant cultural and spiritual importance to Indigenous Australians.

The Traditional Owners of Country and recognised Registered Aboriginal Parties for the area known as the Northern Grampians Shire are the Barengji Gadjin (the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk peoples), the Dja Dja Wurrung peoples and the Eastern Maar peoples. Strong connections to Country founded on history and culture exist for these Peoples.

The Shire is also characterised by its rolling hills, farmlands, and scenic rivers. The Wimmera River, which runs through the region, provides water for agricultural activities and is a popular spot for fishing and water sports. The fertile farmlands of the area are primarily used for grazing livestock and growing crops, including wheat, barley, and canola. The region's rural character is emphasised by its small towns, which offer a peaceful and relaxed way of life, and by its many charming country roads and scenic drives.

The Council directly manages a diverse range of parks, reserves, civic spaces and streetscapes that contribute to the lifestyle and amenity of the towns, villages and communities across the local government area (LGA). Over the past decade, Council has focussed on enhancing public open spaces, sport facilities and streetscapes through upgrading facilities and planting additional street trees. Increasing the network of walking and cycling paths has also been a priority.

## 2.2 Planning areas

The Shire includes the larger towns of Stawell and St Arnaud, and several villages and outlying communities. For the purpose of this Strategy, the Shire has been divided into planning areas. The planning area boundaries are determined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for data collection purposes. In effect, the entire population of Northern Grampians Shire will be considered for the Strategy. The planning areas are detailed in the table below.

Table 01: Northern Grampians Shire planning areas.

Townships	Villages / Outlying communities	
Stawell	Glenorchy	Marnoo
St Arnaud	Great Western	Navarre
	Halls Gap	Stuart Mill

## 2.3 Value of open space and active transport

The provision of land and infrastructure to create fit-for-purpose public open space and active transport networks is an essential element of contemporary settlement planning and community life. The provision of public open space and walk and cycle infrastructure supports a broad spectrum of activities and interactions between people and nature and sustains critical environmental functions for the health of communities. Open space land and connected active transport routes are significant public assets that contribute to the development of liveable and sustainable communities. Planning for the provision of public open space and active transport needs to occur concurrently with strategic planning, urban planning and design, and an understanding of local recreation and participation trends.

To meet its intended purpose, public open space and active transport planning and design needs to respond to the distinctive characteristics of the rural and rural-residential settlement pattern that has evolved across the Northern Grampians Shire. The quantity, distribution and type of public open space and walk and cycle infrastructure that is required in towns and outlying communities is influenced by the following factors:

- population growth or decline
- demographic profile
- housing densities including access to private open space
- access to essential infrastructure including public transport
- employment or commercial and activity hubs
- access to natural assets or physical landmarks such as National Parks and waterways.

An assessment of open space and recreation opportunities available in the Northern Grampians Shire has been undertaken to inform development and application of the Open Space and Active Transport Strategy.

### 2.3.1 Health

Parks are the most frequently visited type of open space - with quality well-maintained parks more likely to be used by the community. Over two thirds of local residents surveyed report visiting parks and sport facilities at least weekly and 94% stated open space is very important or important to them. They also act as connection points that provide increased opportunities to walk and cycle as the preferred means of transport. Health research confirms that access to opportunities for physical activity and to open space, alongside providing adequate and appropriate facilities, is important to prevent chronic disease, promote social inclusion, and improve mental health and wellbeing.

### 2.3.2 Economic

Public open space also provides opportunities for economic diversity. The use of parks and reserves for temporary commercial activities such as markets and mobile food vendors supports both existing and emerging businesses within the community. The activation of parks through weekend activity, including both locals and visitors, also increases trade across the Shire. The hosting of events at larger parks also increases activity and generates business particularly within the Stawell and St Arnaud town centres. Attractive parks in villages across the Shire encourage travellers to break their trip and purchase local goods and services, while experiencing the hospitality of locals.

### 2.3.3 Environmental

The open space network requires sensitive management to ensure it is protected for future generations. There is an increasing focus on improving access, landscape amenity and protecting biodiversity across the Shire. Actions that mitigate and support adaptation to the impacts of the changing climate require careful planning and consistent implementation. Replanting of local plant and tree species within open spaces improves and protects fauna habitat areas. The incorporation of water sensitive urban design and effective water use practices within open spaces ensures the efficient management of water supplies. Expansion and improvement of the active transport network reduced reliance on vehicles and contributes to emission reductions. Broad tree canopy cover within open spaces assists in addressing the adverse impacts of the 'heat-island' effect and provides comfortable places for social connections to be formed.

### 2.3.4 Social

Well located, designed, and developed open spaces that can be accessed by walking, cycling, scooting or skating, provide opportunities for the local community to socialise and improve connections across diverse groups. Parks and reserves bring people together for a variety of sporting, cultural and social activities that benefit the personal development of individuals and enhance community spirit. The provision of high-quality green spaces provides a mechanism to manage chronic illnesses including cardiovascular disease and obesity, increase social connections and improve community safety through natural surveillance. Importantly, these green spaces help shape the identity of Northern Grampians Shire by providing unique character and delivering a sense of place for the local community.

## 2.4 What is open space?

### 2.4.1 Public open space

Public open space is land that is set aside for public recreation or as parkland, or for similar purposes. Public open space incorporates active and passive open space. The terms park and/or reserve are also used interchangeably with public open space.

### 2.4.2 Passive open space

Passive open space is land that is set aside for parks, gardens, linear corridors, conservation, nature reserves, civic spaces and community gardens that are made available for passive recreation, play and unstructured physical activity.

### 2.4.3 Active open space

Active open space is land set aside for the primary purpose of formal outdoor sports by the community.

### 2.4.4 Core open space

Core open space is active and passive open space that meets Council's requirements specified by its Desired Standards of Service (DSS) and Levels of Service (LOS). This is particularly important to ensure equitable distribution and quality open space across planning areas, as well as ensuring development contributions are calculated and captured accurately.

### 2.4.5 Non-core open space

Non-core open space includes:

- active open space areas that are privately owned or operated and that are not freely available for public use
- passive open space areas where appropriate recreation use is typically a secondary use of the land.

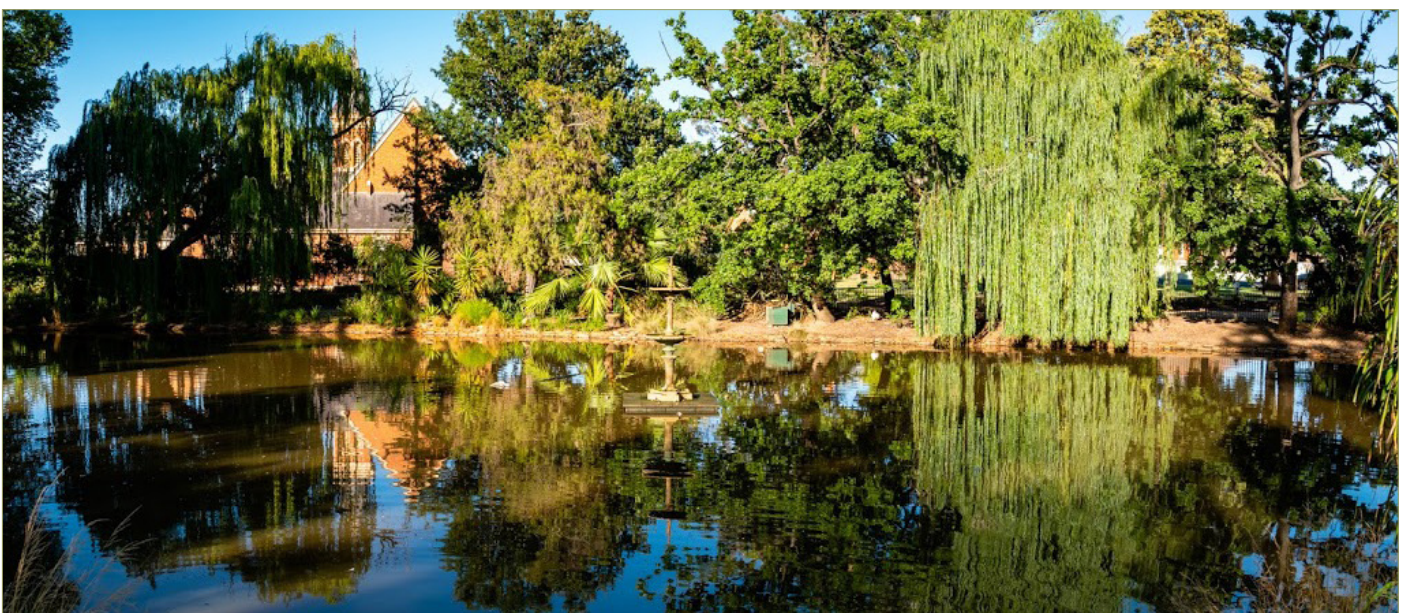
The primary purpose of non-core passive open space can be for a range of uses including conservation, stormwater management, utility reserves and amenity.

### 2.4.6 Access to experiences

In addition to the network of recreation and sport parks available to residents and visitors, there are also significant waterbodies, national and state parks and forests providing a range of outdoor recreation opportunities. Together, Council-managed, and other natural assets across the Shire, provide an extensive network of recreation, nature-based and ecotourism opportunities for residents and visitors.

The range of activities and experiences considered as key elements in the Shire's open space network include:

- walking and cycling
- access to nature
- escape, break out and recreation areas
- comfort/safety
- dog-friendly areas
- indoor recreation/community meetings
- sport
- non-sport physical activity
- nature-based recreation
- water-based recreation
- picnics
- playgrounds
- cultural/community events.



Queen Mary Gardens, St Arnaud; Image credit: Ardash Muradian

## 2.5 What is active transport?

Active transport includes both walking and riding as a means of travel for commuting, recreation and utility purposes, as well as for health, fitness and fun. Walking includes people running, jogging and using mobility aids such as walking frames and wheelchairs (including electric wheelchairs/motorised scooters). Riding includes using pedal bikes, wheeled recreational devices (such as foot scooters and skateboards), as well as micro-mobility devices (such as e-bikes, e-scooters and other personal mobility devices).

### 2.5.1 Active transport infrastructure considerations

Active Transport networks establish transport routes that when combined form a wider network providing an environment where people feel confident, safe and encouraged to participate in active transport activities. The network comprises of a variety of infrastructure components responding to the varied needs of the community including:

- primary purpose of routes
- enhancing accessibility to key community assets
- recognising the physical and social connection benefits.

### 2.5.2 Footpath

A path which is off-road, generally in the road verge, which is provided for people walking. In Victoria, children aged 12 years or younger can ride on footpaths. People older than this may ride on a footpath if they are riding with a child aged 12 or younger.

### 2.5.3 Shared path

A shared path is off-road and is shared space with pedestrians and cyclists. The minimum width for a shared path is 2.5m.

### 2.5.4 Off-road bicycle facility

A bicycle facility is said to be off-road when it is located in the verge (i.e. road related area parallel to the road carriageway); through parks or reserves; or within a public transport corridor or other public or private land not open to motor vehicle traffic.

### 2.5.5 On-road bicycle facility

A bicycle facility is said to be on-road when it forms part of the road carriageway such as a bicycle lane or a shoulder shared with parked vehicles.

### 2.5.6 Bicycle lane

an exclusive space for cyclists on the road carriageway. Defined with a white painted bicycle symbol and regulatory signage. Bicycle lanes can be defined by painted white lines on either side or physically-separated with a kerb or other separation device.

### 2.5.7 Trail network

A combination of sealed and unsealed tracks and paths providing access through and between townships. Trail networks including shared pathways that follow natural or other features such as creeks, stormwater drains, utility corridors, and stock routes, for example, but are not located in road reservations. Trails can be sealed or unsealed depending on local conditions, including expected usage, local character or engineering requirements. Trails are typically sealed in urban areas and unsealed outside of urban areas, provide access to, and alternative connections within, the urban network.



Grampians Rail Trail at Cods Flat Road

## 2.6 Open space provision

There are currently two primary approaches to open space planning for local government - a standards-based approach and a needs-based approach.

### 2.6.1 Standards-based approach

#### **Desired Standards of Service (DSS)**

It is important to develop parks that meet the needs of the community and the standards-based approach aims to meet a range of criteria:

- quantity of land for open space
- size of open space park types
- accessibility of the open space to the community
- level of embellishment of the open space
- condition of the park and embellishments.

#### **Land for parks**

The quantity standard identifies the recommended minimum standards for the provision of land for core open space. Standards are generally presented as hectares/1,000 population. Typically, councils similar to Northern Grampians Shire provide between 4 and 5 hectares/1,000 people of combined recreation and sport parks.

#### **Park size**

The size standard identifies the minimum area for different park hierarchies to ensure parks can be developed to provide the intended service.

#### **Park access**

The access standard evaluates the distribution of parkland and whether residents can easily access it. Research indicates that most residents are willing to walk up to 10 minutes to access a destination, including park and recreation facilities. While many residents will drive to facilities, others (including children) will walk or cycle.

#### **Park embellishment**

Embellishments are the facilities and services provided at parks to meet various recreation needs. The types of embellishments available in parks can be deliberately chosen to allow the park to function for its intended purpose. For example, competition sport facilities can also be embellished for recreation park use by either children, older youth or for picnicking, walking and nature appreciation.

#### **Park condition**

The condition of a park and its embellishments can impact the recreation experience of residents who visit it. The condition standard measures if the park and embellishments are in good, fair or poor condition. Regardless of the quantity and variety of embellishments available, community members may be less likely to visit parks that are in poor condition.

### 2.6.2 Needs-based approach

The standards-based approach to open space planning is most effectively used in greenfield situations where significant population growth is projected. However, this approach is not the only approach for consideration. Alternative approaches are appropriate when:

- infill development (rather than greenfield development) is planned
- limited population growth is expected
- planning areas consist of towns and smaller outlying communities or villages.

Northern Grampians is typified by:

- manageable population growth over the next decade(s)
- towns and smaller outlying communities or villages are distributed across the local government area
- generally larger residential block sizes.

Weight is given to the planning area needs including the social, demographic and environmental characteristics of an area and the type of embellishment required in an open space. Given these characteristics of the Shire, both the needs-based and standards-based approaches are proposed for open space planning, provision and development.

The access and quantity standards are traditionally the two primary measures used to assess and plan for core open space parkland demands.

Recreation needs have also been taken into consideration for this Strategy. Therefore, park embellishment and condition have also been assessed.

Both the Standards- and Needs-based approach have been applied to develop the Strategy.

### 2.6.3 Tiered hierarchy approach to access and distribution

A standards-based approach including a tiered hierarchy of public open spaces in the larger population centres of Stawell and St Arnaud has been proposed, in order to appropriately plan for the public open space, sport and recreation needs of people living in these townships. The tiers provide detail on the level of facilities and embellishments that the community can expect, as well as indicative travel distances (catchments) for the community to access different facilities.

The tiered approach reflects population catchments. Town, neighbourhood and local parks will be found in Stawell and St Arnaud townships due to the population catchments. Town sport parks may be found in Stawell and St Arnaud.

By contrast, a needs-based approach has been proposed for villages to ensure communities with smaller population sizes have access to a minimum standard of facilities for recreation and sport.

It is important to note that people's access to experiences and activities will vary depending on their residence and ability to travel to other destinations.

Specialised sport parks (such as shooting and skiing for example) may be found in or near either towns or villages and have a larger geographic and population catchment. These are often destination parks drawing visitors from a broader regional catchment.

The sustainability of open space and sports facilities must be considered in the provision of future open space, with an important component being Council's ability to fund, operate and maintain the network and assets.

#### KEY IMPLICATIONS

Good quality public open space and active transport networks are integral to the liveability of the Northern Grampians Shire.

Appropriate planning and design is essential to ensure land, embellishments, and support infrastructure delivers the level of service required to meet the physical activity, health and wellbeing, and active transport needs of the community.

A desired standard of service (DSS) has been applied to the larger population centres of Stawell and St Arnaud. A tiered hierarchy and classification provides structure to public open space planning and provision.

A needs-based approach has been applied to outlying communities of less than 500 people. This ensure a minimum standard of provision of public open space.

Different forms of active transport infrastructure aim to meet different transport and recreation needs of the community.



Sports parks include sports courts across the Shire



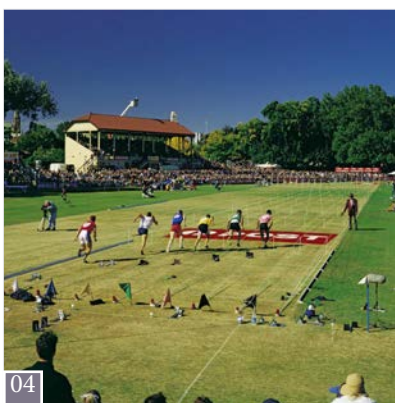
01



02



03



04

- 01\_ Thought extinct, tiger quolls have been seen in the Grampians National Park (Gariwerd)
- 02\_ Northern Grampians Shire is part of the Wimmera Regional Catchment
- 03\_ Over 200 rock art sites are recorded in the Grampians National Park (Gariwerd)
- 04\_ The Stawell Gift annual event is held in Central Park, Stawell

## 2.7 Relevant legislation, planning and policies

The following provides a list of relevant legislation, strategic planning, policies and design guidelines that are relevant to open space and active transport planning and delivery.

### National legislation and planning context

A range of Commonwealth legislation and strategies influence public open space and active transport, as well as structured (sport) and unstructured recreation pursuits during leisure time. Those that have relevant to development of the Open Space and Active Transport Strategy are listed below.

- National Reserve System
- National Landcare Program
- Healthy Active by Design
- National Cycling Strategy 2011-2016.

### Victorian legislation and planning context

The provision and development of public open space is guided by State Government legislation, policy, and strategy. Those referenced when developing this Strategy, are listed below.

- Planning and Environment Act 1987 (and planning provisions and instruments including Ministerial Directions and guidance relating to development of Contributions Policy)
- Subdivision Act 1988
- Victorian Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994
- Gender Equality Act 2020 (and related legislation)
- Urban Design Guidelines for Victoria
- Design for Everyone Guide
- Safer Design Guidelines Victoria
- Victoria's Cycling Strategy 2018-2028
- Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030.

### Regional strategic planning context

Regional strategic planning is a process of developing long-term plans for the growth and development of the various regions within Victoria. This planning process involves collaboration between local government authorities, state government agencies, and other stakeholders, and is aimed at ensuring that the growth and development of each region is well-coordinated, sustainable, and in line with the overall goals and priorities of the state. Regional strategic planning in Victoria is an important tool for managing the balance between economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity, and helps to ensure that the state's regions continue to be attractive places to live, work, and visit.

The following regional plans were reviewed to inform the Open Space and Active Recreation Strategy.

- Regional Growth Plan
- Activate Plan 2020-2030
- Western Region Sustainable Water Strategy
- Grampians Region Climate Adaptation Strategy
- Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy
- Greater Gariwerd Landscape Management Plan 2021.

## NATIONAL, STATE AND REGIONAL PLANNING

An expansive framework of legislation, planning and policy is available to reference when investigating and planning for our local communities. Aligning Council's planning and policy provides a strong basis for material support and success.





## 2.7.1 Council strategic planning context

Northern Grampians Shire Council has undertaken comprehensive strategic planning for a range of key issues to provide a clear direction and framework for decision-making and to ensure that the resources and efforts of the Council are aligned with its goals and priorities.

Quality strategic planning includes engaging with the community, gathering data and information, analysing trends, and developing a vision for the future. The resultant plan is then used as a roadmap to guide decision-making and allocate resources to achieve the desired outcomes. Through its strategic planning processes and activities, Council aims to create vibrant, sustainable, and liveable communities across the Shire.

A selection of Council's strategic planning is summarised below to provide context for the Open Space and Active Transport Strategy.

### **Northern Grampians Planning Scheme**

The Northern Grampians Planning Scheme controls land use and development and includes maps and ordinance to guide and support appropriate development.

### **Council Plan 2021-2025 (Revised 2023)**

The four-year Council Plan sets out how Council will deliver outcomes identified in key Council strategic planning documents such as:

- Asset Plan
- Financial Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Shire Vision 2041.

### **Shire Community Vision 2041**

The Northern Grampians Shire Community Vision 2041 sets the community's priorities for the next 20 years and aims to inform the strategic planning and decision-making processes for the future of the Shire.

Two key themes are of particular relevance to development of the Open Space and Active Transport Strategy:

#### Wellness and Welfare

- Develop the facilities and capabilities to deliver a range of recreational activities and events for all ages

#### Improving Connectivity

- Identify improved transport connections that help people get where they want to be

These strategic directions will guide planning to develop the Northern Grampians Open Space and Active Transport Strategy.

### **Economic Development Strategy Action Plan 2021-31**

Council recognises that targets within the

plan are ambitious goals to reach by 2031, however the aspiration is to "Uplift our communities economic wellbeing and quality of life."

The Strategy identifies how Council and the community aim to:

- grow the population, and lower the median age
- grow the economy
- grow the economic capacity and engagement of residents.

Of relevance to this new work under development, a key strategy (1a ii) is to 'ensure diverse and enriching places and experiences that offer an attractive lifestyle alternative'.

### **Financial Plan 2021-2031**

Council's Financial Plan projects expenditure over the next 10 years to deliver services, maintain and renew existing assets and build new infrastructure.

Council currently spends over \$28 million to deliver an estimated 40 services and functions, and manages over \$500 million worth of community assets consisting of roads, drains, footpaths, buildings, sporting facilities, recreation reserves and streetscapes. Council can only fund \$6 million of asset replacement annually, instead of the required \$10 million, due to income and revenue constraints.

The Open Space and Active Transport Strategy will allow Council to develop an Infrastructure Contributions Policy if required due to project population growth, to ensure appropriate land and/or monetary contributions are sufficient to support its strategies and Council's financial position in the future.

### **Asset Plan 2022-2032**

Council developed an Asset Plan in 2022 to ensure assets relating to roads, bridges and culverts, footpaths, buildings, kerb and channel, stormwater drainage, and open space are strategically managed to meet current and future needs of the community. Footpaths and open space assets are the most relevant for the Strategies being developed.

Community engagement undertaken to inform development of the Asset Plan revealed the following positive feedback from respondents in relation to open space and footpaths:

- 67% believe open space is meeting current community needs
- 69% believe open space assets are well utilised
- 90% believe the size of open spaces meet community requirements
- 70% believe the quality of open space meets community expectations
- all prefer multi-use facilities rather than single use
- 31% are willing to pay more to keep footpaths serviceable
- 54% believe a footpath should be on every street
- 40% believe a footpath should be on both sides of the street
- 56% believe gravel footpaths are acceptable
- all prioritise renewal and fit-for-purpose upgrades over new assets.

According to the Asset Plan, Council manages 115km of footpath assets valued at \$20 million and 134 hectares of open space assets valued at \$7 million.

The Plan recognises that future demands for new and altered services provided by assets will result from a range of factors that are to be proactively managed to maximise efficiency and value for money for the community. Integration with Council's long-term financial plan is integral to appropriate management of assets.

The Strategies will contribute to Council's Asset Plan by providing additional rigour around data gathered through open space and facility inspections, and by making recommendations relating to asset renewal, upgrade or replacement, as well as rationalisation where appropriate.

The Strategies may also contribute to Level of Service planning for parks and reserves, although this will be high-level input rather than detailed analysis.

### **NGSC Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025**

Council collaborated with state government agencies, non-government and community organisations to develop a plan to support improved health and wellbeing outcomes for residents.

The Vision of the Plan is:

*Northern Grampians where communities are thriving, healthy and welcoming.*

The goals of the Plan are:

- improving mental health and wellbeing
- increasing access to health services
- reducing family violence
- increasing healthy eating and active living
- act on climate change.

The goals of the Health and Wellbeing Plan have been incorporated into the Strategy to ensure alignment.

### **St Arnaud Structure Plan - emerging themes**

Council is in the process of working with the community to develop a Structure Plan for St Arnaud to:

- establish the township boundary and protect its rural surrounds for agricultural uses
- support and expand existing industries, and enhance the town's role as a regional centre
- provide a range of housing for the changing community and to attract new residents and tourists
- enhance the lifestyle, character and heritage features that make the town special
- create a network of pedestrian and cycling paths, and enhance road network capacity for industry expansion.

In relation to open space, active transport and recreation, opportunities have been identified to:

- create opportunities to extend the network of high quality public spaces to suit different recreational needs of the existing and future community

- enhance the town's unique landscape setting by establishing links between the areas of St Arnaud State Forest and Regional Park and protecting native vegetation from urban growth
- create pedestrian and cycling links to reduce car dependency and encourage healthier lifestyles
- develop a walkable town core to accommodate the town's changing community.

As development of the Structure Plan continues, the outcomes will inform the Open Space and Active Transport and Sport and Active Recreation Strategies.

### **Stawell Parks Precinct Plan 2019**

The Precinct Plan includes Central Park, Cato Park and the Swans Project water storage and treatment ponds bordering Maude Street. Key directions included:

- paths and access
- fit-for-purpose sport facilities
- presentation and interface
- lakes and wildlife
- inclusive play facilities
- vegetation.

Implementation of the directions will be reviewed as part of the Open Space and Active Transport and Sport and Active Recreation Strategies, to either support or offer amendments, based on current community needs.

### **Stawell Structure Plan 2021**

The Structure Plan provides a long-term plan to guide Council decisions about future development to contribute to Council's goal to make Stawell a better place to live, work, invest and visit.

The Plan identifies the need to indicate preferred locations for open space to enhance the existing open space network and create connections across the landscape, including through a primary pedestrian network.

The identified issues, strategies and actions contained in the Structure Plan will inform the Open Space and Active Transport Strategy, and in turn the Strategy will contribute to confident decision making and informed policy to achieve objectives.

### **Halls Gap Village Masterplan**

The Halls Gap Village Masterplan is a comprehensive plan that guides the future development of the Halls Gap village in the Grampians region of Victoria, Australia. The masterplan outlines a vision for the future of the village and sets out a range of strategies and initiatives to help achieve this vision. The Plan takes into consideration the unique character and natural assets of the village, as well as the needs and aspirations of the local community. The Halls Gap Village Masterplan addresses a range of issues including land use, transportation, housing, economic development, and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. It provides a framework for decision-making, helping to ensure that future development in the village is well-coordinated and in line with the community's goals and priorities. The Halls Gap Village Masterplan is an important tool for shaping the future of the village, and for ensuring that it remains a vibrant and attractive place for residents and visitors alike.

The Halls Gap Village Centre Action Plan supports implementation of the masterplan including amenity, pedestrian access, intensification of commercial land, and the identification of Grampians Peaks Trail Head location.

The Master Plan supports enhancement of existing open spaces and active transport infrastructure and is generally supported for the purposes of the proposed Open Space and Active Transport Strategy.

### **2021 Local Government Community Satisfaction Survey - Northern Grampians Shire Council**

The annual Community Satisfaction Survey (CCS) surveys local residents to provide feedback to Council regarding services and facilities, and provides a benchmark and comparison allowing Council's to adjust focus to meet the needs and expectations of its community.

The overall performance of Council has improved since 2019, with waste management and decisions made in the interests of the community underpinning positive ratings by residents. The survey has not sought feedback relating specifically to open space, active transport, sport or active recreation, however it may in the future.

### **Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy 2014**

In 2014, Council developed an Open Space, Sport, and Recreation Strategy to identify priority projects to respond to the changing needs of the community and increase participation in sport and recreation activities by all members of the community. Priority projects, programs and services were identified to meet Council's strategic objectives over a 10-year timeframe.

Council has progressed several of the recommended actions from the 2014 Strategy, and these are summarised further in this report.

## **KEY THEMES FROM COUNCIL PLANNING**

When considered together, the review of Council's previous planning highlights a number of key considerations:

- Northern Grampians Shire offers an enviable lifestyle with community wellbeing as a cornerstone
- Council engages the community to identify needs and aspirations, and plans accordingly
- Council acknowledges the importance of walk and cycle infrastructure as key contributors to positive health and equity outcomes
- Council acknowledges the importance of public open space, recreation and sport facilities for the community
- Council recognises the unique attributes of individual communities across the Shire and aims to reflect characteristics in future planning
- Council is aware of the need to preserve the lifestyle available in the Shire for current and future generations.

## 2.8 Major trends in open space and recreation

Participation patterns in recreation and sport are changing at a community level. Factors such as a move toward non-organised or social sport, increased outdoor nature-based recreation and increased use of technology have all had a significant impact on how people recreate and use public open space. Understanding these trends (and their impacts) is important as Council looks to develop strategies, programs and facilities to encourage people to engage in activities in public open spaces.

### COVID-19

At the time of undertaking this work, the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic was in its fourth year and was continuing to impact many aspects of traditional society. While in many parts of Australia semblances of 'normal' life has returned, longer term impacts are currently the subject of further study and investigation.

After Australia's initial lockdown period in the first half of 2020, a number of new, staged public protective measures commenced with State and Federal Governments enforcing restrictions to maintain good hygiene and stop the spread of the virus. The government recommendations included:

- social distancing of a minimum 1.5m from any other person
- limited numbers of people for indoor and outdoor gatherings
- limited number of patrons for restaurants
- restrictions on team sports including change rooms, number of supporters and physical distancing.

Toward the end of 2022 and early 2023, with distribution and take-up of vaccines occurring worldwide, it is likely that the impact of the pandemic will have lasting effects on design aspects and use of the public realm.

Some investigations are occurring into the potential effect of COVID-19 on where people want to live, and the influence of technological connectivity allowing some workers to choose a place to live that is not constrained by proximity to work. During the peak of the pandemic, house prices (particularly in major capital cities in Australia) continued to increase, providing another consideration for people's home location choices. The impacts of these factors on population projections in regional locations such as the Northern Grampians is not yet known, however provides an opportunity to promote the lifestyle benefits on offer across the Shire.

In response to social distancing, an association named NACTO (or National Association of City Transportation Officials, which is comprised of 81 major North American cities and transit agencies) released a widely shared guide, in May 2020, entitled *Streets for Pandemic Response and Recovery*.

NACTO city transportation officials around the world quickly developed this new street design and management tool "to keep essential workers and goods moving, provide safe access to grocery stores and other essential businesses, and ensure that people have safe space for social/physical distancing while getting outside". These evolving practices will influence urban development in our towns and cities as we

respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Streets for Pandemic Response and Recovery* is a compilation of emerging practices around the world and provides a set of implementation resources for all population centres. These regularly updated resources provide advice on how authorities and government can manage their public spaces in response to the rapidly changing nature of the pandemic.

There are currently seven different strategic guides available that address changing conditions and provide the best possible information on each design practice. Detailed implementation guides can be downloaded for the following street strategies:

- urban street design guide
- designing streets for kids
- designing for all ages and abilities
- urban bikeway design guide
- don't give up at the intersection.

Council's future planning and design of public parks and places will benefit from referring to guides such as *Streets for Pandemic Response and Recovery* to ensure the optimum in public health standards are maintained in public spaces including parks.

### Technology

In just one generation, there has been a dramatic shift in childhood activity from outdoors to indoors. This has been driven in part by increased use of technology. Technology remains one of the main contributors towards decreased physical activity and increased sedentary behaviour. However, active gaming is becoming a contemporary approach to exercise. In some technology-based games, participants are engaged in physical movement by using their bodies as the controllers (thus increasing their heart rate).

Increasing use of smart phones and apps allows people to obtain information, communicate with each other very quickly, and provide feedback on their recreation experience at any time of the day or night. Many people using parks, playgrounds, paths and trails make the decision on where to recreate based on the information available via the internet, blogs, forums and social media.

A number of mobile phone apps are aiding the community in tracking, recording and mapping their activities including walking, running and mountain bike riding. The apps allow participants to compete against themselves, as well as other app users. It can also be a useful tool for managing authorities in determining where the community is currently participating in activities (whether authorised or not).

There are also increasing community expectations of access to technology in recreation areas including WiFi access in key parks, and use of digital tools for information and marketing on tracks and signage.

### Increasing 'screen time' during leisure time

Time spent looking at a screen is somewhat unavoidable in many workplaces and schools. More of our leisure time is also being spent looking at screens, at the cost of active leisure activities including socialising, reading, writing, arts and crafts, sports, exercise and recreation<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Krause and Sawhill. *How free time became screen time*.

A study conducted using data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics found a clear trend of adult Americans participating in increased screen time (for leisure) and decreasing active leisure over a 13-year period ending in 2015. It is believed that a similar trend applies to adults in Australia. Excessive screen time has been associated with negative health outcomes as people have less time available to participate in physical activity.

### Social media

The rise of social media over the past 15 years has provided new ways for people to engage with parks and public places and share their experiences on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and Facebook. In some cases, this process of sharing and promoting locations has increased visitation. A recent study conducted in the United States identified that millennials are seeking 'brag-worthy' experiences to share on social media<sup>2</sup>.

### Participation trends

Since 2015, Sport Australia has conducted a national sport and physical activity participation survey, Ausplay. The most recent results of the survey were released in April 2020. In 2011-12 and 2013-14, a similar survey, the Participation in Sport and Physical Recreation Survey was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Between 2001-2010, the Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) was conducted by the Committee of Australia Sport and Recreation Officials (CASRO).

Overall, participation in sport and physical activity has increased in the last two decades. More adults participate more frequently compared to 2001. Female participation (at least once each year) has remained on par with male participation throughout. However, more women have constantly participated, more often.

Participation in sport-related activities has not increased, while non-sport physical activities have increased significantly (by more than 20 percent from 2001 to 2019). Participation in non-sport recreation activities such as walking and fitness/gym have increased the most.

More children participate in organised (out-of-school) sport than adults. The top activities children participate in changes as children age, with a focus on the life skill of swimming for infants and toddlers and running, fitness/gym, football and walking being the dominant activities by the time children reach the ages between 15 and 24 years old.

National participation rates in organised sport have been declining for a number of years as participants move toward more social (drop-in drop-out) sport and informal recreation. It will be important for Council to monitor participation trends into the future to ensure resources are allocated appropriately to support a broad range of both recreation and sport activities.

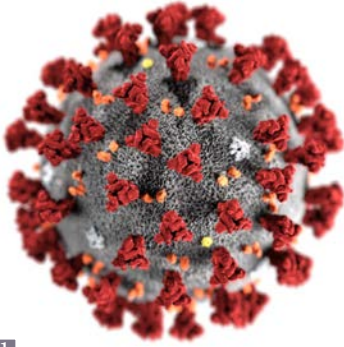
### How Australians' participation in sport and physical activity is adapting to COVID-normal

In July 2022, AusPlay data was reported showing further evidence of how participation in sport and recreation is changing for Australians. In summary:

<sup>2</sup>2016

2 Ways to Make Your Parks Millennial Friendly, US NRPA. 2015





01



02



03



04

- 01\_ COVID-19 has impacted the use of the public realm
- 02\_ Technology changes impact recreation participation
- 03\_ Social media provides new ways for people to engage with parks
- 04\_ Walking remains the activity with the highest participation rate

- compared with 2019, the average mix of activities per person is increasing, with fewer people relying solely on sporting clubs or organised venues for exercise
- physically-distanced (COVID-safe) or home-based activities are increasingly popular, including walking, bush walking, tennis, pilates, mountain biking, and canoeing/kayaking
- “exergaming” is now one of the top 20 activities for Australians aged 15+
- social and mental health benefits of exercise are increasingly important for Australians aged 15+
- participation by children in sport is lower than 2019, however there are indications that children are returning to regular (1+ per week) participation.

### Walking

Walking continues to be the most popular physical activity across age groups in Australia. Further refinement and implementation of Council’s strategic planning for infrastructure that supports walking and cycling for transport and recreation will continue to increase in importance in future years.

### Walking the dog

Australia has one of the highest rates of dog ownership in the world with 36% of households owning a dog.<sup>3</sup> People walk their dogs for several reasons, the most obvious being to maintain the health and wellbeing of the dog, and contributing to their own in the process. Responsible dog ownership includes regularly walking the dog to provide exercise and stimulation as they explore the sights and smells and interact with their owners and other people, as well as socialising with other dogs. Regular walks prevent dogs from becoming bored or destructive.

For people, walking with a dog is recognised as having positive benefits to our physical and psychological wellbeing. Research indicates that dog owners enjoy many health and social benefits including improved cardiovascular fitness, lower blood pressure, stronger muscles and bones and decreased stress. Walking with a dog can promote social interaction as well, with the dog providing a neutral and generally positive talking point.

Walking the dog can be done with the dog on a leash or off-leash. Exercising dogs safely off the leash while keeping them under effective control can be difficult in an urban setting. Ideally, councils should provide several suitably located unfenced off-leash areas and some fenced dog parks. These areas can become effective community centres for people, as much as dogs.

Dog parks are purpose-designed spaces for dogs and their owners, often separated into small and large dog parks, adjacent to each other. Successful dog parks are carefully designed with key considerations including:

- locations are accessible by walking or driving, and avoid conflicts with significant flora and fauna
- separate large and small dog sections
- parking provision
- entry/exit design to minimise the likelihood of a dog escaping while others arrive/ depart
- long, linear park shapes with regular seating and shelter/shade
- fences, water, waste management, signs.

Mechanisms to support dog walking will be investigated further to inform the Northern Grampians Shire Open Space and Active Transport Strategy.

### On Your Bike

In Australia in 2005, 13% of the population (or 2.1 million people) cycled regularly or occasionally. By 2019 this figure reached 19% (or 3.7 million people)<sup>4</sup>. Cycling has been reported as one of the top five sport and physical activities from results of the AusPlay survey released in 2020. Over 90% of participation in cycling is non-organised, with only 8% of cyclists participating in organised competitions.

Mountain bike riding includes a number of off-road biking styles, including cross-country, downhill, observed trials, cross-country marathon and cyclocross. In November 2020,

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/news/news62461.html>

<sup>4</sup> Roy Morgan Single Source (Australia), April 2014–March

2015 (n=15,913)

Mountain Bike Australia, BMX Australia and Cycling Australia amalgamated to form AusCycling. AusCycling has over 54,000 members and 400 affiliated clubs nationwide across different forms of cycling. There are many mountain bikers who are not registered with AusCycling. It is estimated that over half of mountain bike riders are not club or group members.

The past decade has seen a steady increase in registered BMX club members with over 17,000 active members (excluding volunteers) nationwide in 2018. BMX bikes are also popular for non-competition recreation and skate parks are popular locations for BMX bikes, as well as other wheeled recreation devices, such as scooters.

Pump tracks are also becoming one of the more popular recreation facilities for all ages. A pump track is a 2-6m wide track for mountain bike, BMX, pedal-less balance bikes, scooters and skateboard riders. The track consists of rollers and banked turns (berms). While there is no set dimensions or design template, layouts consist of continuous loops with different combinations of rollers and berms. The 'pump' part is the pushing-down and pulling-up action performed by riders as the key source of momentum. A well-designed pump track will allow advanced riders to jump from roller to roller and across berms to different parts of the track, rather than just pumping and riding over a prescribed route. In Australia, larger pump tracks tend to be made of asphalt or dirt, with smaller plywood composite and pre-cast concrete tracks also popular.

The various forms of cycling and the growing popularity of all types of bike riding supports evidence of a shift away from structured sport to unstructured recreation. Cycling is also growing in popularity as an active transport method.

### **Micromobility**

Micromobility is the term used to describe transportation using lightweight vehicles such as bicycles or scooters, including electric scooters available through borrow or self-service schemes in cities. An estimated 250,000 electric scooters and personal mobility devices have been sold and are being used across Australia<sup>5</sup>.

Rental scooters have been legalised in all States except New South Wales, where a trial is currently underway. Privately-owned electric scooters are not yet legal in Victoria, however the outcomes of a trial of commercial e-scooters will potentially influence changes in legislation that accommodate private e-scooter use. Interestingly, the regional town of Ballarat is currently trialling commercial e-scooter hire.

Indicators show that it is likely e-scooters and e-bikes will become increasingly popular forms of transportation in the future. E-bikes and e-scooters may prove popular in Stawell where the topography may act as a barrier to active transport.

### **Declining number of volunteers**

The rate of volunteering in sport and recreation clubs has been declining for many years. Often, the responsibility for running clubs falls to a small group of key personnel. To address this issue, there is a move toward amalgamations, with multi-sport clubs becoming more common. In other cases, organisations may become aligned to larger licensed clubs, that take over some or all of the volunteers' roles, as

well as asset management responsibilities.

Several of the sport facilities in Northern Grampians Shire are home to multiple sports. There is an opportunity to investigate alternative governance models for clubs, that reflect and take advantage of changes in technology, participation trends and contemporary facility management practices.

### **Play space planning**

Planning for the needs of specific age groups can be difficult because investment in parks infrastructure needs to have a shelf life of many years, during which time children grow up and their interests change. Information about age groups is therefore used with caution and while larger numbers of children may indicate the need for more play provision, a lack of children in other areas should not be used to justify the disposal of public open space. Although communities may be planned with a particular demographic group in mind, times will change and there will always be blended families with multiple age groups, visitors and exceptions to the main predicted demographic group, whose needs still must be met.

Communities dominated by older adults and retirees still need a good framework of parks and play spaces. Grandparents have taken on an increasing role as child care providers, and play spaces which are accessible and inclusive are increasingly useful for this group, as well as for the general social and recreation activities of multi-age families and groups.

For these reasons, a basic framework of public open space, parks and play spaces will always be required. They should be ready to be adapted if necessary, in small ways as waves of children move in, grow up and move on. Some details can be changed, and the specifics of play elements can be adjusted over time if required, but the parks and open space framework must remain in place.

### **Adventure and imagination play**

New terms are increasingly being used to describe different forms of play that contribute to healthy child-development outcomes. These terms are used to broaden the concept of play beyond the primary-coloured, plastic, off-the-shelf play equipment used in many playgrounds historically.

In response to a growing body of research, play opportunities are being designed and created that encourage children to use their imaginations, learn social skills, build their self-confidence and test their physical skills through adventure and exploration.

Council's Municipal Early Years Plan 2012-2016 includes strategies and actions aimed at enhancing playgrounds, bike paths, and public open space to support positive early childhood development.

Challenge parks are another emerging type of park. They generally feature multiple play nodes to cater for different ages, gardens, water play areas and lagoons, large open grassy spaces, shady picnic spots with quality facilities, ponds and water features, areas of natural woodland and vegetation and kilometres of shared paths and boardwalks to explore. High tree house structures, sky walks and natural elements are introducing risk back into play, enabling children to develop an awareness of limits and boundaries.

<sup>5</sup> <https://micromobilityreport.com.au/infrastructure/bike-scooter-share/2022-a-year-of-change/>

Children and youth living in the Northern Grampians Shire have opportunities for nature-play and challenge as they have access to a range of outdoor recreation opportunities. Some formalisation of challenging play could be considered in the long term future.

There is an opportunity for Northern Grampians Shire to plan and design play and recreation opportunities for children and youth that contributes to personal development, socialisation and community connection.

### Placemaking

Placemaking by definition refers to a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking is a collaborative process aimed at inspiring people to collectively re-imagine and reinvent public spaces they share as the heart of the community. Placemaking pays particular attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing development.

Key principles of placemaking

The Project for Public Places (PPS) identified eleven key elements required to create or transform public spaces into vibrant community places. The principles are:

- the community is the expert
- create a place, not a design
- look for partners
- you can see a lot by just observing
- have a vision
- start with the petunias: lighter, quicker, cheaper
- triangulate
- they always say “It can’t be done”
- form supports function
- money is not the issue
- you are never finished.

The PPS website is a trove of information and resources relating to placemaking including case studies that can inspire action. Through community-based participation, effective place making processes leverage local community assets, inspiration and potential to create quality public open spaces that contribute to people’s health, happiness and wellbeing.

### Increasing health and environmental awareness

People are becoming increasingly concerned about their health, with conditions such as obesity and stress-related illness on the rise. Surveys conducted in Melbourne and Sydney indicated that residents with easy access to the natural environment reported a higher quality of life (regardless of public or private housing<sup>6</sup>). It is acknowledged that these areas are cities, unlike the townships and villages in the Northern Grampians Shire.

These city-based surveys showed steady increases in people’s preference for large, managed and accessible natural areas. This, combined with a growing awareness of the environment and its challenges (global warming, pollution and urbanisation), has led to a growth in visitation to natural

areas. A term referred to as ‘returning to nature’ has emerged where people feel the desire to become reconnected to their natural environment.

### Ageing population

Australia’s population is ageing due to declining fertility rates and increasing life expectancy. Sixteen percent of Australians (4.2 million) were aged 65 and over in 2020. This cohort is projected to grow to 22% of the total population by 2066.

In 2020, AusPlay data revealed that less than half (44%) of older Australians aged 65+ participated in physical activity five times per week.

The change in age structure for people living in Northern Grampians Shire between 2011, 2016, and 2021, indicates increases (+575) in people aged 70+ living in the Shire. Overall, this group represents over 5% of the population, and approximately 2,269 individuals.

Ensuring access to a range of recreation opportunities for older residents in the Northern Grampians will require conscious planning and design, including elements to ensure inclusion and access. Recent research shows that older adults who maintain a higher level of physical capacity may actually slow their ageing process, contributing to improved personal health outcomes including managing cardiovascular disease or diabetes, for example<sup>7</sup>.

## IMPLICATIONS OF MAJOR TRENDS

Trends are significant changes occurring over the long term that are tracked with data-based evidence. The implications for Northern Grampians include:

- Major interruptions from external and uncontrolled sources to ‘normal’ daily life can occur and may occur again in the future
- Technological advances will continue to influence how we interact with the physical environment
- Participation in unstructured physical activity is increasing, compared with declining participation in sport. Sport remains important particularly for children and young adults (ages 5-35 years)
- Walking remains the most participated in physical activity and safe and comfortable walking and cycling options are key to creating liveable communities
- Imagination and nature-based play provide extended play opportunities compared with traditional equipment ‘playgrounds’
- People are reclaiming the public realm, particularly from car dominant uses, and creating spaces where people create a sense of belonging
- People are increasingly aware of living well into older age.

6 SKM. Recreation Implication from Residential Densification. 2006

7 Richards, R & May, C. Mature-aged sport and physical activity. 2019



## 2.9 Research highlights

### 2.9.1 Physical activity and sedentary behaviour guidelines

In 2012, the Australian government undertook a systematic review of scientific research and evidence relating to the Australian physical activity guidelines for children, adolescents and adults. The available evidence related to the relationship between:

- physical activity and health outcome indicators
- sedentary behaviour and health outcome indicators.

Underpinning the growth in research interest in sitting time, is an increased awareness of the biological plausibility that there could be health risks from too much sitting, which are independent of the risks associated with not meeting guidelines for physical activity. Current thinking is, that these deleterious metabolic effects, which are now being demonstrated in controlled trials of the effects of sitting and standing/walking on metabolic markers, are distinct from (although similar in nature to) the detrimental effects of not meeting physical activity guidelines. In other words, people may meet the physical activity guidelines and yet sit for many hours each day, with adverse metabolic effects over time resulting in the development of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Whether or not these effects can be countered by increasing levels of physical activity at any intensity is currently unclear. Children should experience several hours of light activities with at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day.

### 2.9.2 ParkWatch Report<sup>8</sup>

Given the introduction of Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020 and the requirement for Local Government to undertake Gender Impact Assessments, recent research relating to use of parks and public places that was released by UK based Make Space for Girls, is relevant and worth considering.

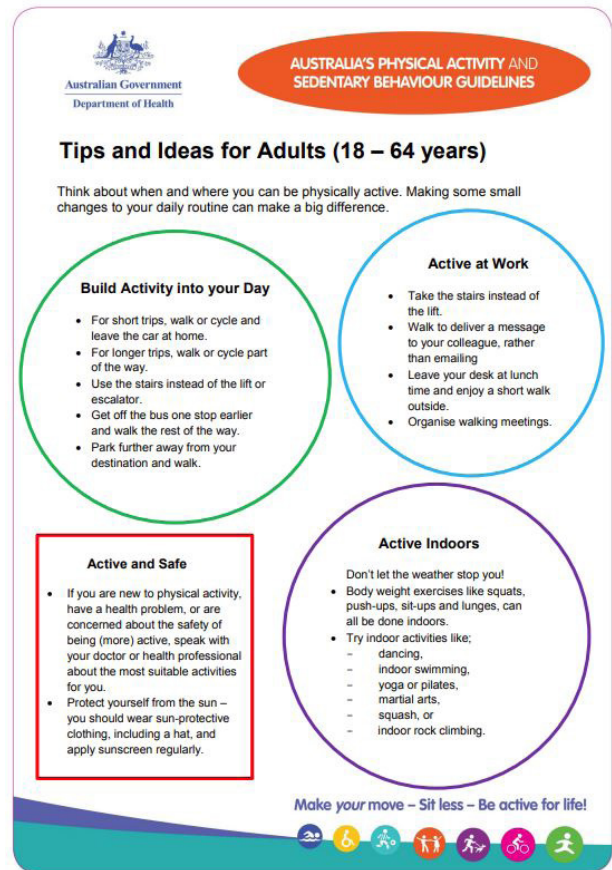
During May 2023, Make Space for Girls asked people count the number of teenagers using local park facilities, and their gender, to collect data for a citizen science project.

Youth parks or facilities designed for teenagers often include skateparks, BMX tracks or multi-use games areas (MUGAs) such as basketball half-courts or similar modified sport facilities. These types of facilities are anecdotally known to be primarily used by boys, however this project sought to collect data. The results are enlightening:

*"Our research reveals that overall 88% of the teenagers using these facilities were boys, and for MUGAs, the most common facilities, this was 92%"*

Some additional findings:

- Where different types of facilities were provided, including shelters, swings, tennis courts and play areas designed for older children, girls were more than three times more likely to use them
- Facilities dominated by boys, can also be the dominant facility provided, effectively 'designing girls out' of public parks and places
- The impact on girls is that they don't feel that parks are for them, potentially causing them to miss out on the mental and physical health benefits of park use.



Recommendations from the report include:

- When new facilities for teenagers are being provided, councils and developers should consider a far wider range of facilities than skate parks, BMX tracks and MUGAs
- Councils should evaluate what they currently provide for teenagers and whether it meets the needs of girls
- Councils and other bodies should also examine all their policies to ensure that these do not result in the same limited provision
- Every piece of current and future provision should be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment using data or observation
- Most importantly of all, we need better engagement. Teenage girls need to be at the centre of the decision making process, in order to create parks and other spaces which really meet their needs.

The full report, including the methodology provides insights into relatively simple processes that Council may be able to apply to gather data specific to park and facility use across the Northern Grampians to support development of gender impact assessments.

8 <https://www.makespaceforgirls.co.uk/resources-library>



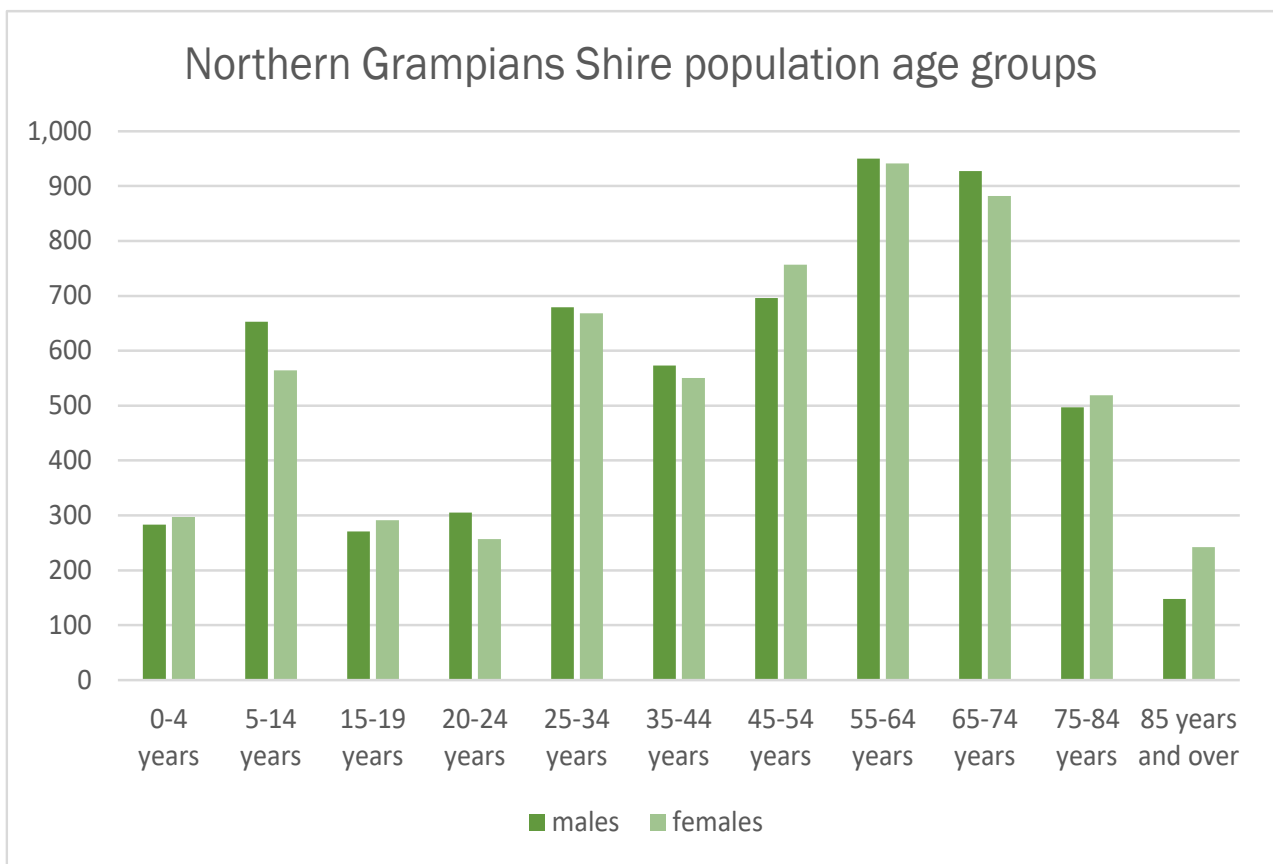
# Community profile

## 3.1 Community profile

Understanding the Shire's demographic profile including age, household composition and income and employment patterns provides an insight into potential leisure and recreation needs for the people living across the Northern Grampians Shire. Key demographic information is provided here as an input to further analysis of participation in recreation, sport and active transport activities by individuals, as well as groups of people with similar demographic characteristics in the community.

The following graph provides an overview of the Shire's population relative to gender and age. As with many communities across Australia, the population in the Northern Grampians is ageing, however the attractive lifestyle on offer and work culture changes such as remote working may be contributing to people aged 25-54 making the Shire their home. The difference in the population of 15-24 year olds compared with 55-74 year olds is striking. The age profile of a Shire is important to understand when planning for public open space and active transport, particularly in relation to the support facilities and settings created.

Additional demographic information is provide on the following pages, and highlights are also in Section 6 Planning Area Directions.





**66%**  
residents

Live in the townships of  
Stawell and St Arnaud



**229**  
people

Estimated Indigenous population



**5,989**  
male



**5,963**  
female

Male and Female population



**2.2**  
people

Average household size

Fig. 03 Northern Grampians Shire demographic overview

## Stawell township

5,627	population
48	median age
2,853	(50.7%) female
2,774	(49.3%) male
2.1	average people per household
\$1,089	median weekly household income
118	Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander people
2,384	(88.9%) occupied private dwellings
294	(11%) unoccupied private dwellings



### Glenorchy



131	population
53	median age
	(57.2%) male
	(42.8%) female
2.1	average people per household
\$1,020	median weekly household income
0	Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander people
53	(88.3%) occupied private dwellings
4	(6.7%) unoccupied private dwellings

### Great Western



425	population
52	median age
218	(51.3%) male
207	(48.7%) female
2.2	average people per household
\$1,474	median weekly household income
6	Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander people
182	(88.8%) occupied private dwellings
25	(12.2%) unoccupied private dwellings

### Halls Gap



495	population
44	median age
268	(54.1%) male
227	(45.9%) female
2	average people per household
\$1,196	median weekly household income
16	Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander people
184	(44.1%) occupied private dwellings
230	(55.2%) unoccupied private dwellings

## St Arnaud township

2,318	population
52	median age
1,203	(51.9%) female
1,115	(49.3%) male
2	average people per household
\$920	median weekly household income
54	Aboriginal/ Torres Strait Islander people
1,042	(86.6%) occupied private dwellings
160	(13.3%) unoccupied private dwellings



### Marnoo



99	population
52	median age
53	(53.3%) male
46	(46.7%) female
2.1	average people per household
\$900	median weekly household income

### Navarre



99	population
54	median age
45	(45.1%) male
54	(54.9%) female
2.2	average people per household
\$814	median weekly household income

### Stuart Mill



78	population
57	median age
40	(51.2%) male
38	(48.8%) female
2.1	average people per household
\$1,042	median weekly household income

## 3.2 Community consultation outcomes

To inform development of the Open Space and Active Transport Strategy, community views were sought through various methods, including a community survey, a sport club survey, and individual or small group interviews. A summary of the consultation feedback is provided below.

### 3.2.1 Community survey

A link to the online survey was distributed via Northern Grampians Shire Council's website and social media. Survey responses were received from a cross-section of residents living in:

- Stawell
- St Arnaud
- Glenorchy
- Great Western
- Halls Gap
- Marnoo
- Navarre
- Stuart Mill

### 3.2.2 Profile of respondents

The survey was voluntarily answered by approximately 250 Shire residents, just over 60% of respondents were female and 31% were male. The remainder either preferred not to say, or were indeterminate. The higher proportion of female respondents is not unusual, with research indicating that females are more likely to respond to surveys, than males. The age distribution of respondents is provided in the graph below:

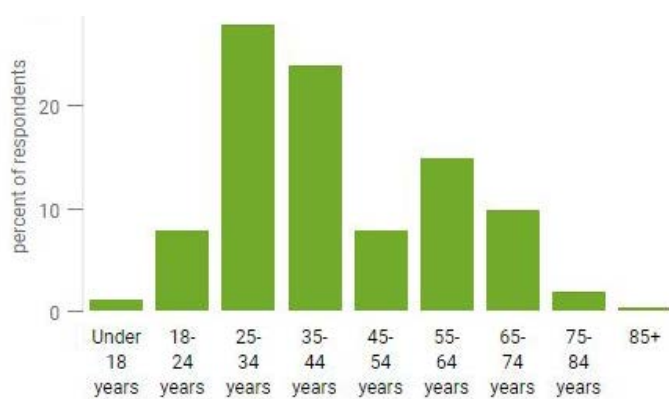


Fig. 07 Age of community survey respondents

### 3.2.3 Participation in recreation activities (not organised sport)

Figure 06 shows the top ten most popular recreation activities (not organised sport) selected by survey respondents.

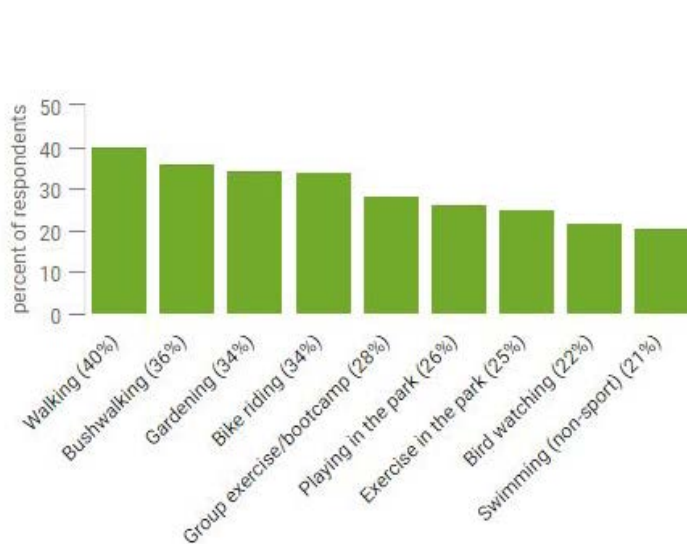


Fig. 03 Top ten most popular activities

Other activities selected by respondents included:

- running (16%)
- horse riding (15%)
- scooter riding (14%)
- golf (12%)
- canoe/kayaking (11%)
- fishing (11%)
- lawn bowls (11%)
- road cycling (10%)
- BMX (9%)
- skateboarding (8%)
- mountain bike riding (all forms) (8%).

Other activities identified in the comments section included:

- yoga
- exercise/weights at gym/leisure centre
- indoor bowls
- rock climbing
- walking/exercising the dog(s)
- archery
- water skiing.

### 3.2.4 Popular open spaces and recreation facilities

When asked about the open space and facilities where they liked to recreate, survey respondents identified the following:

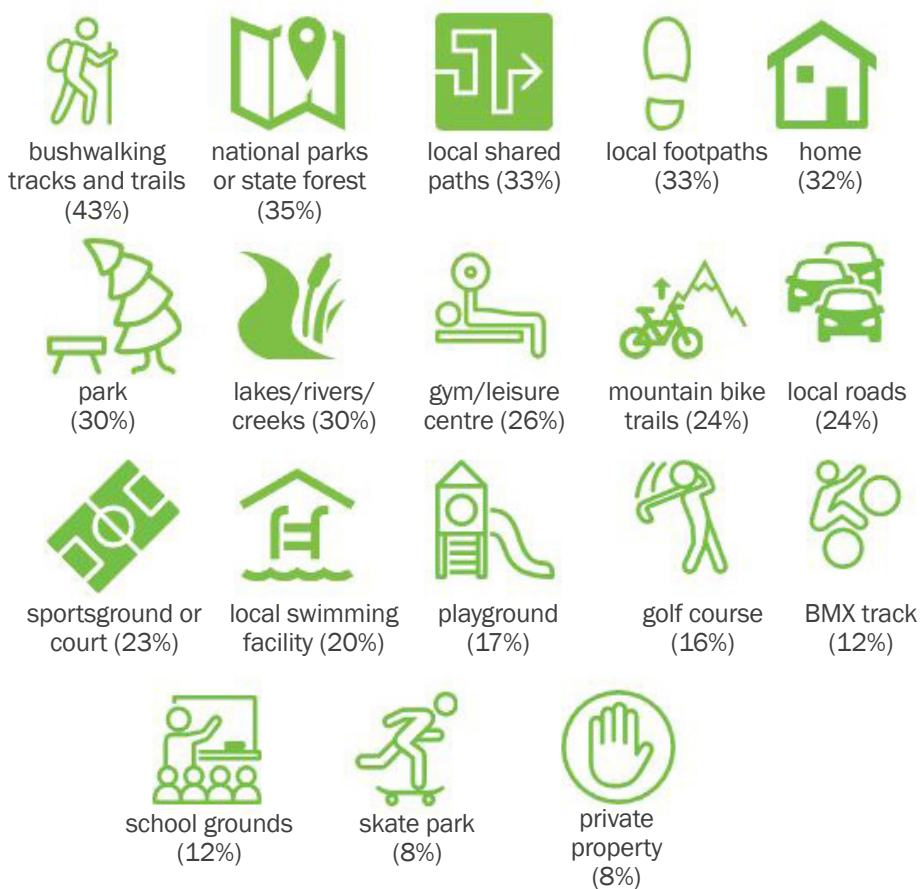


Fig. 04 Popular open spaces and recreation facilities where residents recreate

Importance of open space (playgrounds, sporting fields/courts, skateparks, picnic facilities etc.)

Survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of open space to them and their families. Overwhelmingly, survey respondents rated open space as very important or important to them and their families.

94.4%

79.85% Very important, plus 14.55% Important

1.86%

1.49% Not very important, plus 0.37% Not important

What priority should open space be for Council?

When asked what priority open space, recreation and sport should be for Council, respondents' responses were, overall, quite similar to the importance for them personally. Respondents were asked to use the same rating scale.

95.15%

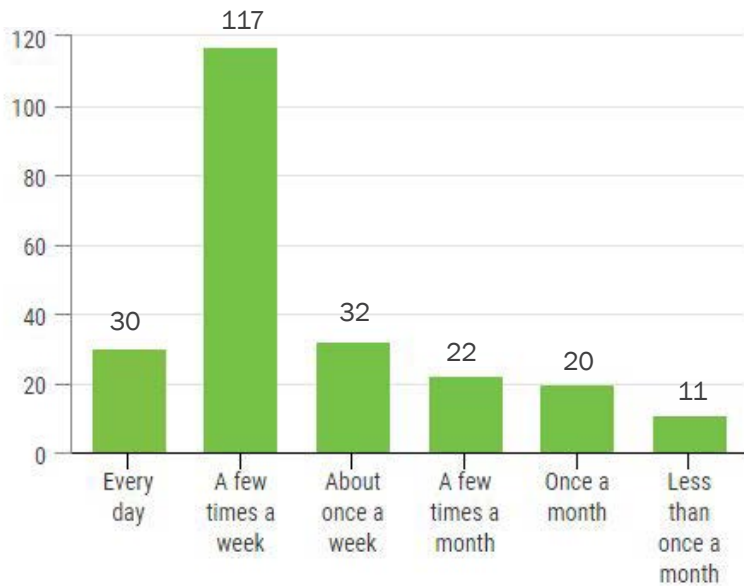
65.67% Very important, plus 29.48% Important

0.37%

0.37% Not very important

### 3.2.5 Regularity of visits to parks and sport facilities

When asked about the regularity of visits to parks and sport facilities, 115 of the survey respondents reported the following (column representing number of respondents):

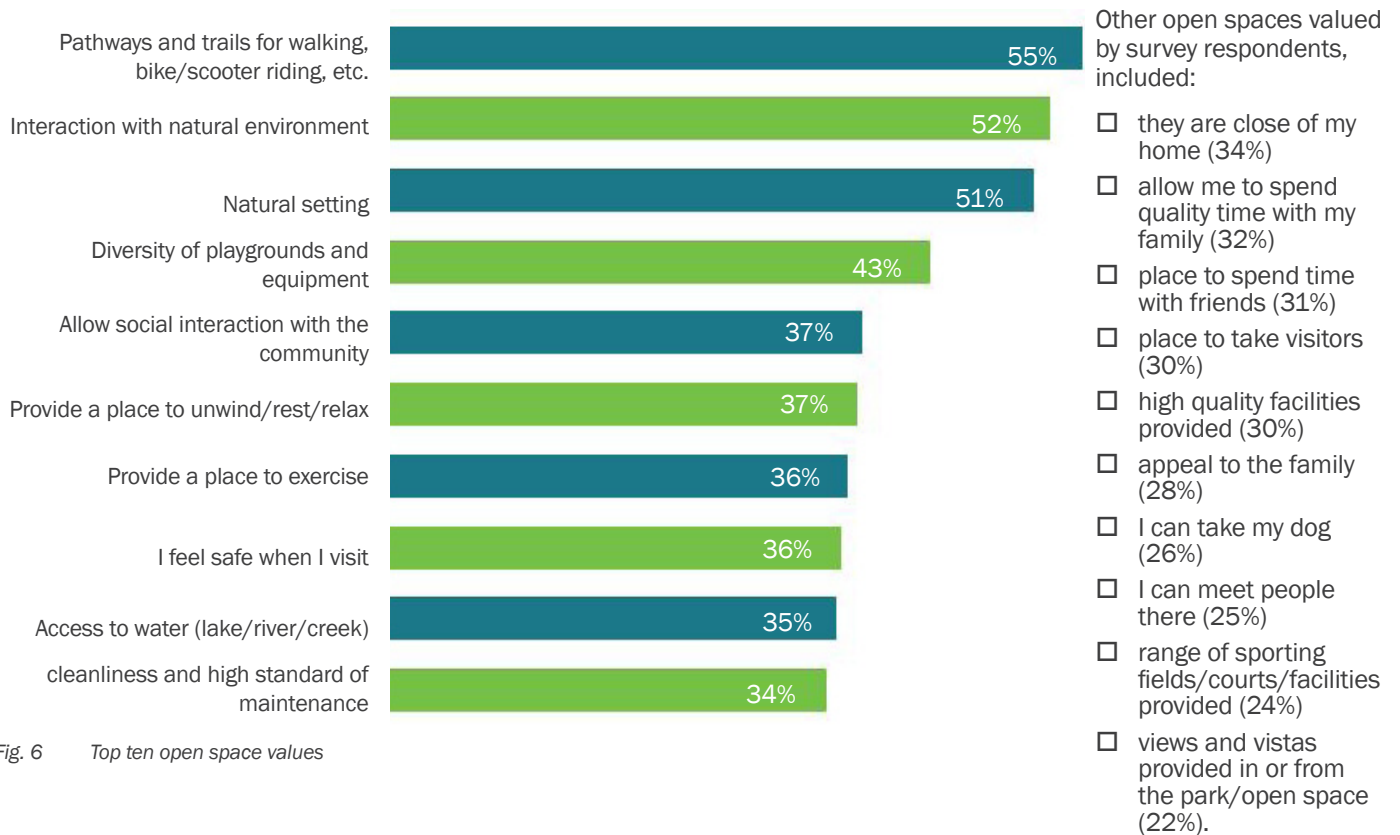


76% of respondents visit a park or sports facility at least weekly.

Fig.05 Regularity of visits to parks and sport facilities

### 3.2.6 Top ten open space values

A comprehensive list of open space values were provided and respondents were asked to select all that applied to them. The results are provided in figure 10 below and reflect broad trends from research across Australia, particularly appreciation of nature and the opportunity to connect with other people, that use of public open space can provide. The top ten responses are provided in the graph below:



- Other open spaces valued by survey respondents, included:
- they are close of my home (34%)
  - allow me to spend quality time with my family (32%)
  - place to spend time with friends (31%)
  - place to take visitors (30%)
  - high quality facilities provided (30%)
  - appeal to the family (28%)
  - I can take my dog (26%)
  - I can meet people there (25%)
  - range of sporting fields/courts/facilities provided (24%)
  - views and vistas provided in or from the park/open space (22%).

Fig. 6 Top ten open space values



### 3.2.7 Favourite open space/park within the area

Survey respondents were asked to record their favourite open space/park, including the reasons why. It is acknowledged that Council does not manage all the parks or reserves identified. The following table lists the responses in descending order.

NO.	PLACE	REASONS GIVEN
51	Cato Park, Stawell	lake, landscaping, accessible pathways
8	Central Park, Stawell	sports field, landscaping, history
7	Grampians National Park	biodiversity, views
5	Halls Gap Recreation Reserve	-
4	Maude Street Ponds, Stawell	-
4	Old Lake Velodrome, Stawell	dog off-leash
4	Queen Mary Gardens, St Arnaud	-
4	Market Square, St Arnaud	-
4	King Georges Park, St Arnaud	-
4	North Park, Stawell	-
3	The Ironbarks (Deep Lead Nature Conservation Reserve)	trails and picnic area
3	Lord Nelson Park, St Arnaud	-
3	Pioneer Park, St Arnaud	-
2	Kara Kara National Park	-
2	Federation Park, Stawell	-

Several parks or places were identified by individual survey respondents, including:

- Skate Park
- Gladstone Park, Stawell
- Stawell - Halls Gap Rail Trail
- Marnoo Hub
- St Arnaud Regional Park
- Bicentennial Park, St Arnaud
- Rifle Range Reserve
- Lake Lonsdale.

### 3.2.8 Top three open space priorities

Survey respondents were asked to nominate the top three open space priorities that they would fund, if they were in charge of Northern Grampians Shire Council. The responses are summarised below and provide an insight into the values of the community.



Improved walking/bike riding/scooter path connections between key destinations

49% of respondents



Improved bushland maintenance/management/conservation

28% of respondents



Provision of places/facilities for young people

28% of respondents

A small sample of comments received as part of the survey have been provided below. These comments provide a glimpse into how residents currently use open spaces and the value they place on those spaces and facilities.

#### “Playground at North Park.”

“Love to catch up with friends at Cato and grab coffee while walking. It’s so peaceful and has a great atmosphere. We exercise at North Park running track and occasionally Central.”

“Definitely need to look at developing a network of walking/cycling trails to connect parks for locals and tourists so that they can travel off road.”

“I think these different parks all have their own different characteristics, and they are perfectly mixed together.”

“Blythwood SP is close to home and is where I walk my dogs and ride my horse. I sometimes ride my mountain bike and my horse in the Ironbarks. I enjoy hiking in the Grampians because of its beauty.”

“Parks and Gardens team do a great job around town.”

“Improve the rail trail out to Hall’s Gap. Could be a major interest for people.”

“My children love to be outdoors, exploring, running off their adhd energy.”

“Stawell North Park facilities are excellent and such an asset to the town. Love walking the dog around there.”

### 3.2.9 Barriers to using parks and sport facilities

Two questions were posed relating to potential barriers to using parks and sport facilities within the Northern Grampians LGA, aimed at identifying barriers related to facilities and personal/psychological and social factors ('psycho-social'). Survey respondents reported a range of barriers. The top ten barriers identified for facilities and psycho-social factors are provided in the graphs below.

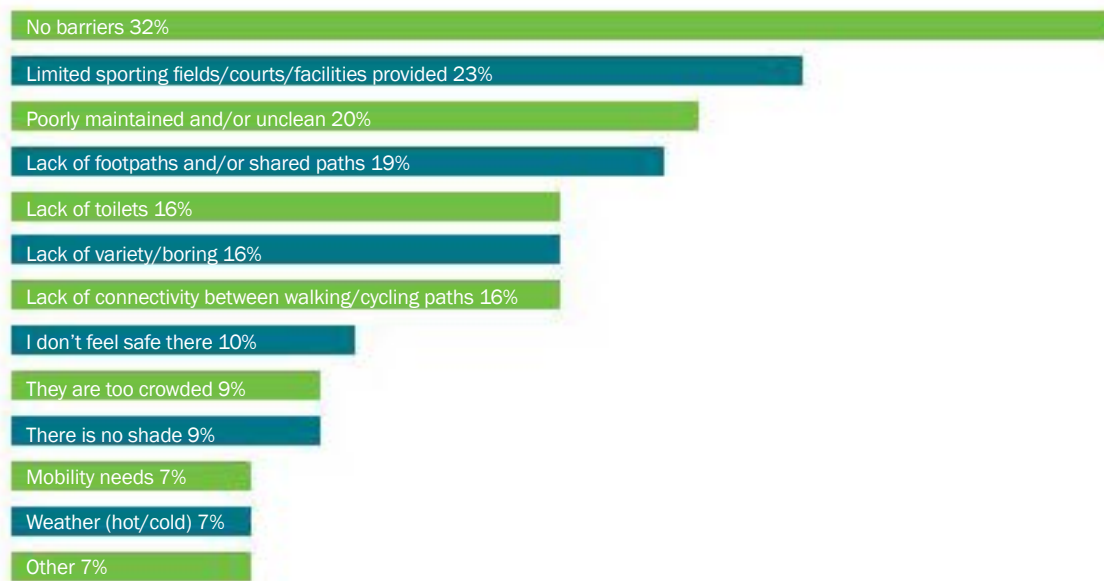


Fig. 7 Top ten barriers to use of parks and sport facilities identified by survey respondents

The top ten barriers identified for social or personal (psychological) factors are provided in the graphs below.

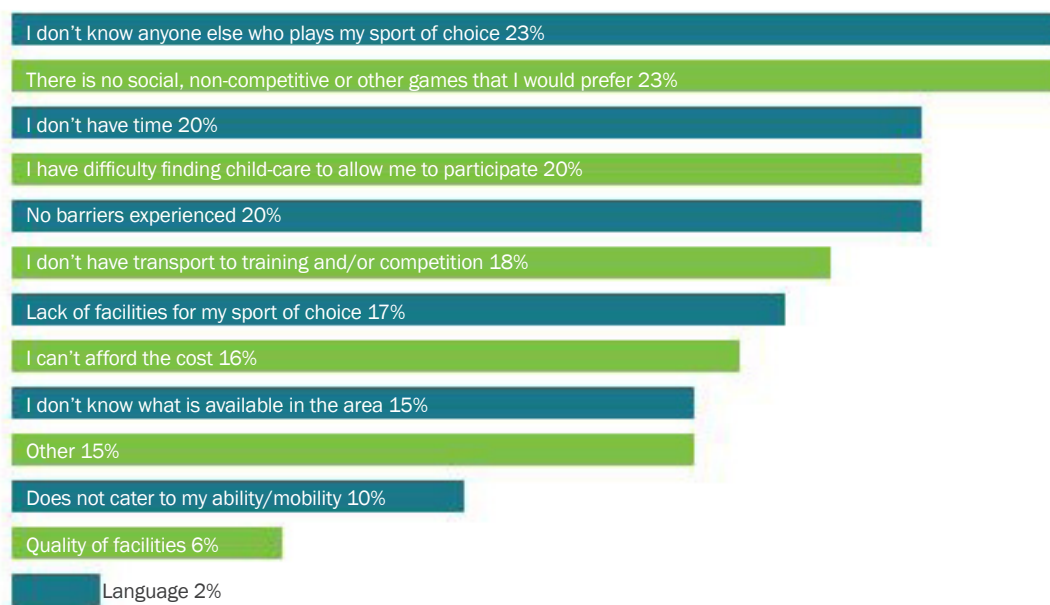
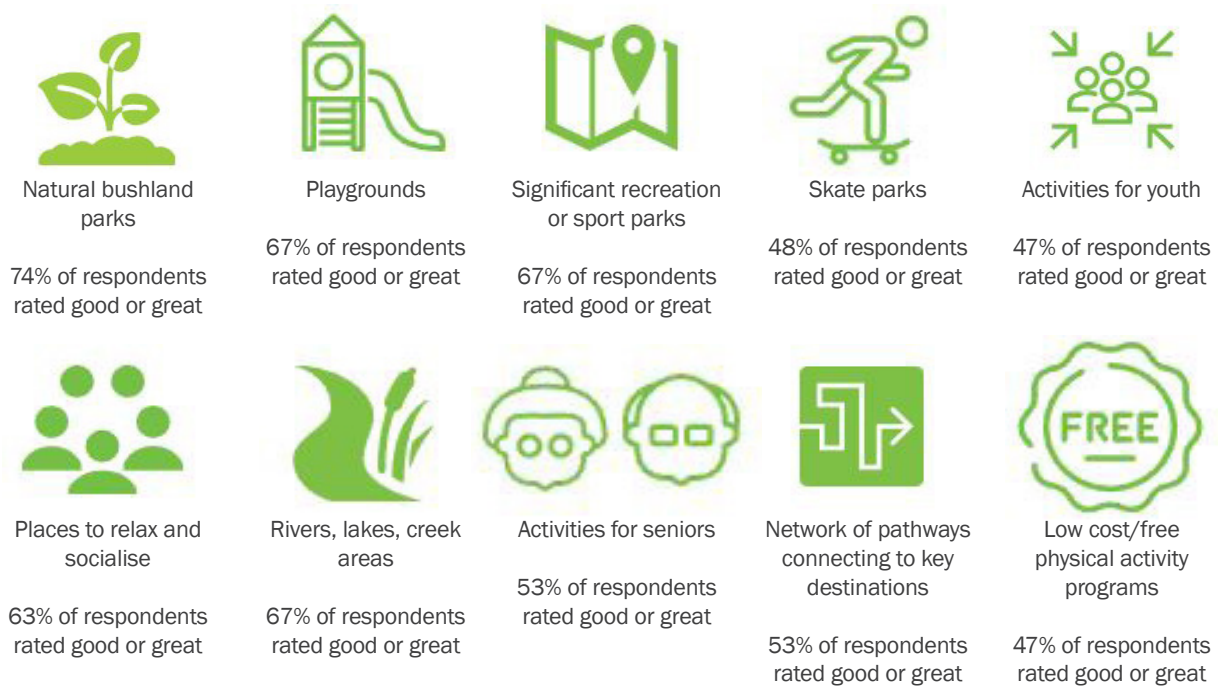


Fig. 8 Top ten barriers to use of parks and sport facilities due to social or personal/psychological factors identified by survey respondents

### 3.2.10 Overall quality of recreation and sporting opportunities

When asked to rate the overall quality of recreation and sporting opportunities in the area, using a scale out of 5, 1 being poor and 5 being great, survey respondents revealed their opinions. These following are listed in descending order based on overall rating, that may not correspond with the percentage provided.



### 3.2.11 Open space that may be unnecessary

Survey respondents were asked if there are any open spaces/parks that they believe are unnecessary due to low usage, safety concerns, a better park close by, poor location, etc.

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of respondents stated that there were no open spaces or parks that are unnecessary. Some respondents took the time to communicate the importance of all open spaces, for native flora and fauna, if not people. This is not disputed.

However, several survey respondents identified open space that Council could investigate further for enhancement for environmental or nature preservation purposes.

#### **Median strip, central reservation and roadway medians**

Wide road reserves are typical across the Shire, and many roads have median strips or central reservations that are of sufficient width to accommodate trees, grass and, in some cases, shelters, picnic facilities, and playgrounds.

Several survey respondent highlighted 'lawn reserves' - grassed and mown areas adjacent to roads or at intersections - that do not appear to serve any purpose and are void of any park facilities. Revegetation of these areas was suggested to contribute to habitat and canopy cover across towns, reducing maintenance, the urban heat sink, and to increase aesthetic appeal.

#### **Repurposing or sale**

No land was identified by survey respondents for either repurposing to meet other community needs, or for potential sale.

In the case of selling land, it is recommended that proceeds are reserved for identified upgrades to other parks across the public open space network.



### 3.2.12 Sport club survey

Sport clubs and associations that provide sport training and competition for residents living in the Northern Grampians Shire, were asked to complete a specific survey to gather data regarding facilities and registered members. Sport groups that have responded to the survey, to date are listed below:

- Stawell Little Athletics
- Navarre Football Club
- Great Western Racing Club
- St Arnaud and District Lawn Tennis
- Grampians Cricket Association
- St Arnaud Hockey Association
- Grampians Bushwalking Club
- St Arnaud Netball Club
- Stawell 13 and Under Football Association
- Stawell Racquetball Association
- Stawell Interchurch Netball Association
- Grampians Petanque Club
- Halls Gap Caravan Park and Recreation Reserve Committee of Management
- Stawell Wildcats Basketball Association
- Swifts Football Netball Club
- Stawell Gymnastics Club
- Riding for the Disabled
- Halls Gap Cricket
- Youth Club Cricket Club
- Callawadda/Stawell Target Club
- Stawell Racing Club
- Dance Capital
- Grampians Riding Club
- Stawell Bowling Club
- St Arnaud Harness Racing Club
- Stawell Pony Club
- Swifts Great Western Cricket Club
- St Arnaud Cricket Club
- Stawell Amateur Athletic Club
- Stawell Rifle Club
- Glenorchy Golf Club
- Stawell Fire Brigade
- St Arnaud Swimming Club
- Stawell Pioneers Soccer Club
- Stawell Tennis Club.

Information provided by sport clubs has primarily been used to inform the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.

In relation to the Open Space and Active Transport Strategy, information has been used to guide recommendations for planning areas, particularly where these clubs undertake their activities.

*Organisations that have not yet responded to the sport club survey are encouraged to provide feedback during public exhibition of the Draft Sport and Active Recreation Strategy, and information gained during this stage of the project will be reflected in the directions provided for specific sport parks.*

### 3.2.13 Key stakeholder interviews

Interviews with additional key stakeholder community organisations is summarised below.

#### **School workshops**

Council engaged with students from schools in Stawell and St Arnaud to inform the development of both the Open Space and Active Recreation Strategy and the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy. The outcomes of the school workshops that provide direction for this Strategy includes:

- on the whole, students like where they live and appreciate the lifestyle across towns and outlying communities
- popular destinations in St Arnaud include Lord Nelson Park, Queen Mary Gardens, skate park and the tennis club
- popular destinations in Stawell include Cato Park, netball courts and running track at North Park, and Taylors Gully Park
- young people generally feel safe walking and cycling around the towns and on trails, including the rail trail
- interestingly, some younger students felt unsafe at the skate park and Central Park due to the behaviour of other park users
- young people 'hang out' at each other's homes, as well as the popular parks identified above.

Further engagement with school students and young people will be necessary as specific projects identified in these Strategies undergo further detailed planning.

#### **Village and community groups**

Interviews were conducted with committee members of various groups representing the needs of some of the villages and outlying communities across the Shire. As the outcomes of these discussions relate to specific communities, they have been included in the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.

#### **Disability Service and Support Organisations**

Representatives of several disability services and support organisations were consulted, and raised several important considerations for future planning and design of public open space and active transport infrastructure to ensure equitable access. These considerations are summarised below:

- consult key services and agencies at every stage of individual project's design and construction life-cycle to ensure important access provisions are included early and continue to be considered as inevitable project changes occur during detailed design and construction
- connectivity and improved physical access:
  - lack of continuous connected pathways and appropriately designed and located kerb ramps, pedestrian refuges and zebra crossings, prevents safe and independent travel for people living with mobility impairments
  - selection and installation of park furniture and embellishments need to consider the needs of people living with a disability, including access to drinking water, back and arm rests on seating, accessible furniture and access to public toilets
  - provision of appropriate car parking and the ability to travel safely from the car park into parks are key considerations for park accessibility, particularly parks that are key attractors for community events

- provision of shelter and shade is an important feature for people living with a disability, to support them to regulate their temperature, including over play spaces
- information regarding accessible places and features needs to be clearly communicated to assist destination decision-making and planning.

Council has previously had a dedicated Community Access Committee in the past that included community stakeholders, Council staff and elected representatives. Currently, Council Officers consult directly with services and key individuals. While this is reportedly satisfactory, it is recommended that Council consider re-establishing a formal Committee to ensure access and equity issues are considered in a consistent and systematic manner, by a group of people that represent the spectrum of the community's needs and draws on collective knowledge and experience. The Committee could aim to remove social and physical barriers that prevent access and full participation in community life, and to oversee implementation of any relevant adopted Community Access Plan.

### **Sport and Recreation Victoria**

Sport and Recreation Victoria is the Victorian State Government's agency tasked with supporting sport and physical activity. The agency works collaboratively with the not-for-profit, private and government sectors to:

- improve the health and wellbeing of Victorians
- build stronger and more connected communities
- deliver economic growth and jobs
- enhance liveability.

When consulted regarding the Open Space and Active Transport Strategy, key objectives for the Strategy were identified by SRV Officers, including:

- contributing to the liveability of the Shire
- increasing participation - "more people, more active"
- recognising and embracing principles of diversity and inclusiveness, including gender-neutral
- environmentally sustainable design principles
- having a pipeline of projects for funding programs.

### **Council officers**

A diverse range of Council officers with specific expertise were consulted to identify existing issues and identified needs, as well as ideas relating to open space provision and management. The Council functions examined include infrastructure, park operations, strategic and development planning, grant funding, financial services, youth and community development. Identified areas for further planning and examination when developing the Draft Open Space and Active Transport Strategy are summarised below:

- increasing importance of walk and cycle infrastructure provision
- ensuring footpaths and shared paths near aged care facilities are sufficiently wide enough to cater for mobility scooters and wheelchairs
- need for wayfinding and improved signage throughout towns to support people independently navigating to where they want to go
- current developments including North Park, Central Park, SSAC, skate park
- unauthorised golf practice in parks
- lack of funding for community education and proactive and targeted campaigns that respond to issues quickly and effectively
- inadequate path lighting
- need for entry statements and signage
- adequate operational resourcing (staff and budget) to meet the level of service expected by Councillors and the community
- need to cater for dogs on- and off-leash in suitable areas
- potential of Grampians Rail Trail
- Street Tree Strategy and tree species list required to expand scope and revise suitable species for climatic conditions
- some contaminated land that has potential to help form the open space network - constraints
- enhancement of liveability elements, particularly additional trees for amenity and shade
- need for wayfinding and interpretive signage for residents and visitors to navigate
- identification of additional tourism product relating to parks and open spaces.

Discussion were held with Council Officers to investigate specific issues and gain understanding of factors relevant to the Strategy development.

## 3.4 Issues and opportunities

As part of the process to develop this Strategy, an audit of all open spaces in Northern Grampians Shire was undertaken to assess characteristics including accessibility, amenities, appearance, maintenance, safety and security. The community consultation undertaken with residents of the Shire gathered data relating to recreation and sport participation, park and facility preferences, real or perceived barriers to using open space, regularity of use, as well as needs and desires for future opportunities. The following table provides a summary of key issues and opportunities (in no particular order) resulting from the open space audit and community consultation, and provides context for the strategic framework and focus areas applied to development of the Strategy.

ISSUE / OPPORTUNITY	OBSERVATION / ASSESSMENT
Planning instruments	Incorporation of the Desired Standards of Service (DSS) for core open space into appropriate planning instruments (e.g. Planning Scheme, Policy, Developer Guides) is essential so that future core open space land contributions meet DSS criteria including size, shape, access to surrounding residents, road frontage, flood immunity and embellishment levels. Important corridor mapping can be included in appropriate planning mechanisms to achieve strategic outcomes for environmental conservation, stormwater management, and recreation parkland.
Infrastructure design guidelines	Appropriate infrastructure design guidelines and standard drawings are essential to deliver appropriate facilities for active transport infrastructure. Currently Council typically defaults to Austroads which nominates the absolute minimum standard.
Open space provision	Currently, the provision of open space in Northern Grampians Shire is higher than other similar local government authorities (as a ratio per 1,000 population). The current provision rate has been retained.
Contaminated land	Contaminated land, particularly in Stawell, has potential to provide strategic open space connections and further investigations to allow planned and controlled access are warranted.
Universal design	Meeting the needs of a diverse community including older aged and people requiring assistance requires deliberate planning and design to ensure inclusion, rather than exclusion. "Universal design allows everyone, to the greatest extent possible, and regardless of age or disability, to use buildings, transport, products and services without the need for specialised or adapted features."
Signage and wayfinding	Observations across the open space network confirm that the lack of consistent signage likely contributes to residents and visitors not being informed of the opportunities available for recreation within towns and communities and across the Shire.
Avoiding ad hoc and precedence	Residents living in outlying communities/villages and outlying communities need recreation parks to provide opportunities for play, recreation and physical activity. However, asset management, particularly whole-of-life assets costs, require careful consideration when responding to community demands. The capital cost of construction will almost always pale into insignificance when compared with the ongoing operational and maintenance costs (over the life of the asset).
Active transport	Walking and cycling are popular activities in the Northern Grampians Shire across the full spectrum of the community. Council is progressively implementing active transport infrastructure and this needs to be a continued focus to ensure people can walk and cycle to key destinations within the community easily and safely. People walk for different reasons (commuting vs recreation) and this is important when determining the location, design, surface treatment and setting of the path.
Play spaces	There are several playgrounds across Northern Grampians Shire that consist of off-the-shelf play equipment and soft fall. Future trends in play space creation require the integration of select pieces of play equipment with natural elements and landscaping to encourage imagination play and inquisitive investigation of the environment.
Recreation as a secondary use of National and State Parks and Forests	There are numerous bushland reserves and natural areas across the local government area and results of the community survey indicate that a large proportion of the community utilise these areas for walking, trail running, and mountain biking. These activities are secondary to the primary purpose of the land and require monitoring to ensure negative impacts do not occur as a result.
Resourcing constraints	Council's large land area and relatively small rate base result in its resources being applied to achieve the best outcome with limited funds.
Asset Management	Audits revealed that most public open space assets are in fair to good condition. It will be important in future years, when assets reach the end of their useful lives and are considered for renewal or replacement, that Council and the community undertake planning to ensure the current and future needs of residents are met, rather than simply replacing infrastructure 'like-for-like'. While this may result in the level of park embellishments changing significantly, in most case the land should be retained for future needs and generations.

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# Strategic framework

## 4.1 Planning principles

Planning principles are outlined below that describe Council's intentions through the provision and management of public open space and active transport infrastructure.

### ***Effective planning***

Council will encourage and support maximum utilisation of public open space facilities and walk and cycle infrastructure.

### ***High quality***

Council will ensure that all recreation, sport and active transport opportunities are designed and maintained to a high quality, commensurate with the setting and primary use of the land and facilities.

### ***Access and equity***

Council will ensure that residents enjoy access to the public open space and active transport networks.

### ***Community involvement***

Council will provide and support a range of ways for the community to be an integral part of planning and providing recreation, sport and active transport opportunities.

### ***Resourcing***

Council will identify and allocate resources for the provision of public open space and active transport in an efficient, effective and equitable manner.

### ***Effective management***

Council will ensure that public open space and active transport facilities are managed in the most efficient and cost effective way.

### ***Public safety***

Council will ensure public open spaces and active transport infrastructure are safe for public use.



## 4.2 Open space

### 4.2.1 Public open space network

For the purpose of this Strategy, both public and private open space types have been considered to plan strategically to achieve an integrated public open space network. Privately owned land, such as a golf course, bowling club or private school can play an important role in providing benefits and opportunities to the community. However, the Strategy primarily relates to publicly owned and/or managed open space.

### 4.2.2 Classification and hierarchy

#### Classification

Various open space types possess different values, functions and settings. Compatible and incompatible uses of open space can result in impacts, changing the nature of open space types over time. To promote appropriate use of open space, a classification framework has been developed for application to the open space network. The classification identifies the primary purpose of the land, the size and scale (hierarchy) of the park and the embellishments required to provide recreation and sport opportunities. The open space classifications are detailed in Table 01 according to function, purpose, hierarchy, and description.

#### Hierarchy

Assessment and allocation of parks within a hierarchy provides a useful framework to manage the level and variety of embellishments in a particular park type. The park hierarchy also assists park users' expectations as they can select to visit parks that provide the recreation experience and opportunities they are seeking.

The hierarchy levels used for Northern Grampians Shire's open space network are:

- Local (core)
- Township (core)
- Specialised
- Linear
- Encumbered
- Natural areas
- Civic

The park hierarchy is described in Table 02 including the catchment for each park type, where relevant.

Table 01: Open space classification by function, purpose, hierarchy and description

FUNCTION	PURPOSE	HIERARCHY	DESCRIPTION
Passive open space (Recreation Parks)	Provides a setting for informal play and physical activity, relaxation and social interaction	Local (core) Township (core)	Provides a range of passive recreation activities in predominantly informal settings. The sites can also contribute to the amenity and environmental values of towns and villages.
		Linear (non-core)	Long and relatively narrow interconnected open space that can contain natural creek lines and associated riparian vegetation. Linear reserves can also play an important secondary role providing cycle and pedestrian pathways and values consistent with other open space categories.
		Encumbered (non-core)	Encumbered open space is often associated with areas for stormwater, drainage, utility infrastructure and cemeteries. However, it can also add value to the core open space network through provision of pedestrian connections and enhancing visual amenity.
Active open space (Sport Parks)	Provides a setting for formal structured sporting activities	Township (core)	Site predominantly used for active or competitive recreation including grassed or synthetic playing fields and courts.
		Specialised (non-core)	Open space provided for sporting activities where the nature of the sport precludes the easy transfer to an alternative sport, or the nature of the activity precludes free, unrestricted access to members of the public, or where the land and facility requirements result in high level provision (e.g. large stadia).
Environmental protection open space	Provides a setting where biodiversity is the primary purpose of the reserve	Natural areas (non-core)	Reserves that contain biodiversity features of local, regional, state or federal significance. As the primary use of open space is for environmental protection, the area is likely to be significantly encumbered and may preclude unrestricted public access
Civic open space	Provides amenity value	Civic spaces	Civic spaces may provide opportunities for civic ceremonies, passive recreation, and contribute to the amenity of a town or village

### 4.2.3 Desired standard of service

Desired Standards of Service (DSS) is the level of open space that Council aims to provide as a minimum to all residents in the Shire. DSS is calculated using quantitative and spatial measures.

The passive and active open space supply for Northern Grampians Shire is provided below:

- Recreation Parks (passive open space) - 2ha/1,000 people
- Sport Parks (active open space) - 2ha/1,000 people

### 4.2.4 Core levels of service

To achieve the potential benefits of open space to individuals and the community, parks need to provide established minimum levels of service. This section aims to provide guidance on the siting and design of open space types delivered by local government. It includes:

- factors for consideration when designing parks
- principles that influence good design
- performance standards detailing land size, catchments, minimum and optional embellishments for core open space types.

#### ***A planned and strategic approach***

A well planned and strategic approach to the design and development of open space will contribute to the long term sustainability of the open space network for current and future generations. Benefits of a planned and strategic approach include:

- open space located to reflect Council's open space and land use planning outcomes relating to distribution and access, connectivity and linkages, co-location of compatible services/opportunities, and shared use of available resources
- design considerations that reflect the Council's policies and objectives relating to diversity of opportunities and settings, integration with natural and urban landscapes, accessibility features and environmental sustainability
- continual enhancement of the open space network in line with Council's capital works program and budgets, changing local needs and changes in the urban environment
- improvements in the quality or distribution of open space in line with relevant local strategies and plans.

#### ***Distribution***

- provide new parkland in growth areas and in areas that have an under supply of parkland
- public open space should be provided along foreshores, streams and permanent water bodies
- provide a network of well-distributed neighbourhood public open space that includes:
  - local parks within 500m safe walking of at least 95% of all dwellings
  - active open space of sufficient size within 2 kilometre of 90% of all dwellings
  - linear parks and trails along waterways, vegetation corridors and road reserves within 1 kilometre of 95% of all dwellings (where practical).

#### ***Connectivity***

- ensure that land is set aside and developed in residential areas for local recreation use and to create pedestrian and cycle links to commercial and community facilities
- ensure that open space networks:
  - are linked through the provision of walking and cycle trails and rights of way
  - are integrated with open space from abutting subdivisions
  - incorporate, where possible, links between major parks and activity areas, along waterways and natural drainage corridors, connecting places of natural and cultural interest, as well as maintaining public accessibility on public land immediately adjoining waterways.
- ensure land identified as critical to the completion of open space links is transferred for open space purposes
- the provision of public open space should be linked to existing or proposed future public open spaces where appropriate
- an application for subdivision that creates public open space should be accompanied by a landscape design that provides for walking and cycling networks that link with community facilities.

#### ***Access***

- ensure public access is not prevented by developments along stream banks and foreshore
- ensure public land immediately adjoining waterways remains in public ownership

#### ***Urban design***

- ensure open space is designed to accommodate people of all abilities, ages and cultures
- accessibility - provide ease, safety and choice of access for all people
- inclusiveness and interaction - create places where all people are free to encounter each other as equals.

#### ***Layout options and features***

- maximise road frontage to the boundaries (minimum of 50%) of any shape, piece or linear section of open space
- maximise surrounding residential frontage to the open space (minimum 50%) to provide visual surveillance
- maximise safe pedestrian connections and links to the open space.

#### ***Appropriateness and usability***

- ensure the size of the open space land is suitable for its intended primary purpose
- ensure the shape of the land can accommodate the required embellishments
- ensure the topography including appropriateness of the slope, vegetation, drainage, cultural or heritage values:
  - slope no steeper than 1:10 for recreation parks
  - slope no steeper than 1:50 for sport parks
  - land that is steeply sloping or has natural water flowing through it may be suitable for environmental or conservation purposes
- aspect/orientation of the land for the proposed activities.

## 4.2.5 Performance standards

Performance standards are required to ensure that land offered by developers as part of their developer contribution, or acquired by Council with other funds, is capable of supporting the recreation activity intended from the site.

Basic performance standards have been established for recreation and sporting parks. These will generally only be applicable to new open space acquisitions or additions to existing spaces to improve their functionality.

Table 02: Minimum performance standards for recreation and sport parks

<b>RECREATION PARKS (PASSIVE OPEN SPACE)</b>	
Local	<p>Typically, local parks will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» be 0.25-2.0ha in size (or joined to a network of open space areas)</li> <li>» be within 500m walking distance from surrounding homes</li> <li>» have slopes no greater than 1:10 for 25% of the park area. Where wheelchair access is more likely to occur then some of the park should have slopes of 1:20 or less</li> <li>» retain and integrate natural vegetation and creek lines where possible into the park design</li> <li>» have 50% of the park boundary with road frontage</li> <li>» have a minimum width of 40m</li> <li>» have sufficient land above 100 year flood levels for infrastructure (notionally at least 10%)</li> <li>» have access to required services such as electricity and water</li> <li>» be linked to other open space where possible.</li> </ul>
Township	<p>Typically, town parks will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» be 5-10ha in size depending on function (or joined to a network of open space areas)</li> <li>» have an average grade no greater than 1:10 for 75% of the park area. Where wheelchair access is more likely to occur then some of the park should have slopes of 1:15 or less</li> <li>» retain and integrate natural vegetation and creek lines where possible into the park design</li> <li>» have sufficient land above 100 year flood levels for infrastructure (notionally at least 10%)</li> <li>» have 75% of the park boundary with road frontage so that visibility is maximised</li> <li>» have access to required services such as electricity, sewerage and water</li> <li>» be linked to other open space where possible.</li> </ul>
<b>SPORT PARKS (ACTIVE OPEN SPACE)</b>	
Township	<p>The following criteria are for typical open space areas used for field and courts sports. Specialised facilities, such as indoor sports or lawn bowling greens may be adequately accommodated on other land types. Typical open space for sporting fields will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» be at least 8ha in size as this allows for efficient development of infrastructure, adequate buffers and adequate space for competitions. There is no limit to maximum size</li> <li>» have at least 75% of the park boundary with road frontage</li> <li>» have adequate space for car and bus parking</li> <li>» be relatively flat to minimise the earthworks required to provide level playing fields</li> <li>» if the site is a closed landfill, then have some virgin areas for facilities</li> <li>» have sufficient land area above the 100 year flood level for infrastructure (e.g. clubrooms, change rooms, storage sheds etc.)</li> <li>» have soils that offer adequate drainage.</li> </ul>

## 4.2.6 Recreation setting and diversity

The open space network also needs to offer variety in the recreation setting. This is a measure of the diversity within the recreation park network and recognises people's needs and expectations for a variety of recreation experiences. The figure below provides a scale or range of naturalness from wild to urban settings.



Fig. 03 Range of naturalness of outdoor recreation settings

### Example images of park setting and diversity in Northern Grampians across the scale from wild to urban settings



## 4.2.7 Embellishment and maintenance standards

Embellishment standards describe the typical levels of infrastructure and services expected for recreation and sport parks. Detailing the typical level of embellishment for park types within the open space hierarchy assists local government managers, development assessment staff, and developers by providing:

- descriptions that convey the typical embellishments to expect at different park types
- a basis to estimate typical capital costs of development (for infrastructure charging and/or budgeting)
- an initial set of parameters guiding appropriate versus inappropriate embellishment, ensuring functionality, diversity and values are not eroded.

Management and maintenance standards can be developed that are related to the planning framework, classification and hierarchy categories. These standards provide a structure for allocating resources in the areas where they best serve community needs.

Table 03: Park embellishment

PARK TYPE	PARK SIZE	FUNCTION	ACCESS	MINIMUM EMBELLISHMENT	OPTIONAL EMBELLISHMENT
Local	0.25ha-2.0ha	Recreation	500m catchment  minimum 50% road frontage	<input type="checkbox"/> turf <input type="checkbox"/> paths <input type="checkbox"/> bins <input type="checkbox"/> seating <input type="checkbox"/> shade (natural and/or built) <input type="checkbox"/> play space	<input type="checkbox"/> lighting <input type="checkbox"/> drinking fountains <input type="checkbox"/> landscaping elements that contribute to comfortable use, appeal and aesthetics.
Township	5ha-10ha	Recreation Sport	1km catchment  minimum 50% road frontage; 75% preferred	<input type="checkbox"/> turf <input type="checkbox"/> paths <input type="checkbox"/> bins <input type="checkbox"/> seating <input type="checkbox"/> lighting <input type="checkbox"/> shade (natural and/or built) <input type="checkbox"/> multiple play spaces for different age ranges <input type="checkbox"/> drinking fountains <input type="checkbox"/> irrigation <input type="checkbox"/> public toilets <input type="checkbox"/> bicycle racks <input type="checkbox"/> soft and hard landscaping elements that contribute to comfortable use, appeal and aesthetics.	<input type="checkbox"/> picnic settings <input type="checkbox"/> barbeques <input type="checkbox"/> dog exercise area and dog amenities for owners (e.g. seating, shelter) <input type="checkbox"/> event infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> mobile food vendor zones <input type="checkbox"/> sport infrastructure, clubhouse and ancillary facilities.

#### 4.2.8 Current open space provision

The following maps show existing open space across the Shire to provide context for the public open space gap analysis undertaken.

Current open space provision in Northern Grampians Shire is shown in the following below. This identifies the current area of public open space against the 2021 population (available Census data) and projected population growth in 5-year increments with provision of public open space per 1,000 head of population. The current provision of public open space across the Shire is high when compared with other local government authorities (LGAs) in rural and regional Victoria, and across Australia. When separated into recreation parks and sport parks, there is a surplus of land for both types of public open space.

Demand is based on a total DSS of 4ha/1,000 population, made up of 2ha/1,000 population for recreation parks and 2ha/1,000 population for sport parks.

Three scenarios have been used to examine the current and future provision of public open space across the Shire.

- Scenario one uses the Victoria State Government population projections for the Northern Grampians Shire Council area. This projection sees a decline.
- Scenario two uses a population increase of 0.88% per annum. This projection has been used by Council for its Housing Strategy to ensure adequate provision in the future.
- Scenario three uses an aspirational population increase provided by Council's elected representatives, projecting a total population of 20,000 residents by 2040.

Provision of land for recreation and sport parks remains in surplus under all three scenarios.

When reflecting on the trends indicating increasing use and demand for passive open space (recreation parks), and reducing participation in formal sport, planning and design will need to balance need and demand carefully to resolve potential underused parks and facilities across the public open space network. The generous provision of open space overall, places Council in a relatively comfortable position currently, and for the foreseeable future.

However, additional open space will be required to ensure distribution attributes are met. This open space should be acquired through the contributions associated with residential development.

Table 04: Scenario one: Victoria Planning population projections - declining population. Provision of core open space required for current and projected population in 5-year increments

Open space classification	Current supply (ha)	Current (2021) 11,885		Future (2026) 11,581		Future (2031) 11,238		Future (2036) 10,210	
		Demand	Gap/Supplus	Demand	Gap/Surplus	Demand	Gap/Surplus	Demand	Gap/Surplus
Total recreation parks	39	23.77	+15.23	23.16	+15.84	22.48	+16.52	20.42	+18.58
Sport parks	248	23.77	+224.23	23.16	+224.84	22.48	+225.52	20.42	+227.58
Total core open space	287	47.54	+239.46	46.33	+240.67	44.95	+242.05	40.84	+246.16

Table 05: Scenario two: NGSC Housing Strategy population projection of 0.88%. Provision of core open space required for current and projected population in 5-year increments

Open space classification	Current supply (ha)	Current (2021) 11,885		Future (2026) 12,417		Future (2031) 12,973		Future (2036) 13,554	
		Demand	Gap/Supplus	Demand	Gap/Supplus	Demand	Gap/Supplus	Demand	Gap/Supplus
Recreation parks	39	23.77	+15.23	24.83	+14.17	25.95	+13.05	27.11	+11.89
Sport parks	248	23.77	+224.23	24.83	+223.17	25.95	+222.05	27.11	+220.89
Total core open space	287	47.54	+239.46	49.67	+237.33	51.89	+235.11	54.22	+232.78

Table 06: Scenario three: Council population projection of 20,000 residents by 2040. Provision of core open space required for current and projected population in 5-year increments

Open space classification	Current supply (ha)	Current (2021) 11,885		Future (2026) 13,122		Future (2031) 14,488		Future (2036) 15,966	
		Demand	Gap/Supplus	Demand	Gap/Supplus	Demand	Gap/Supplus	Demand	Gap/Supplus
Recreation parks	39	23.77	+15.23	26.24	+12.76	28.98	+10.02	31.99	+7.01
Sport parks	248	23.77	+224.23	26.24	+221.76	28.98	+219.02	31.99	+216.01
Total core open space	287	47.54	+239.46	52.49	+234.51	57.95	+229.05	63.98	+223.02

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## 4.2.9 Current open space provision

The following maps show existing open space across the Shire to provide context for the public open space gap analysis undertaken.

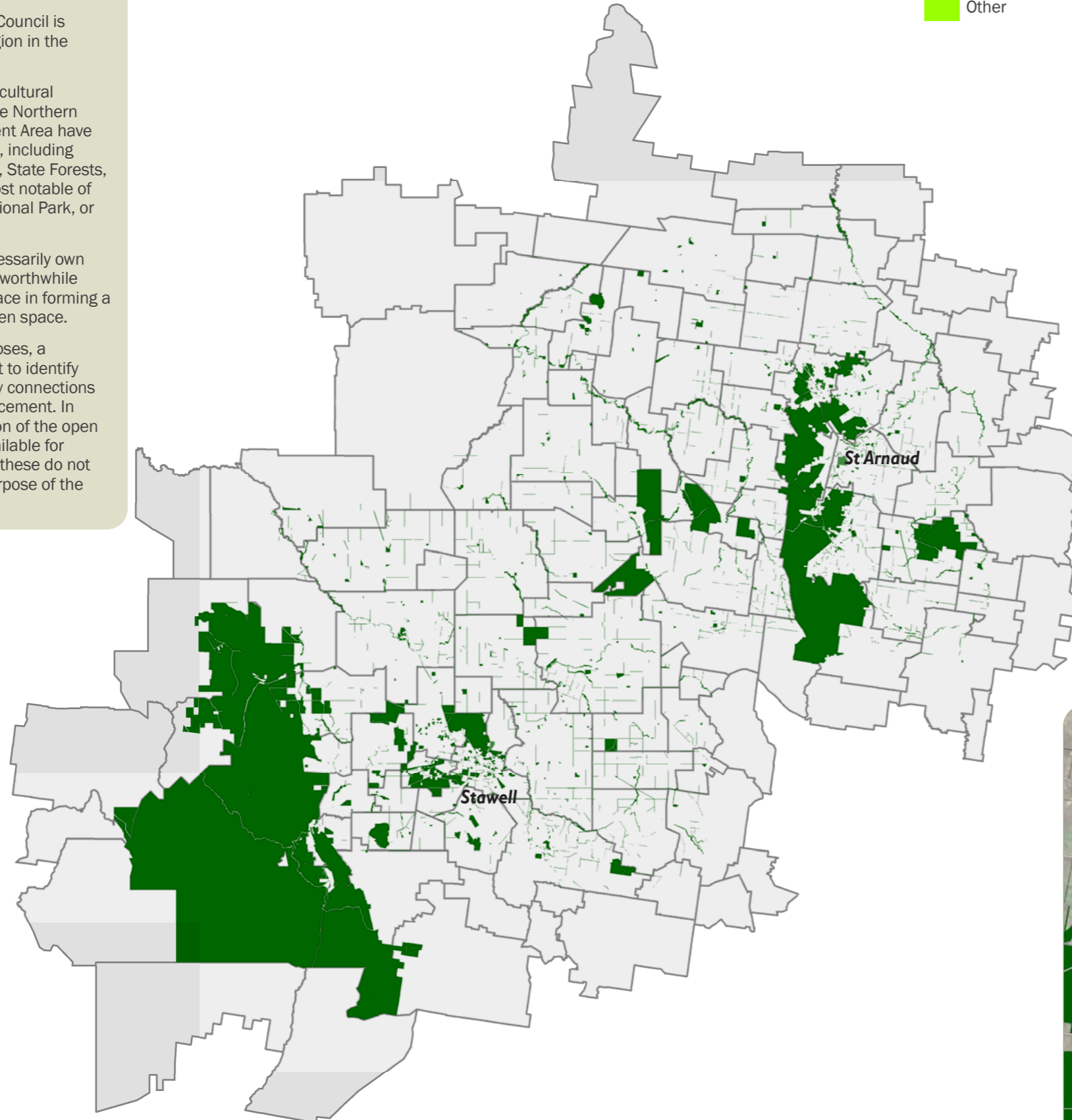
### Regional Green Space

Northern Grampians Shire Council is located in the Wimmera region in the western part of Victoria.

As a primarily rural and agricultural region, residents living in the Northern Grampians Local Government Area have access to vast open spaces, including waterways, nature reserves, State Forests, and National Parks. The most notable of these is the Grampians National Park, or Gariwerd.

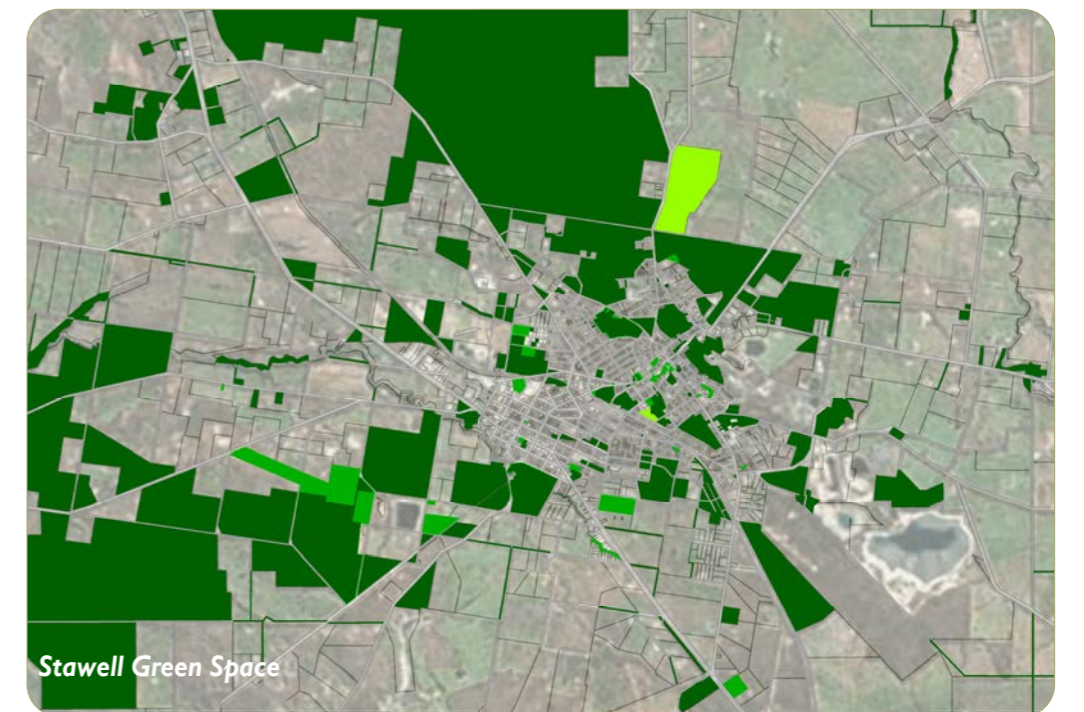
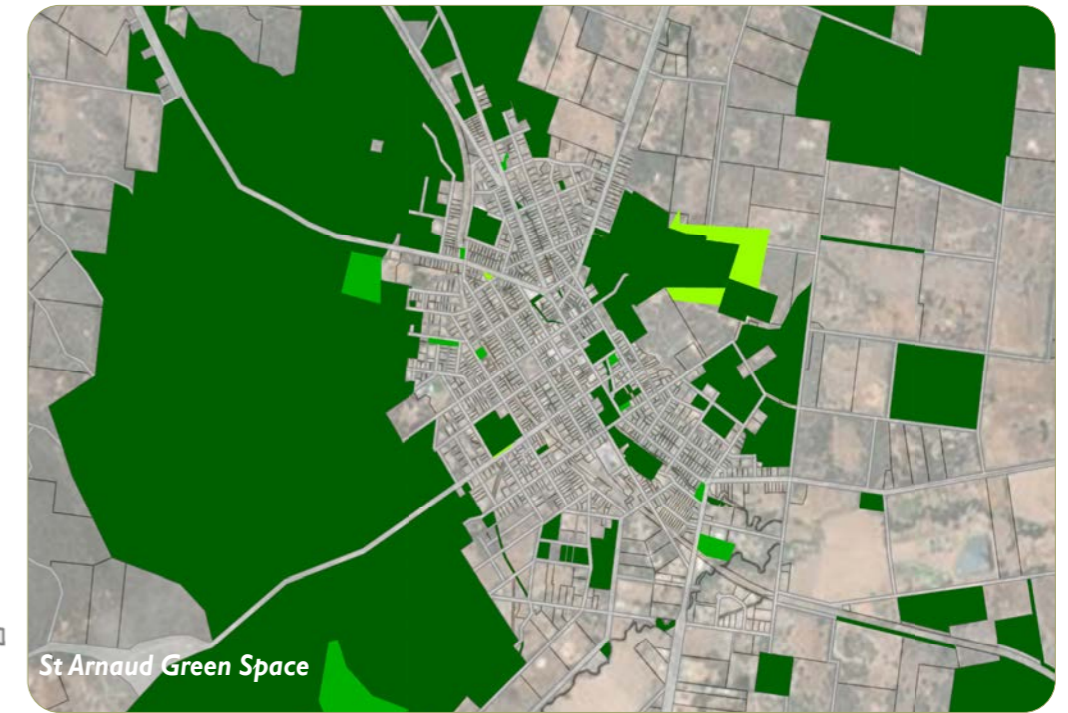
While Council does not necessarily own or manage these sites, it is worthwhile recognising the role they place in forming a regional perspective for green space.

For strategic planning purposes, a regional overview can assist to identify significant corridors and key connections for preservation and enhancement. In addition, it allows recognition of the open space that is potentially available for recreation activities, where these do not conflict with the primary purpose of the land.



### Legend

- Crown
- NGSC
- Other



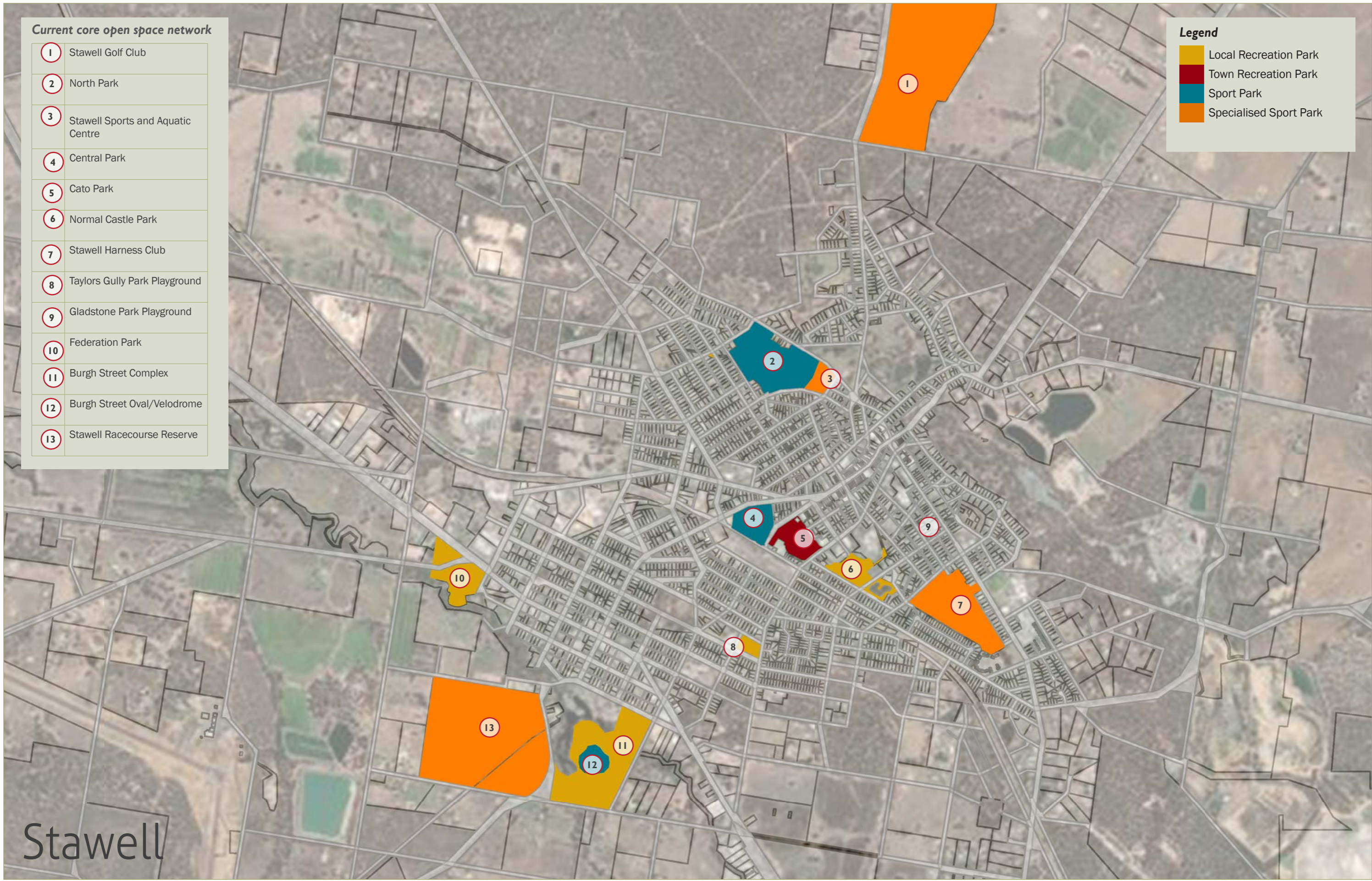


**Current core open space network**

- 1 Stawell Golf Club
- 2 North Park
- 3 Stawell Sports and Aquatic Centre
- 4 Central Park
- 5 Cato Park
- 6 Normal Castle Park
- 7 Stawell Harness Club
- 8 Taylors Gully Park Playground
- 9 Gladstone Park Playground
- 10 Federation Park
- 11 Burgh Street Complex
- 12 Burgh Street Oval/Velodrome
- 13 Stawell Racecourse Reserve

**Legend**

- Local Recreation Park
- Town Recreation Park
- Sport Park
- Specialised Sport Park



Stawell

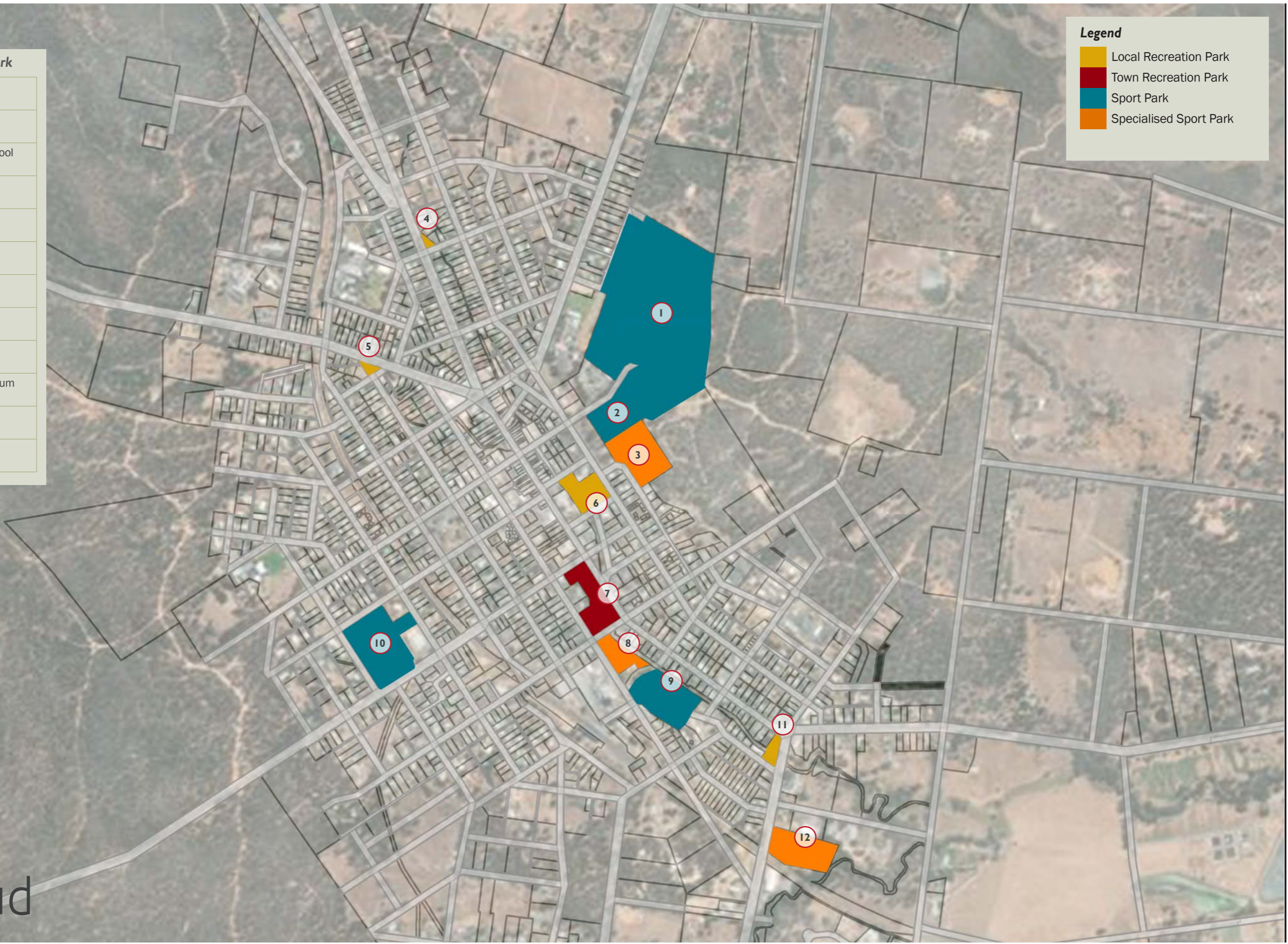
Stawell current open space network

**Current open space network**

- 1 Lord Nelson Park
- 2 Pioneer Park
- 3 St Arnaud Swimming Pool
- 4 Silvermines Road Park
- 5 Apex Park
- 6 Market Square
- 7 Queen Mary Gardens
- 8 St Arnaud Bowls Club
- 9 King Georges Park
- 10 St Arnaud Sports Stadium and sports field/oval
- 11 Bicentennial Park
- 12 St Arnaud Lawn Tennis

**Legend**

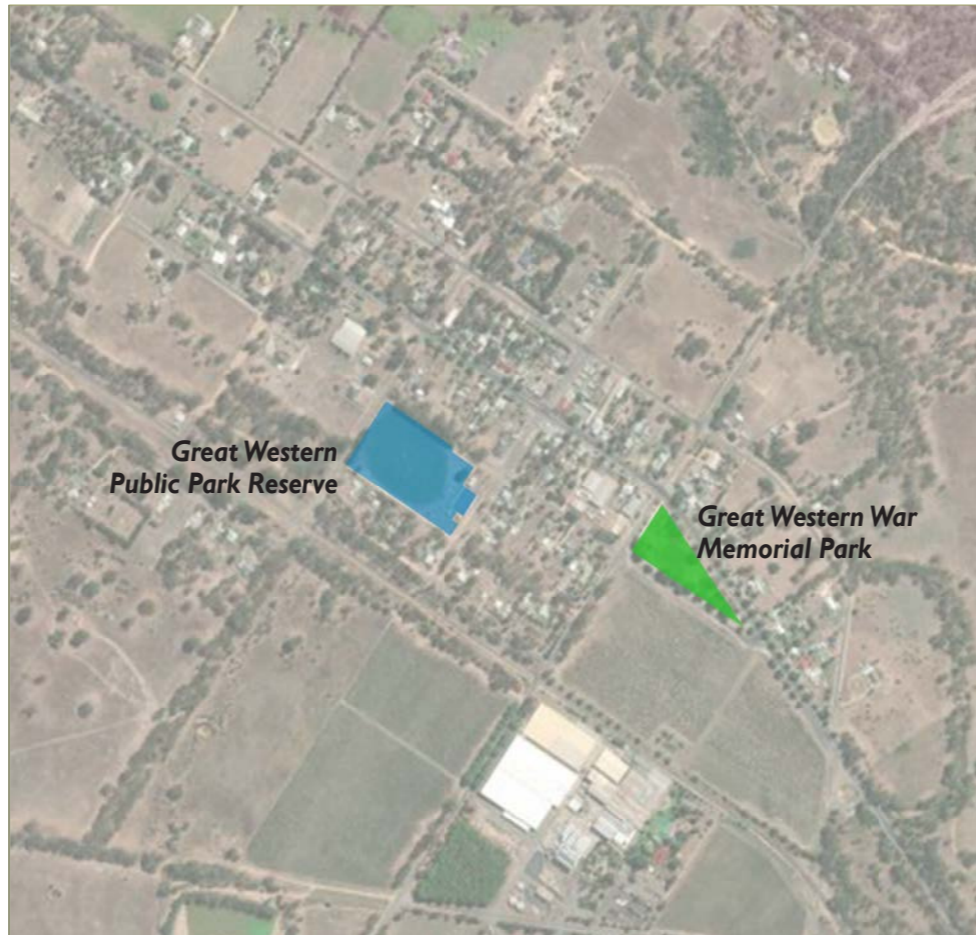
- Local Recreation Park
- Town Recreation Park
- Sport Park
- Specialised Sport Park



St Arnaud



Glenorchy existing open space



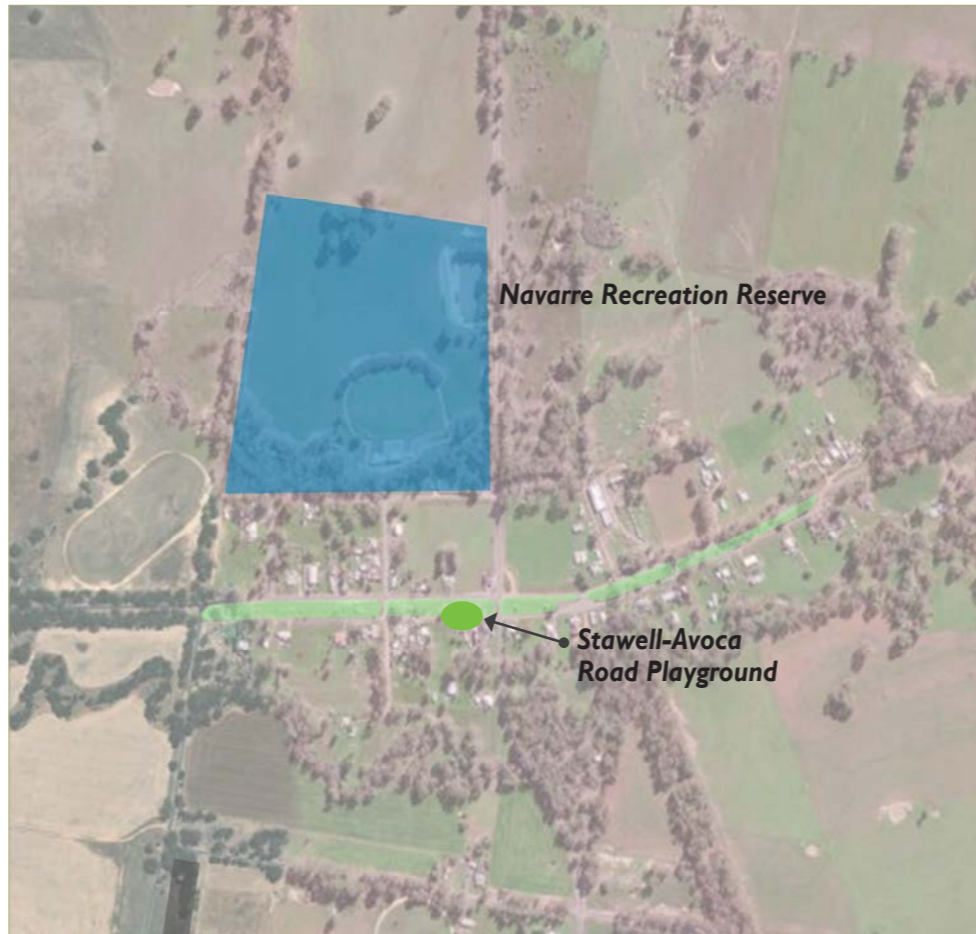
Great Western existing open space



Halls Gap existing open space



Marnoo existing open space



Navarre existing open space



Stuart Mill existing open space

## 4.3 Active transport

### 4.3.1 Active transport network

Council has a role in creating an environment that supports active transport options, particularly through the provision of infrastructure, and coordinating advocacy and awareness in partnership with health services.

For most people, walking and cycling are the most accessible form of exercise and travelling to key destinations, particularly short journeys of up to 2km for walking and 5km for cycling. It is important for everyone in the community to be able to access and enjoy the public realm, including streets. Connecting the missing links in the walking and cycling networks with more footpaths and bike lanes is essential to encourage regular walking and cycling trips. It is also important that paths are wide and smooth, particularly considered the ageing population, to cater for people using motorised mobility scooters and wheelchairs.

Council also needs to consider emerging technologies such as e-scooters, which can be an attractive alternative mode where public transport is limited. Trial rules in Victoria at the moment restrict e-scooters to shared paths and roads 60km/h or less (they are not currently allowed on footpaths), so more separated bicycle lanes and shared paths will ensure safe spaces for everyone to travel.

Trialling temporary facilities like ‘pop-up’ bike lanes allows the community to test ideas that can help to create safer and more attractive places for walking and cycling. These ‘lighter quicker cheaper’ approaches are a great opportunity for Council to provide safe and cost-effective infrastructure.

The community told us they would love to walk and ride more, but they don’t always have options to do so. Council’s community engagement activities when developing its asset management plan, and more recently during development of this Strategy, the key barriers to walking and cycling included:

- lack of footpaths and/or shared paths
- lack of connectivity between walking/cycling paths
- lack of shade
- mobility needs.

### 4.3.2 Local Government Infrastructure Design Manual

Council currently uses Austroads to guide design of walk and cycle infrastructure. An alternative being utilised by an increasing number of Victoria’s local government authorities will allow Council to provide improved walk and cycle infrastructure to meet the needs of residents.

The Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM) is a joint initiative of Victorian rural and regional Councils working together to formulate and maintain a set of consistent requirements and standards for the design and development of infrastructure.

The IDM is designed to be used within the boundaries of all the municipalities who have adopted the IDM. The primary objectives of the IDM are:

- To clearly document Council’s requirements for the design and development of Infrastructure that is or will become Council’s Infrastructure.
- To standardise development submissions as much as possible and thus to expedite Council’s engineering approvals.
- To ensure that minimum design criteria are met in regard to the design and construction of Infrastructure within the municipalities regardless of whether it is constructed by Council or a Developer.
- To recognise and deal with the various issues currently impacting on the land development industry, in particular sustainability, integrated water cycle management, timeliness and affordability.

When there is a conflict with Standard Drawings or other Council policies the IDM will take precedence where the matter relates to Infrastructure standards.

### 4.3.3 Matrix for decision-making

By coordinating planning, construction and maintenance activities, we can increase opportunities to accelerate the development of the active transport network. Council’s current expenditure on cycling and walking is primarily through the capital works and footpath maintenance programs. Opportunities for improving the quality and quantity of walking and cycling infrastructure include:

Footpath renewal program - when footpaths are replaced under renewal programs, ensure they are widened to meet latest standards.

Road resurfacing - upgrade line marking to include on-road bicycle lanes

Kerb and channel upgrades - install/replace kerb ramps to meet current standards for disability access.

New roads/bridges - incorporate footpaths/shared paths and on-road cycling facilities in new roads and structures

The following matrix outlines design considerations and preferred facility types for the Northern Grampians active transport network. The Active Transport Strategy maps for each township should be referred to when determining walking and cycling facility types for new and upgraded infrastructure.

#### NOTES:

Design considerations and facility types are for guidance only and are subject to technical feasibility and local conditions. Locations such as schools, hospitals, aged care and childcare facilities may require wider paths to cater for higher pedestrian volumes and/or different devices such as bicycles, scooters, wheelchairs and mobility aids.

The Primary Pedestrian Network has been identified in Stawell in the Stawell Structure Plan 2021.

Any roads or streets not marked as a primary or secondary active transport route should have a minimum of a 1.5m wide footpath on at least one side of the street, with kerb ramps at all street crossings.

Table 04: Active Transport Matrix for decision-making

FUNCTION/CHARACTERISTICS	DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS (CYCLING)	PREFERRED FACILITY TYPES	DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS (WALKING)	PREFERRED FACILITY TYPES
<b>Primary active transport routes</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> High demand corridors (including Victorian Strategic Cycling Corridors – Stawell only)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Connects major destinations (town centres, schools, employment, health care, open space, recreational trail heads and tourist attractions)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Predominantly within 800m of town centres and other major activity nodes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safe and continuous with limited interruptions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Caters for all types of bicycle riders (from higher speed bike riders to less-experience bike riders)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Separated from cars when on high speed and traffic volume roads</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shared with motor vehicles when on low speed and traffic volume roads</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Separated from pedestrians when off road</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Signage/wayfinding</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> End and mid trip facilities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lighting for morning/evening trips</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Kerb-separated bicycle lanes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Protected intersections</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Priority crossings at side streets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Separate walking/ cycling paths (where demand warrants)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Min. 3.0m wide shared paths</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shared streets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safe and continuous with limited interruptions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cater for people walking of all ages and abilities (people using strollers and people with physical/vision impairments)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable and attractive (shade trees, seating/rest areas)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lighting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Min. 1.8m wide footpaths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» On both sides of the road for highways/ arterial roads/urban collectors</li> <li>» On one side of the street for access/residential streets</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continuous footpath treatments at side streets and driveways</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Priority crossings e.g. signalised pedestrian crossings, wombat (raised zebra) crossings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Kerb ramps at all crossing points</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary active transport routes</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Moderate level of demand</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Connects residential areas to primary routes and provides links between primary routes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continuous, safe, and visible</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lighting dependant on demand</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Separated from cars when on high speed and traffic volume roads</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shared with motor vehicles when on low speed and traffic volume roads</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shared with pedestrians when off road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle lanes (painted or kerb-separated)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Min. 2.5m wide shared paths</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shared streets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safe and continuous with limited interruptions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable (shade trees)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Min. 1.5m wide footpaths</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Zebra/wombat crossings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrian refuges</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Kerb extensions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Kerb ramps at all crossing points</li> </ul>
<b>Primary pedestrian network</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> High Amenity Pedestrian Area within the town centre that supports reallocation of street space used for on-street car parking to uses such as widened footpaths, street trading, public space and gathering areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cycling facilities to be separated from people walking in highly pedestrianised areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle lanes (painted or kerb-separated)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Shared streets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> High quality, DDA compliant footpaths with safe, dedicated crossing points on desire lines</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Measures to address perceptions of safety, including clear sightlines, lighting, active surveillance, active frontages and minimising conflict between pedestrians and other transport users</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Improved public realm, including pause points incorporating facilities such as seating and shade</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implementation of wayfinding strategies including directional signage and markers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Full-width footpaths</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Zebra/wombat crossings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Slow vehicle speeds e.g. 10km/h shared zones, 30-40km/h speed precincts</li> </ul>

### 4.3.4 Overarching priorities

#### **Getting to school by walking and cycling**

School-based initiatives represent a 'quick win' as they are typically simple to implement and represent a cost-effective way to catalyse change. Designing facilities for children also makes walking and cycling more accessible for all. Importantly, our consultation with the community showed support for measures which support the behaviour change around schools, such as reduced car usage and safer walking and cycling facilities.

#### **Creating walking and cycling towns**

It is proposed that active transport is established in towns, villages/outlying communities to make them comfortable and attractive places to walk. This will include initiatives which prioritise the convenience of walking in favour of driving and car parking. We envision communities where people can walk from home (or park their car), then linger and spend time at the shops, a cafe and the supermarket by foot, rather than by car. In turn, this will stimulate economic activity and opportunities for social interaction.

#### **Connected and liveable developments**

In tandem with other initiatives and actions in the Strategy, we will implement and uphold standards for good walking and cycling connections in new developments.

### 4.3.5 Overarching strategies

#### **Increase the provision of quality on-road and off-road active transport infrastructure across the Shire**

1. Address gaps in connections and facilitate the creation of circuits (loops)
2. Improve the provision of a walk and cycle network both on- and off-road (refer to maps)
3. Increase the length of off-road cycle routes that are safe, accessible, convenient, comfortable and attractive
4. Improve the level of safety for cyclists/pedestrians during infrastructure upgrades.

#### **Effective maintenance of the active transport network**

1. Improve maintenance systems of current active transport infrastructure.

#### **Align the Council Planning Scheme and recognise the role of active transport**

1. Embed active transport and Healthy by Design values into Council's strategic objectives.

#### **Improve the environment for walking, cycling and public transport use, both in transit and end of trip facilities**

1. Increase the number and quality of walk and cycle amenities (such as bike racks, water stations, etc.)
2. Create elements of interest along walking routes
3. Improve the accessibility of public transport
4. Increase shelter from weather along key routes

#### **Raise the profile and increase the prestige of active transport options**

1. Increase awareness within the community of places to walk and cycle
2. Promote the benefits of walking and cycling
3. Support events, activities and infrastructure upgrades that will promote walking and cycling
4. Identify community leaders and ambassadors from key organisations and the community

#### **Enable more people to confidently walk and cycle and maintain a bicycle**

1. Support an increase in the level of cycling skills and knowledge of relevant rules
2. Reduce barriers to walking and cycling

#### **Enable cyclists, pedestrians and motorists to interact more considerately and safely**

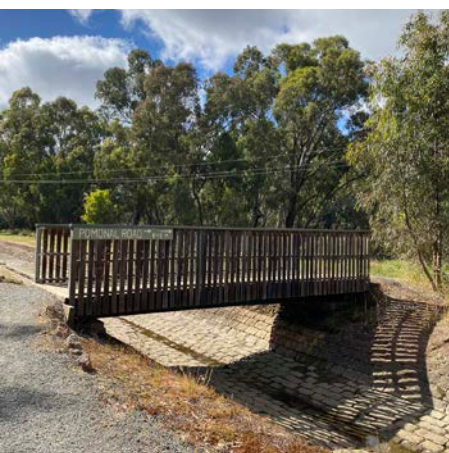
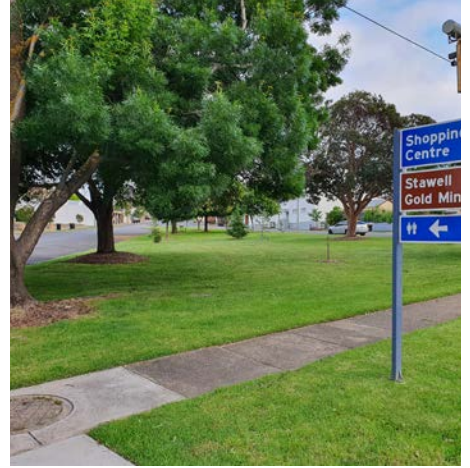
1. Promote road rules and mutual respect between cyclists, pedestrians and motorists.

#### **Monitor and report walking and cycling participation data**

1. Establish methods to monitor levels of walking and cycling across the Shire.

### 4.3.6 Proposed active transport networks

The maps on the following pages detail the primary and secondary active transport routes to be systematically implemented over the course of the next 20 years.



# North Grampians Active Transport Strategy


## Stawell

### Legend

#### Key destinations

-  Centre/retail
-  Health
-  Education
-  Tourist
-  Recreation
-  Community
-  Transport
-  Other

#### Existing facilities

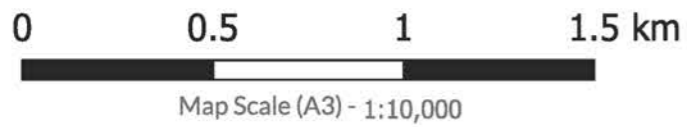
-  Existing paths

#### Active transport hierarchy

-  Primary active transport route
-  Secondary active transport route
-  Primary Pedestrian Network
-  800m buffer (town centre)

#### Roads and Rail

-  Railway Stations
-  Bus Stops
-  Major Roads
-  Local Roads
-  Railway



Version	2
Status	Draft
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Map Data: © State of Victoria and North Grampians Shire Council



# North Grampians Active Transport Strategy St Arnaud

## Legend




### Key destinations

-  Centre/retail
-  Health
-  Education
-  Tourist
-  Recreation
-  Community
-  Transport
-  Other

### Existing facilities

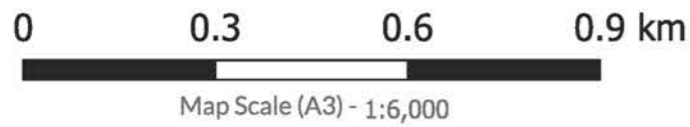
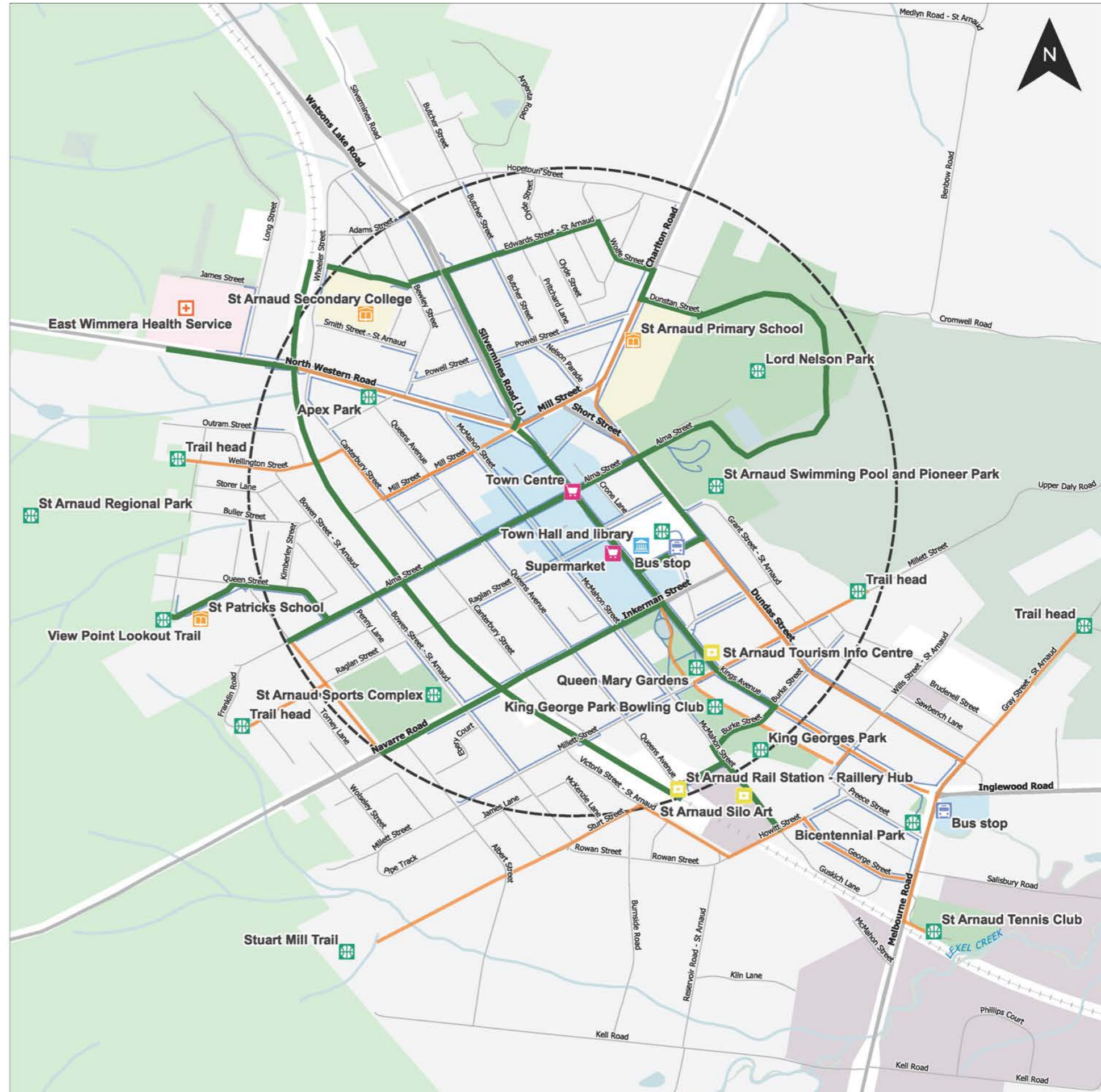
-  Existing paths

### Active transport hierarchy

-  Primary active transport route
-  Secondary active transport route
-  800m buffer (town centre)

### Roads and Rail

-  Railway Stations
-  Bus Stops
-  Major Roads
-  Local Roads
-  Railway



Version	2
Status	Draft
Issued	09/11/23

Map Data : © State of Victoria and North Grampians Shire Council

# North Grampians Active Transport Strategy Glenorchy

## Legend




### Key destinations

-  Centre/retail
-  Health
-  Education
-  Tourist
-  Recreation
-  Community
-  Transport
-  Other

### Existing facilities

-  Existing paths

### Active transport hierarchy

-  Primary active transport route
-  Secondary active transport route
-  800m buffer (town centre)

### Roads and Rail

-  Railway Stations
-  Bus Stops
-  Major Roads
-  Local Roads
-  Railway

0 0.2 0.4 0.6 km

Map Scale (A3) - 1:4,000



Version	2
Status	Draft
Issued	09/11/23

Map Data : © State of Victoria and North Grampians Shire Council




# North Grampians Active Transport Strategy Great Western

## Legend





### Key destinations

-  Centre/retail
-  Health
-  Education
-  Tourist
-  Recreation
-  Community
-  Transport
-  Other

### Existing facilities

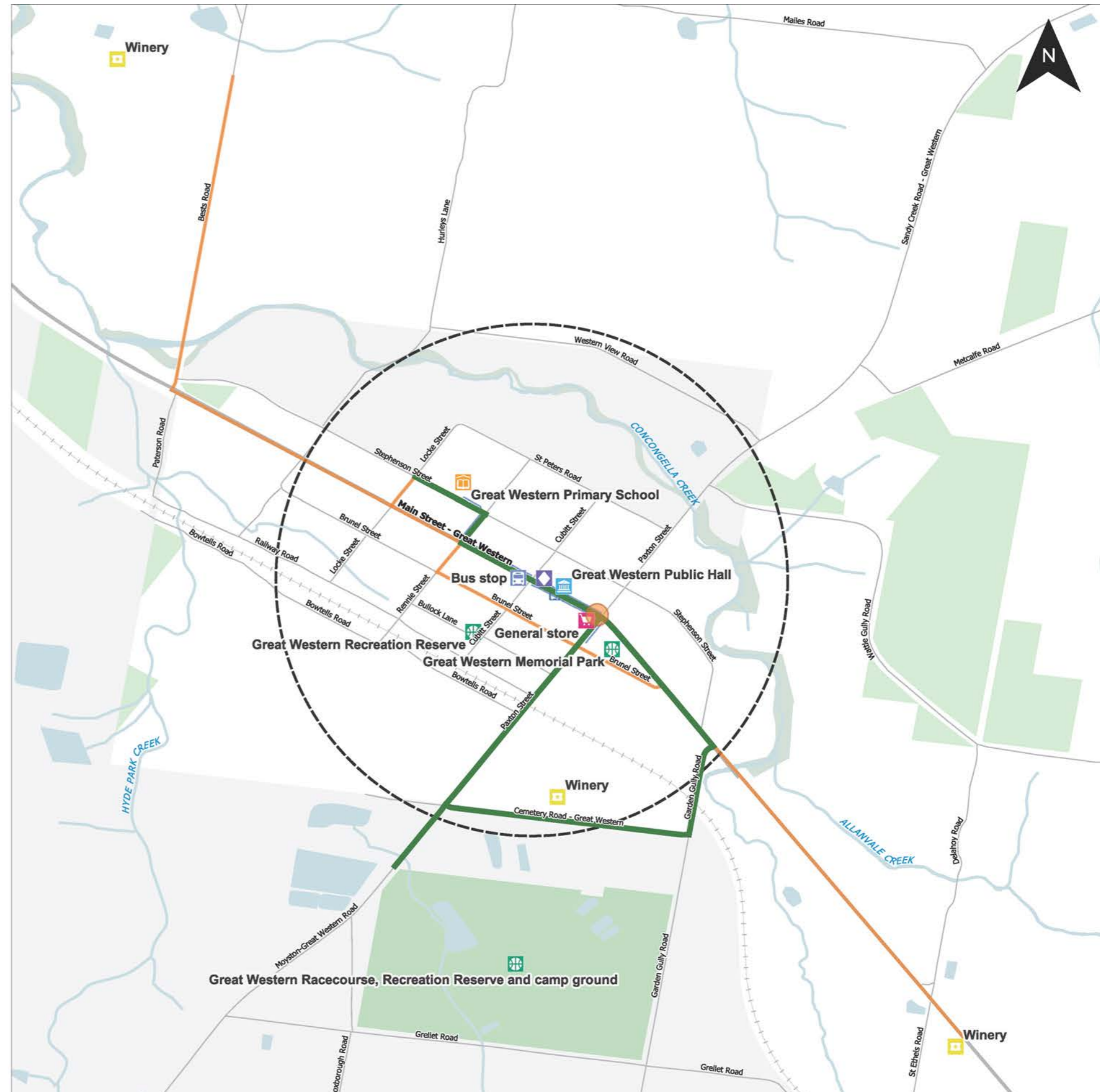
-  Existing paths

### Active transport hierarchy

-  Primary active transport route
-  Secondary active transport route
-  Potential crossing improvement
-  800m buffer (town centre)

### Roads and Rail

-  Railway Stations
-  Bus Stops
-  Major Roads
-  Local Roads
-  Railway



Map Scale (A3) - 1:7,500



Version	2
Status	Draft
Issued	09/11/23

Map Data : © State of Victoria and North Grampians Shire Council

# North Grampians Active Transport Strategy


## Halls Gap

### Legend

#### Key destinations

-  Centre/retail
-  Health
-  Education
-  Tourist
-  Recreation
-  Community
-  Transport
-  Other

#### Existing facilities

-  Existing paths

#### Active transport hierarchy

-  Primary active transport route
-  Secondary active transport route
-  Potential crossing improvement
-  800m buffer (town centre)

#### Roads and Rail

-  Railway Stations
-  Bus Stops
-  Major Roads
-  Local Roads
-  Railway

0 0.2 0.4 0.6 km

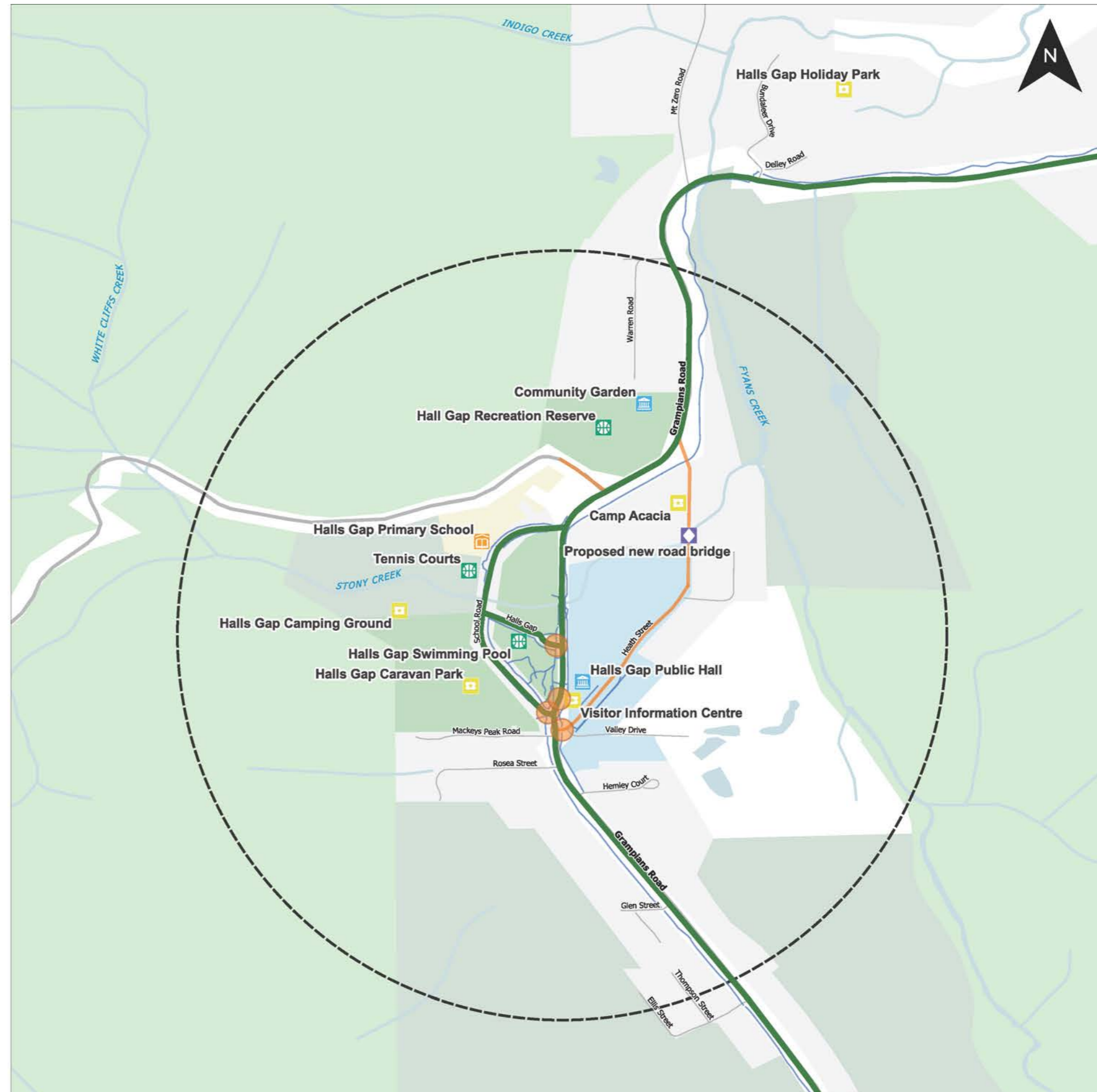


Map Scale (A3) - 1:5,000



Version	2
Status	Draft
Issued	09/11/23

Map Data : © State of Victoria and North Grampians Shire Council



# North Grampians Active Transport Strategy


## Marnoo

### Legend





#### Key destinations

-  Centre/retail
-  Health
-  Education
-  Tourist
-  Recreation
-  Community
-  Transport
-  Other

#### Existing facilities

-  Existing paths

#### Active transport hierarchy

-  Primary active transport route
-  Secondary active transport route
-  Potential crossing improvement
-  800m buffer (town centre)

#### Roads and Rail

-  Railway Stations
-  Bus Stops
-  Major Roads
-  Local Roads
-  Railway

0 0.1 0.2 0.3 km



Map Scale (A3) - 1:3,000



Version	2
Status	Draft
Issued	09/11/23

Map Data : © State of Victoria and North Grampians Shire Council



# North Grampians Active Transport Strategy


## Navarre

### Legend




#### Key destinations

-  Centre/retail
-  Health
-  Education
-  Tourist
-  Recreation
-  Community
-  Transport
-  Other

#### Existing facilities

-  Existing paths

#### Active transport hierarchy

-  Primary active transport route
-  Secondary active transport route
-  Potential crossing improvement
-  800m buffer (town centre)

#### Roads and Rail

-  Railway Stations
-  Bus Stops
-  Major Roads
-  Local Roads
-  Railway



0 0.1 0.2 0.3 km



Map Scale (A3) - 1:3,000



Version	2
Status	Draft
Issued	09/11/23

Map Data : © State of Victoria and North Grampians Shire Council

# North Grampians Active Transport Strategy

## Stuart Mill

### Legend





#### Key destinations

-  Centre/retail
-  Health
-  Education
-  Tourist
-  Recreation
-  Community
-  Transport
-  Other

#### Existing facilities

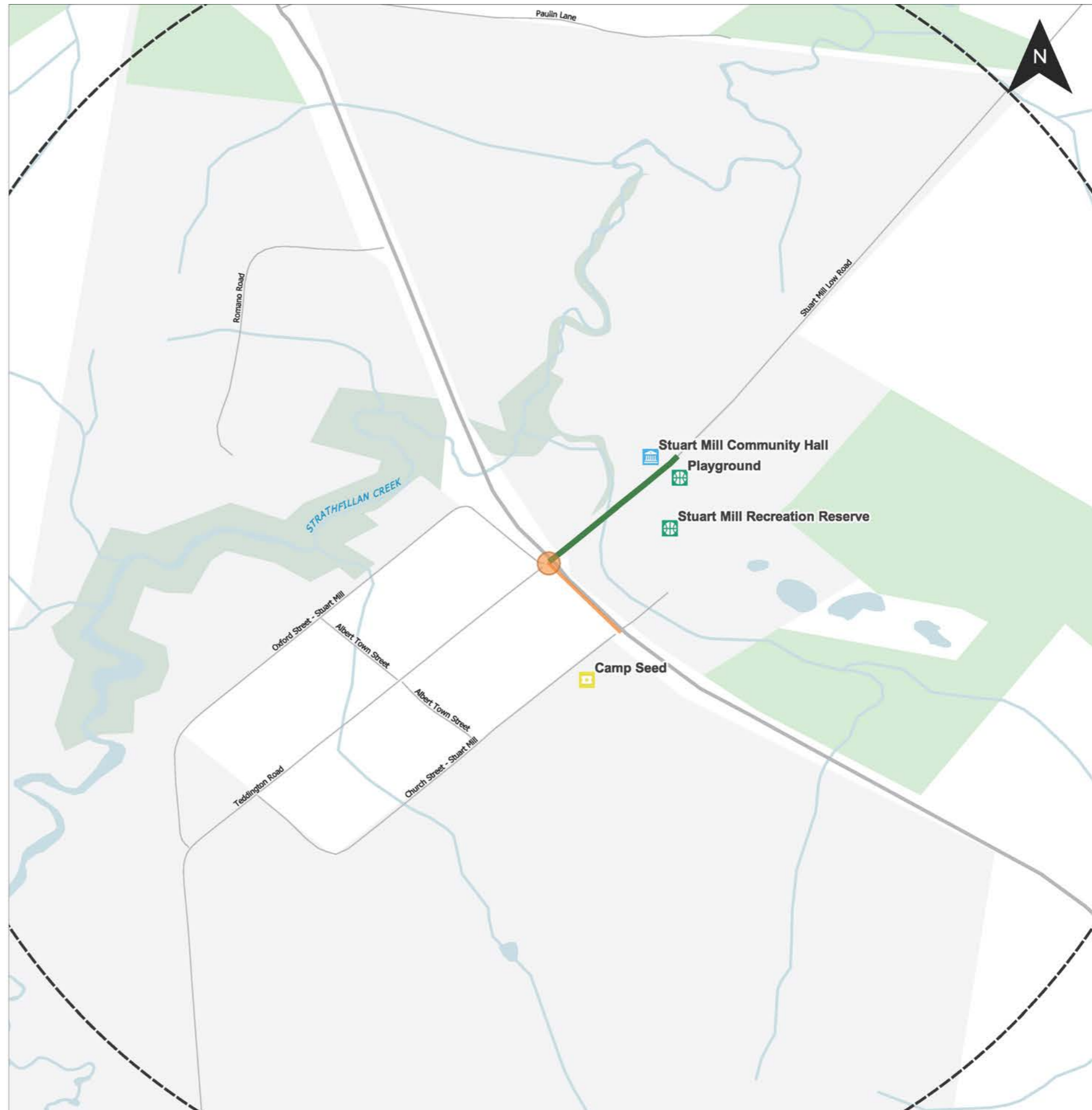
-  Existing paths

#### Active transport hierarchy

-  Primary active transport route
-  Secondary active transport route
-  Potential crossing improvement
-  800m buffer (town centre)

#### Roads and Rail

-  Railway Stations
-  Bus Stops
-  Major Roads
-  Local Roads
-  Railway



0 0.1 0.2 0.3 km



Map Scale (A3) - 1:3,000



Version	2
Status	Draft
Issued	09/11/23

Map Data : © State of Victoria and North Grampians Shire Council

## 4.4 Grampians Rail Trail

The Grampians Rail Trail is currently an 11km stretch of gravel/sand trail extending from Stawell West to Mt Dryden Road. The trail officially starts at a small carpark on the Grampians road approximately 700m south of Western Highway. Some trail users choose to park vehicles at Federation Park where there is ample car parking, toilets, and picnic facilities. From Federation Park, a trail connects to Hines Road, connecting to Grampians Road near the start of the rail trail.

The initial 2.5km of the trail travels west toward the Grampians National Park along a path south of the original easement. The remaining 9km of the trail travels along the old rail alignment parallel to the Grampians road and then Mt Dryden Rd near Lake Lonsdale. Bridges and an 800m boardwalk have been installed along the trail. A car park is located on Mt Dryden Road where the trail terminates.

### 4.4.1 What is a rail trail?

Rail trails are shared-use paths recycled from abandoned railway corridors. Usually managed by local councils for the enjoyment of the general public, rail trails can be used for a range of purposes including walking, cycling and horse riding.

The Grampians Rail Trail is currently maintained by the Friends of Grampians Rail Trail community group. This group and local students have been integral to constructing bridges and boardwalks along the trail, as well as ongoing maintenance.

### 4.4.2 Rail Trails Australia

Rail Trails Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that supports the development and promotion of a rail trail network across Australia. The organisation supports local government and community committees through the provision of information, experience and resources, primarily through the website, committee and regional representatives.

### 4.4.3 Future directions

The rail trail is currently popular as a walking, running, and riding trail as it is considered a relatively easy route extending 22km out and back.

The Halls Gap Zoo is a popular attraction, but is located on the Ararat Halls Gap Road which is an arterial road with a current speed limit of 100km/hr.

The Halls Gap Bike Path Zoo Link is a clear priority for the Halls Gap community and will further encourage safe active tourism in the Halls Gap area. In addition it is expected the path will link to the proposed Wildlife Arts Museum Australia (WAMA) to facilitate further safe travel to two key tourism locations.

Council's tourism strategies have previously identified continuation of the rail trail to Halls Gap, and this Strategy provides further support to this initiative. The following actions are recommended to progress the required planning and design work to achieve this.

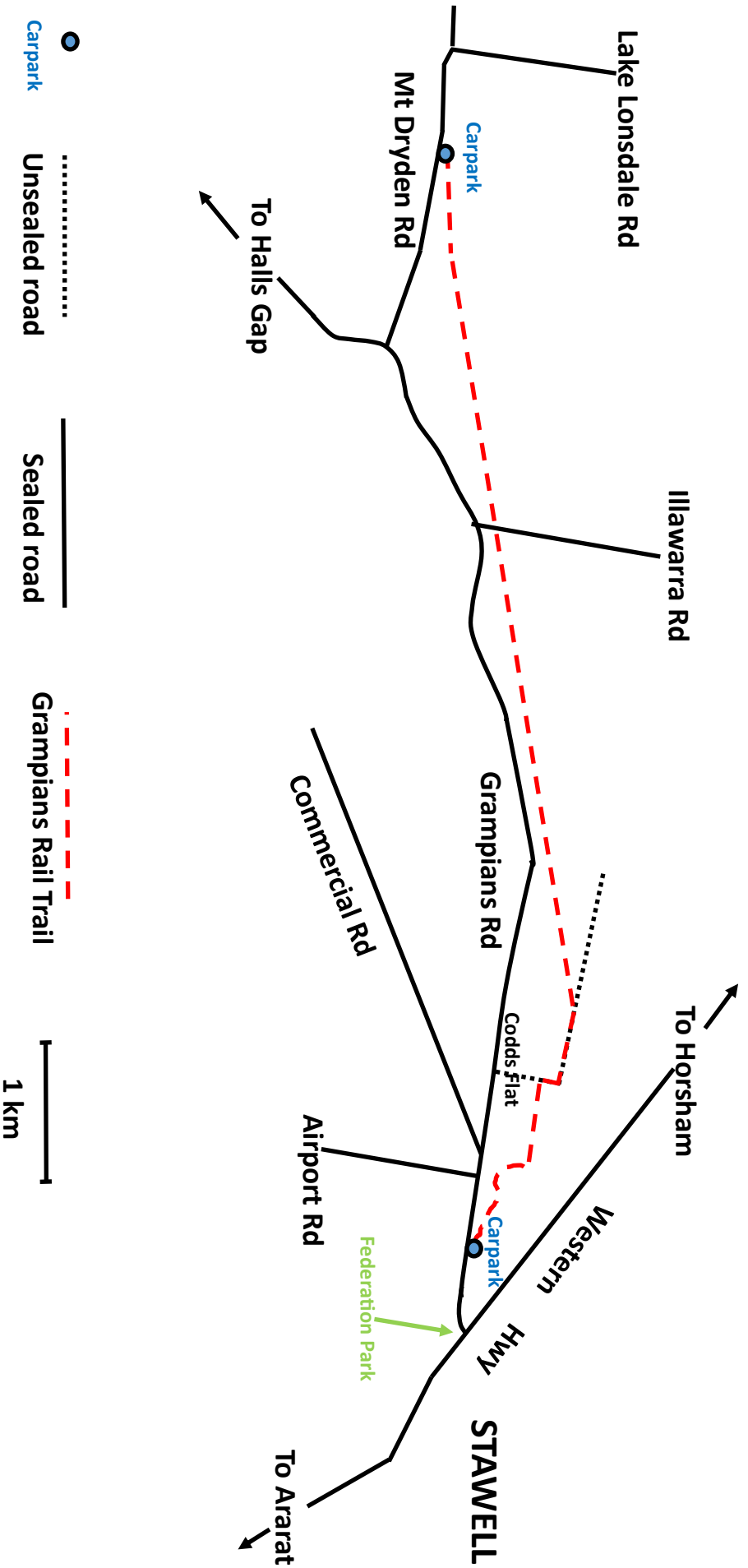
- Undertake a feasibility study to identify the costs, benefits and whether a continuous connection from Stawell to Halls Gap can be achieved, including the existing Grampians Rail Trail. Ongoing maintenance considerations should also be identified
- Develop a landscape master plan over Federation Park including necessary elements to create a trail head for the Grampians Rail Trail
- Identify and implement a continuous walk and cycle route connecting the Grampians Rail Trail and Federation Park Trailhead with the Stawell Railway Station allowing visitors to confidently travel to the area without a private vehicle.



A. Constructed boardwalk  
B. Car park at start of rail trail on Grampians Road



# Gramprians Rail Trail 11km



## 4.5 Public realm

Delivering good urban and landscape design outcomes in the public realm requires an in depth understanding of four key contributing factors:

- site characteristics and parameters (i.e. physical attributes including extent of works, existing and proposed uses, infrastructure needs, existing conditions and any other opportunities, restrictions or limitations)
- the community and various user groups, including asset owner/s, key stakeholders and tourists
- design expectations and desirable outcomes
- budget and time.

These factors influence the scale, form, function and on-the-ground attributes that are necessary to deliver a high-quality and successful outcome. These considerations apply to all types of public realm - from natural areas, parks and open spaces to more urban settings, such as town squares and streetscapes.

It is critical for the design approach to holistically consider the very different needs between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles; where the objective is achieving balanced provisions between each user group with safety being paramount.

The practical aspects of designing in the public realm setting should equally consider accessibility, amenity, user comfort and experience. It is essential for a sustainable future to appropriately respond to climatic conditions, heritage assets, community values, and other distinguishing qualities that are unique to that place. Collectively, this ensures a well-integrated, functional and enhanced outcome can be achieved for the enjoyment of all.

The information provided in this section is an overview on guiding principles that can assist Council and the Northern Grampians community in how they approach future beautification works in the public realm.

### 4.5.1 Statutory context

At a governance level, the Victorian government has a suite of policies and strategic documents that provide guidance on best practices for public realm and streetscape design. The documents listed below provide a range of objectives and targets that seeks to enhance the urban landscape environment across Victoria. They also provide technical guidance and minimum standards.

Relevant strategic documents include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Regional Growth Plans (e.g. Wimmera Southern Mallee RGP 2021)
- Urban Design Guidelines for Victoria
- 20-minute neighbourhoods
- Built Environment Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan
- Victorian Cycling Strategy 2019-2028 and strategic cycling corridors
- case studies published on the Healthy Active by Design website by the Heart Foundation
- Trees for cooler and greener streetscapes.

“Public spaces are essential for the wellbeing of everyone in a community. They provide opportunity for relaxation, recreation and socialising, and contribute to a neighbourhood’s local character and sense of place.”

- Victorian State Government Public spaces principles

## 4.5.2 Other influential trends

Revitalising public spaces can present many new opportunities and benefits to a town and its community. Changes in social, environmental and financial trends should be considered when designing for public realm beautification works and includes the following contributing factors:



### **Transport options**

There is increasing public interest in more efficient and sustainable modes of transport, such as public transport, electric vehicles, bicycles, scooters and walking.



### **Walkability**

Increase the walkability of places by providing good access to parks and civic spaces that are supported by attractive and functional neighbourhood facilities and services. Walkability can be enhanced further by being accessible by foot and bike.



### **Smart cities**

Technology, although constantly changing, can be introduced to the public realm to enhance user experience and operations for governing authorities. Examples of smart city technology include:

- providing free WiFi in public spaces
- using smart signals that give additional time to pedestrians at crossings
- providing public electric charging points to facilitate the use of more low-emission vehicles
- planning for a potential future with driver-less vehicles, which will undoubtedly change how traditional streets operate.



### **Changing workplace behaviours**

The impacts of changing customer behaviour and business operations, particularly as a result of COVID-19, is affecting main street retailers and the commercial leasing market. A strong transition to online shopping and operations is placing less reliance on traditional “9 to 5” hours in favour of home delivery and more flexible work arrangements, such as shared work spaces and growing trends towards working from home.



### **Modernisation of vehicles**

The changing size and type of vehicles in Australia is seeing a general trend towards ownership of large SUV and 4WD vehicles, particularly in regional areas. According to Toyota Australia, there is an increased interest in regional areas for hybrid pick-ups and four-wheel drives.

### 4.5.3 Other influential trends

There are many contributing factors that can influence the design and performance of public spaces. At a basic level, design and constructed outcomes must adhere to relevant legislation, building and development codes, and Australian Standards.

As previously described, there are several main factors that generally apply when planning public realm beautification works. These include the following:

- celebrate historical and cultural attributes
- incorporate local materials and plants to highlight, complement and reflect local character
  - whole-of-life maintenance costs should be a key driver when selecting hard and softscape components and the type of infrastructure/furniture introduced within the space
- public safety is critical and cannot be compromised, hence Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles should be applied to the design of the space
- ensure there is clear delineation between public and private space
- design for human scale and cater for a diversity of users, abilities and activities
- striving for 'shared use' outcomes, where possible, in streetscape settings
- integrate greenery wherever possible
- engage the community in the design and activation of the space.

In addition to the above, there are other trends and influential factors that should be considered when planning for public realm works. Often, this reflects current social, environmental or physical trends. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of open space for the community.

Accommodating the physical aspects of these recommendations into the public realm will need to consider outcomes such as:

- providing footpaths wide enough to allow for 1.5m social distancing between individuals
- providing additional space on verges for shops that create high demand and long queues
- increasing the footprint of footpath dining zones to accommodate a safe distance between tables
- frequently cleaning commonly touched surfaces such as parking meters, handrails, seats and rubbish bins.

Other trends to consider into the future include:

- population growth and decline
  - whilst many cities are experiencing rapid growth, many regional towns are experiencing a decline. The Northern Grampians Shire Council is determined to promote the lifestyle benefits of the Shire to maintain and increase the population.
- the rising rate of obesity
  - providing walkable environments that also encourage cycling and other alternative transport options will help encourage individuals to use those other modes of travel over vehicles and incidentally experience exercise, thereby contributing to reduced physical and mental health issues.
- an aging population
  - Australia's aging population is a well known fact and, therefore, the public realm must aim to be equitable to all and cater to the physical needs of an aging demographic. This includes continuous and good quality footpaths, integration of rest points at regular intervals (particularly on roads with steep grades the use of suitable street furniture), supporting people with disabilities by providing convenient and dedicated on-street parking bays and drop-off zones.
- equity and deprivation
  - residents living in regional areas are often impacted by distance to and frequency of community-based services such as public transport. The young and elderly are often dependent on alternative transportation options (such as rail, bus and bicycles) as these members of the community are often less likely to drive or own personal vehicles.

## 4.5.4 Streetscapes

What makes a great street?<sup>9</sup>

The following characteristics are typical of a well-designed and successful main streets.

### *Offer a superior pedestrian experience*

- Encourage walking, browsing, lingering and socialising - main streets must be highly walkable to succeed.
- Consider pedestrian needs (i.e. footpath width wide enough to accommodate all users and uses, convenient and safe crossings, shade, and legible shopfronts with active uses such as cafes, retailers, etc.)
- Reduce traffic volumes and speed in high-use pedestrian traffic areas. This may include reducing the number of traffic lanes to make the main street feel more intimate and human-scaled. It also reduces the distance pedestrians have to walk over crossings.
- Maintain clear sightlines between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists by ensuring landscaping and street furniture elements are appropriately positioned.
- Ensure entrapment zones are designed out. Consider the safety of individuals with special needs or potentially in vulnerable situations (e.g. women, children, persons with disabilities, and elderly).
- Avoid unnecessary obstructions and visual clutter (i.e. proliferation of signs, service pits and power lines).
- Ensure there is good drainage, lighting and security infrastructure.
- Integrate accessibility infrastructure, such as tactile indicators and contrasting colours.
- Manage anti-social behaviour through considerate design, layout and activation rather than exclusionary furniture or restricting access (unless necessary for public safety).

### *Density is OK but at a human and regional town scale*

- Moderate density is necessary for a main street to be viable, however, should not be overwhelming.
- Encourage a mixture of building heights and articulated frontages to create a dynamic edge to the street.
- Setbacks should be used to character buildings and features.

### *Promote and support local businesses*

- Encourage a mix of retailers, hospitality outlets, service providers, and arts/community/entertainment based activities (e.g. galleries, museums, library, etc.) along the main street.
- Ensure that main street businesses have adequate on-street parking provision but ensure there is ample space to accommodate a streetscape that buffers walkers from vehicles.
- Ensure that 'placemaking' attributes are authentically represented, particularly in terms of architecture, public art, furniture and materials selection. Historical storytelling helps with the success of a main street, particularly in terms of boosting the local economy by stimulating tourism.

### *Celebrate natural, cultural and historical assets*

- Maintain greenery within the town centre that is distinctive and functional (such as street trees for shade). Landscaping helps to create amenity, activity and comfort. Ensure materials are robust and affordable.
- Provide spaces / nodes that cater to rest, interpretation and gathering. A civic space at the heart of town encourages community pride and provides a space for events.
- Use locally sourced, high-quality and place-appropriate landscape and urban design treatments.

### *Promote liveable lifestyle choices*

- Encourage walking from local residential areas by providing shady, accessible and continuous paths.
- Cater to cycling as an alternative to driving by providing dedicated cycle infrastructure.
- Consider mixed use developments for any new developments within close proximity of or on the main street. The integration of residential accommodation above commercial/retail shopfronts on the ground level allows for 24-hour passive surveillance and can stimulate activity at quieter times of the day/week.
- Promote good wayfinding by providing visual cues, signs and maps to key destinations and public spaces.
- Employ high standards of maintenance (particularly devoid of rubbish and graffiti).

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.placemakers.com/2016/12/13/what-makes-a-good-main-street-work/>

Below are photographic examples of main streets that have been beautified in recent years and successfully introduced characteristics of “great streets.”

Walkable



Wide footpaths allow multiple uses on the verge.



Pedestrian prioritisation and traffic calming with a raised “wombat” pedestrian crossing.

Shade



Structures provided where trees cannot grow.



Reducing the Urban Heat Island effect with large canopy trees providing shade over footpaths and road pavement.

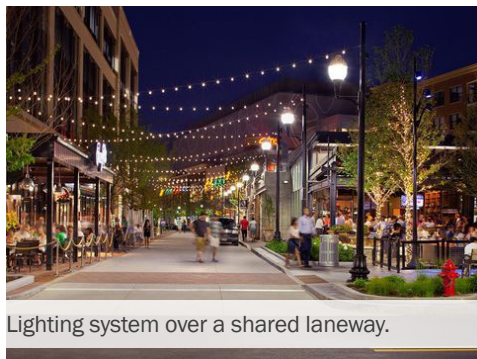


Integrated art opportunity.

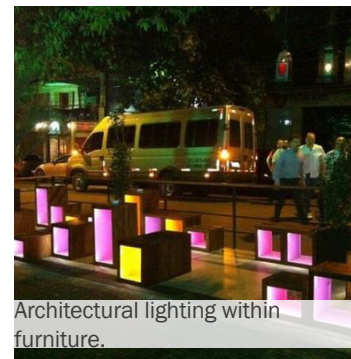
Night time activation



Street tree lighting installations.

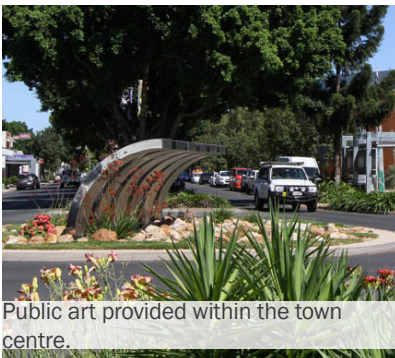


Lighting system over a shared laneway.



Architectural lighting within furniture.

Art, history and culture



Public art provided within the town centre.



Cultural references in pavement.



Storytelling through materials and interpretive signage.



Retaining objects from the past.

Innovation



An outdoor public art gallery.



Consolidating lights, sound and CCTV onto one pole.



Misters provided within a town square.



Smart technology (i.e. charging station with USB ports) integrated into street furniture.



### 4.5.5 Future directions

Understand the street and its function:

- Use a place-based approach to set a vision for the future form and character of the street
- Develop a landscape master plan, which will capture the vision and objectives by proposing physical changes needed to improve the amenity and functionality of the street.

Gap analysis:

- A detailed analysis of the existing landscape and urban design and transport functions of the street will identify any current and future issues and opportunities related to the corridor. A comprehensive analysis of the existing situation is crucial to identifying any gaps in performance and provisions before commencing design
- Some influencing factors to be assessed include traffic counts, hazardous or high-risk spots, accident prone locations, landform, sightlines, drainage, location of existing services, heritage and culturally-significant features, significant healthy trees, etc.

Develop options:

- Explore options that address any change to vehicle speeds, desirable pedestrian crossing locations, carriageway and parking arrangements to balance outcomes that enable optimal footpath widths and cycle lanes, and the location and frequency of street trees, landscaping, street furniture and outdoor nodes (i.e. footpath dining, rest stops, interpretation/art) provisions
- Validate the options by consulting a variety of stakeholders and the broader community, particularly in terms of the ultimate vision for the function and character of the street.

Prioritise people and businesses:

- The impacts of traffic volume, speed, noise and emissions seriously affects the pedestrian experience, and when these conditions are hostile or allowed to continue to grow (in terms of traffic volumes) often, those streets ultimately fail. A chain effect can occur when pedestrian numbers decline - businesses suffer from loss of patrons and the street becomes entirely about vehicle movements.

Prioritise greenery:

- The health of a street - the trees, people and businesses that inhabit it – needs to be co-equal with the impact on its moving parts.

### 4.5.6 Guiding principles for public realm improvements

- Prioritise people over vehicles by encouraging quieter and slower streets
- Support walking to and from the town centre and residential areas that are within a 10 minute walk of any public space (NOTE: this is a common distance used when linking park access for public health benefit)
- Improve air quality and noise where people congregate along the main street, particularly avoid on-street parking or loading bays situated close or adjacent to footpath dining
- Reduce and manage traffic speeds by considering the main street transitions to a 40 km/hr speed limit zone passing through the town centres and introducing traffic calming treatments to support this (such as gateways, signage, raised threshold/wombat crossings, kerb extensions, installation of medians, etc.)
- Consider peak times of the day, where movement is congested or high-risk, and pedestrian activity occurs, particularly if evening activation is a goal
- Ensure there is sufficient and efficient provision of dedicated disability parking, commercial loading zones and bus stops
- Dedicate space and infrastructure for cycling
- Maintain existing trees and increase the tree canopy along streets.

### 4.5.7 Signs of success after investing in beautification works



More people on the street, especially children.



An increase in walking and cycling.



Lower crime rates, particularly acts of vandalism.



An increase in private reinvestment (i.e. new development)



Economic vitality (measurable by decrease in vacancy rates, a diverse mix of businesses, extended trading hours, activity in the evenings, and a rise in real estate values).

## 4.5.8 Placemaking and activation

Employing a place making approach can be invaluable in how places are created, as it seeks to ingrain context-specific outcomes that are dynamic, inclusive and flexible and developed in a balanced manner that equally considers social, environmental and economic factors. In fact, Australasia has been on the cutting edge of the place making movement for many years, with government organisations and professionals driving innovation and “new models of place-led design, governance, and economic development.” (Ethan Kent, PSP, 2016)

“Placemaking inspires people to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces as the heart of every community. Strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, place making refers to a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, place making facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution.”

- Placemaking: What if we built our cities around places?, Project for Public Places, 2007



The place making process: a place led, community-based approach<sup>1</sup>

### What is place making?<sup>10</sup>

Placemaking is a multidimensional approach to the design, activation and transformation of public spaces. The process performs best when collaboration is prioritised; the active involvement of the community, stakeholders and government agencies, in most cases, leads to successful visioning, ongoing community involvement and support, and quality on-the-ground built outcomes.

### Key principles

There are eleven (11) guiding principles for improving places that have been published by internationally renowned leaders in place making - Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a nonprofit planning, design and educational organisation dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities. These principles are provided on the following page.



10 <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

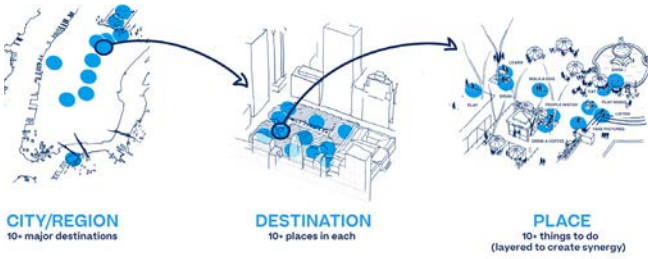


Key principles recommended by PPS<sup>11</sup> are:

2. The community is the expert
  - identify members within the community with an interest in the project and who can provide skills and/or knowledge (such as historical details, insights into local environmental and social traits) and an understanding of critical issues
  - information gathered at the beginning of the process will help to create a sense of community ownership over the project; a great benefit to the future success of the space.
3. Create a place, not a design
  - identify the physical elements to be retained and what features would attract the community and other visitors. Outcomes should ensure user comfort, amenity, enhanced pedestrian and cyclist circulation, and effective relationships to surrounding retailers and destinations.
  - create a place that invokes a strong sense of community and a setting which provides a range of activities and uses that collectively reflects the wants and needs of the community.
4. Look for partners
  - partners are critical to the future success and image of a public space beautification project. Partners can assist with project planning, options development and participation in the future
  - these collaborations are invaluable in providing support and getting a project off the ground. Partners can be local institutions, schools, various organisations, and many others.
5. They always say “it can’t be done”
  - challenges are inevitable when creating good public spaces. Engaging and involving the community early in the process (and ongoing through out delivery) can help the community feel a sense of ownership for the new space.
  - consider implementing small scale interventions to test cumbersome ideas as demonstration projects, as this can help some individuals to overcome the perceived obstacle. For example, “PARKing Day” is an event where on-street car parks are temporarily transformed into “parklets” for the day to demonstrate how these spaces can be repurposed without significant impact on local parking systems.
6. Have a vision
  - a vision needs to be borne from the interests expressed by the community and stakeholders. It is essential for a project to have an overarching vision as it provides all individuals with a clear idea of what the future space will look and feel like.
  - the vision statement should be aspirational and have a good appreciation for the important values of that place. It should also inspire and excite people whilst instilling a sense of pride in residents who live and work in the local area.
7. You can see a lot just by observing
  - by undertaking a benchmarking exercise and case study research, much can be learned about the successes and failures of other places.
  - investigate how people use public spaces by finding out what they like and don’t like about the space, what is missing, and what could enhance the activation of the space. This can be achieved either through observing individuals in the space, holding community meetings/workshops, running a questionnaire or survey, school visits, and other community engagement techniques.
8. Form supports function
  - inputs from the community and project partners provides an understanding of how other spaces function and can overcoming the future obstacles when implementing the conceptual ideas into built outcomes. Design is important, however, these other elements will establish the “form” needed to accomplish the future vision for the space.
9. Triangulate
  - triangulation is “the process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to other strangers as if they knew each other” (Holly Whyte)
  - the selection and arrangement of different elements and how they relate to each other can affect the triangulation process.
10. Experiment: lighter, quicker, cheaper
  - public spaces are complex and it may be that staged delivery is required to achieve the overall vision, particularly due to cost. In other instances, concepts may be challenging for others to envision and therefore could benefit from an “experiment” whereby the initiative/s are introduced in a short term manner that can be tested and refined. Pending the success of the experiment, it can then be made permanent.
11. Money is not the issue
  - by experimenting first or undertaking works in stages, the elements that are added into that space will contribute to the future success of the finished space (e.g. pop-up vendors, cafes, shade and seating) and are reasonably inexpensive. It also creates enthusiasm for the project.
  - involving the community and other partners can help with programming and other activities, which can also reduce costs.
12. Works are never finished
  - regular management and maintenance of public spaces must respond to the ever changing needs of the community, the environment and technology. Plan ahead for when amenities provided within the space come to the end of their life. Build-in flexibility and funding to readily enact repairs, replacements and upgrades, as needed, to maintain great public spaces and towns.

## 4.5.8 Placemaking concepts

### The Power of 10+



Graphic representation of the Power of 10+ concept from PPS.

This concept (developed by PPS) is an evaluation tool to help facilitate place making across varying urban setting scales. It enables constructive conversations to help identify priorities, opportunities and challenges.

The tool helps to identify a range of reasons (10+) for people to visit a place. Activities may include relaxation and respite, taking children to a playground, attending an event, dining at an on-site cafe, educational purposes, or a meeting point. Seek out which of these activities are unique to that particular place as they positively represent local culture and history. Local residents are the best source for identifying and prioritising the top 10+ list.<sup>12</sup>

### Place Activation



Example of evening activation in a park in Maitland (image source: [www.maitland.nsw.gov.au](http://www.maitland.nsw.gov.au))

The activities that happen in a public space and the people there enjoying those moments are what typically makes a successful public space. It is, therefore, important that Council and the community prepare (from start to completion and beyond) a public space activation program/strategy that will plan for a variety of community events to occur at a range of times (day and night, weekdays and weekends) to generate opportunities for the community to interact with each other and the space. Examples include pop-ups, outdoor cinema nights, giant board games (such as chess), and potentially regular events such as monthly markets or annual festivals.

### Tactical urbanism or 'Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper'



Example of PARKing Day from the Maitland Activation Strategy (2016).

Introducing interim or trial measures that, in most instances, are low-cost can yield a high return and have significant impact on community support when entering into any public space beautification project.

This approach helps to capitalise on the excitement of the community generated by new opportunities to engage in ways that the space previously may not have been equipped to cater for. This helps the community to prepare for the transformation whilst the space is still familiar. From small and 'tactical' interventions such as PARKing Day and temporary art installations to large temporary structures and community events.

### Place governance / management



Place management flow diagram (source: [www.townteammovement.com/whats-the-difference-placemaking-place-management-and-place-activation/](http://www.townteammovement.com/whats-the-difference-placemaking-place-management-and-place-activation/))

Place management can be defined as:

*"A coordinated, area-based, multi-stakeholder approach to improve locations, harnessing the skills, experiences and resources of those in the private, public and voluntary sectors."* - [www.placemanagement.org/](http://www.placemanagement.org/)

This intentional form of governance can be the key contributing factor in successfully delivering the transformation of a public space into a vibrant and active place. A Place Manager's role is to be the conduit between government, businesses and the community, and drive the collective towards reaching their full potential and the vision for that public space.

12 <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

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# Open space gap analysis

## 5.1 Open space audit

All open space in Northern Grampians Shire has been audited to assess characteristics including accessibility, amenities, appearance, maintenance, safety and security. Key observations from the audit and assessment reveal the following key themes.

Table 05: Themes identified from the visual audit of Northern Grampians Shire open space

Table 08:

AREA OF INTEREST	KEY OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT
Walk and cycle connections	Walking and cycling are popular activities in Northern Grampians Shire across the full spectrum of the community. Respondents to the community survey highlighted the need for additional and improved infrastructure to support walking and cycling for recreation, physical activity and active transport.
Access to nature	People living in the Northern Grampians Shire have access to a diverse range of natural areas providing the potential for a broad array of outdoor recreation activities (where appropriate and when negative impacts to the natural area will not occur). Residents highly value the natural environment and the recreation activities available.
Wayfinding and signage	For long-term residents, navigating available parks, reserves and recreation opportunities within the towns and outlying communities across the Shire is likely second nature. However, for local residents (particularly youth) seeking alternate activities to those their family participate in, or for visitors to the area, signage and the ability to navigate to places and activities confidently and safely is constrained by a lack of clear signage and wayfinding.
Inclusive design	Inclusive design applies to both physical and social elements of accessing public spaces. Council has made in-roads to ensure public places are designed to be inclusive. There are opportunities for further enhancement to ensure everyone in the community feels welcome, safe and a sense of belonging.
Shade	Several parks and playgrounds across the Shire lack sufficient shade. Shade trees and structures provide protection from exposure to harmful ultraviolet (UV) light and heat. Provision of shade is an essential design component for parks and particularly play spaces to encourage people to utilise these public spaces safely, regardless of the time of day. Shade trees contribute significantly to the amenity of parks and shade structures can provide effective all-weather shelter.
Play space distribution	The distribution of play spaces is generally good, with each outlying community/village including a play space. The distribution of play spaces across St Arnaud provides access for a majority of residents within 500m of their homes. There are gaps in distribution of play spaces across Stawell
Play infrastructure	Playgrounds and play spaces are currently provided for children in age ranges including: infants and toddlers; preschoolers; primary school children up to 8 years of age. Traditional playgrounds have been installed and consist of off-the-shelf play equipment and softfall (bark chip or rubber). Future trends in play space creation require the integration of select pieces of play equipment with natural elements and landscaping to encourage imagination play and inquisitive investigation of the environment.
Recreation vs Sport	Generally, sport parks appear to be embellished and maintained to a high standard. Similarly, larger recreation parks in St Arnaud and Stawell (e.g. Cato Par, Queen Mary Gardens) have facilities and landscaping to provide recreation opportunities, amenity and appeal to a broad cross-section of the community. There is opportunity to enhance local parks to enhance their appeal and opportunities for play and recreation.

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## 5.2 Stawell core open space network analysis

The public open space network has been analysed through a series of scenarios to provide direction on future enhancement and development. The following section examines the existing public open space network against a range of variables, including:

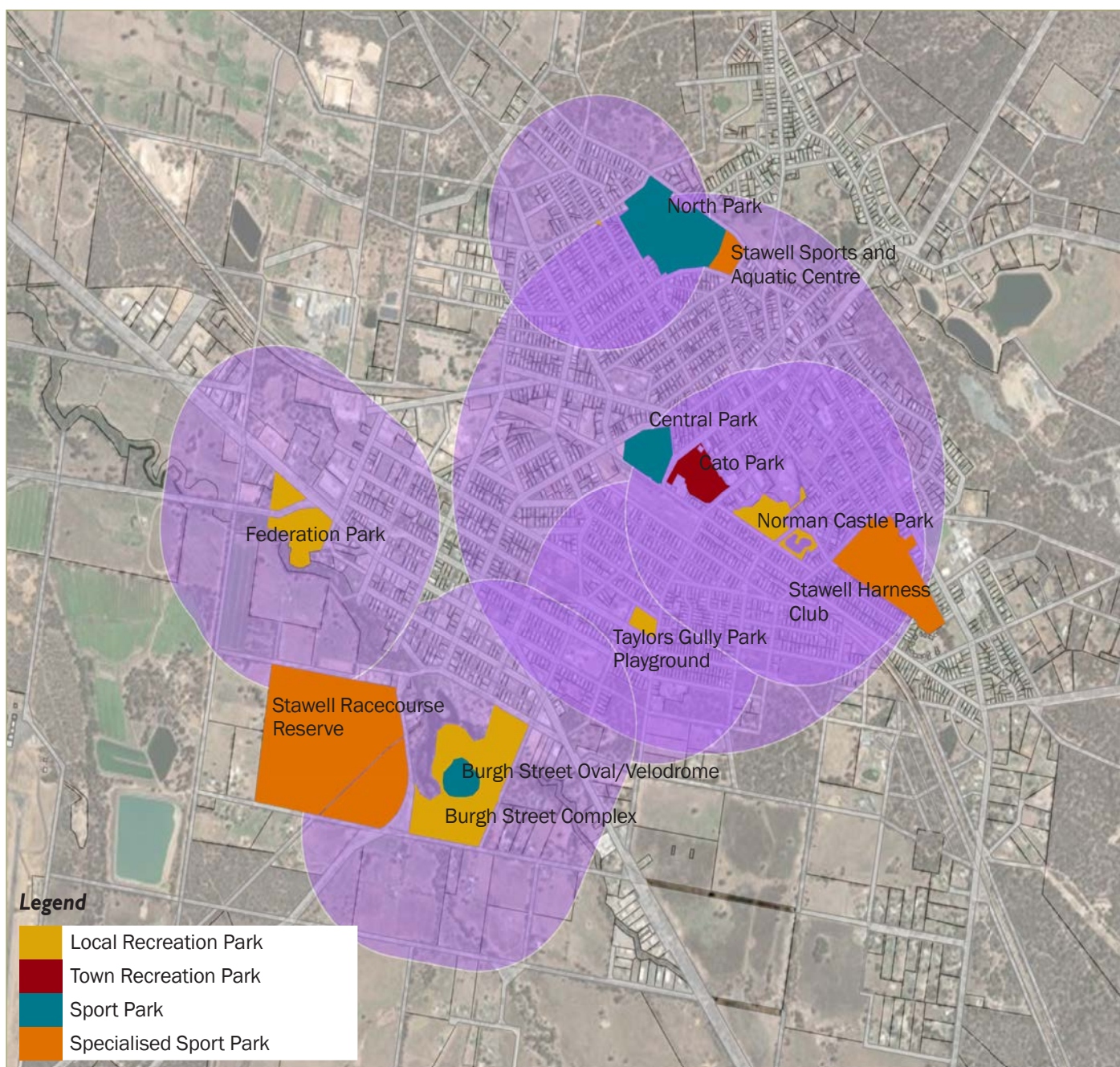
- ❑ residential lot access to open space within 500m walkability catchments
- ❑ sport parks within 1km of residential homes
- ❑ playground accessibility to residential areas within 500m (Local Recreation) and 1km (Town Recreation)
- ❑ youth space accessibility to residential areas within 1km.

### 5.2.1 Stawell: Local Recreation Park within 500m Or Town Recreation Park within 1km

When a catchment area of 500m (or 5-7 minute walk) for Local Recreation Parks and 1km (10-15 minute walk) for Town Recreation Parks is overlaid with existing recreation and sport parks, the majority of residents can access a park relatively quickly.

However, while sport parks are embellished and fit-for purpose, not all recreation parks have been developed to function for the intended purpose. Additionally, major sport parks could be enhanced with play spaces to serve dual purposes and better meet the recreation and sport needs of nearby residents.

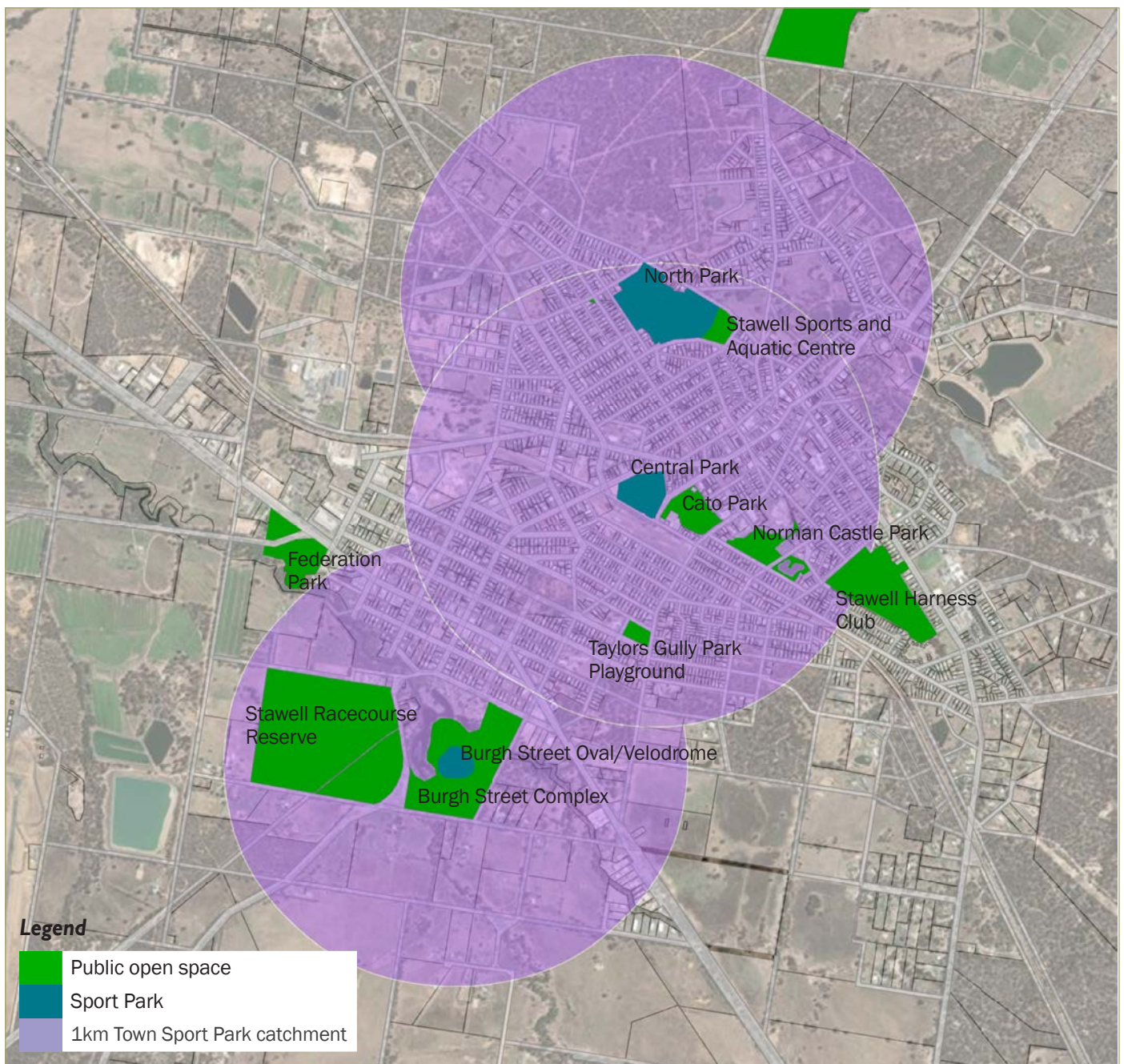
Council has ample open space land for the current and projected population. However, there are gaps in provision across the network in relation to access and embellishment standards (DSS and LoS).



### 5.2.2 Stawell: Sport Parks within 1km

Sport Parks are a resource for formal sport training and competition and also provide an open recreation space for unstructured play and social sport. When a catchment area of 1km is overlaid with existing sport parks, the majority of residents can access sport parks and opportunities relatively easily.

In addition to sport parks provided by Council, most schools provide at least one sport field within their grounds for health and physical education classes, as well as physical activity by students during breaks. With consultation and approval by the school principal, these sport fields can provide additional open space accessible to surrounding residents for appropriate use, outside of school hours and on weekends.



### 5.2.3 Stawell: Play space accessibility

To gain an understanding of the relative access of playground infrastructure to the resident population of Stawell, all playgrounds were mapped and 500m catchments assessed. The analysis indicated:

- an estimated 75% of the population has access to play space facilities within 500m of their residence
- the quality of local park play spaces is generally good, however it does vary, with shade a significant missing element
- additional play spaces are required to meet catchment standards and provide local, easily accessed opportunities for children
- factors impacting on safe and comfortable use of the play space may be discouraging use, e.g. poor drainage
- embellishment levels of service need to be applied consistently across the network
- there are opportunities for more contemporary play space creation including imagination and nature play elements in addition to traditional play equipment.

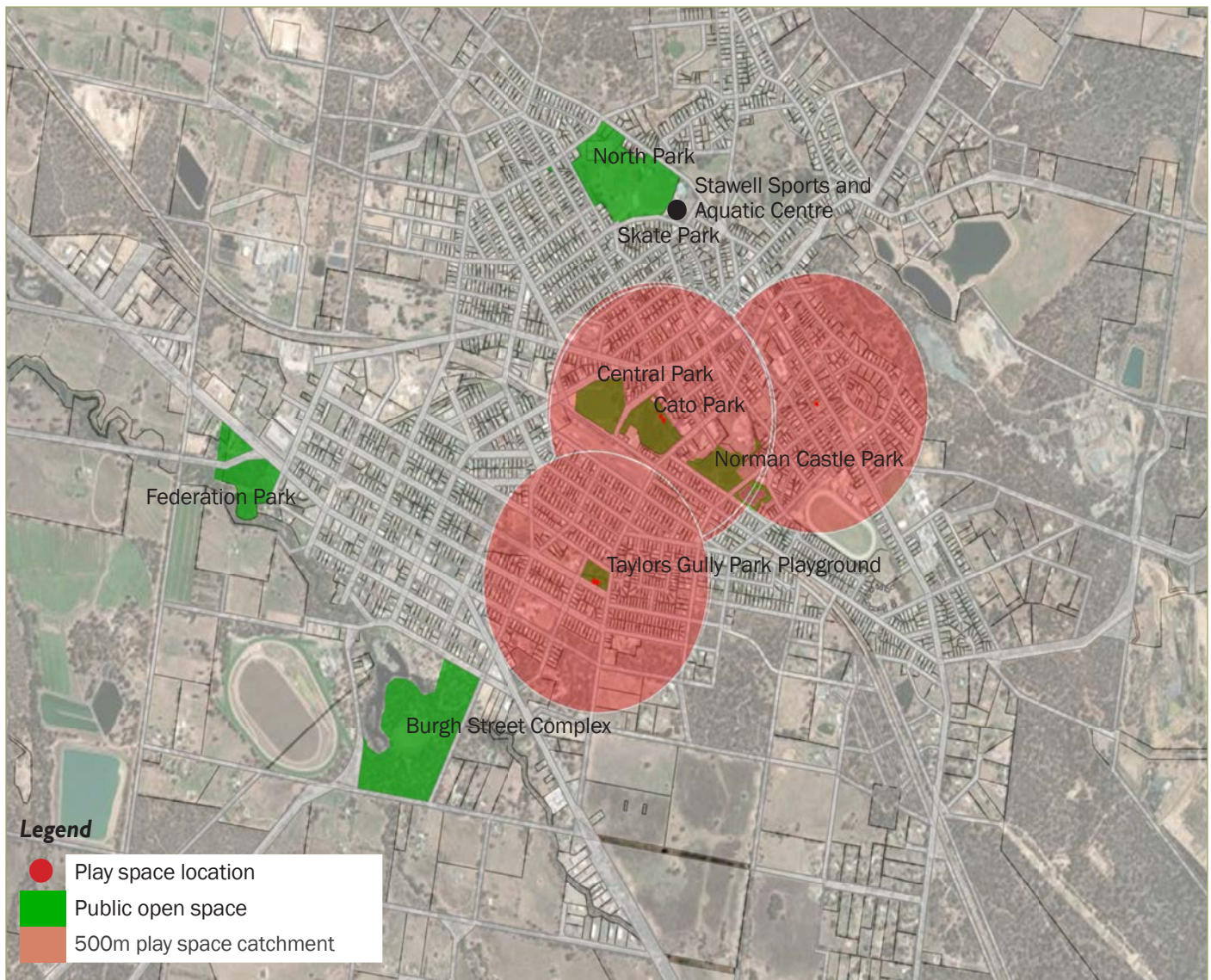
### 5.2.4 Stawell: Skate Park accessibility

Youth are typically people in the 15-24 age group and from a recreation planning perspective this group has characteristics including:

- significant 'free time'
- are high users of public transport
- are attracted to town centres and public spaces to socialise and gather
- are going through a challenging period of transition (from childhood to adulthood) and change.

A 'youth space' is a public space deliberately designed to attract youth to participate in recreation, socialising, events and contribute to their community.

Council has built skate parks in Stawell.



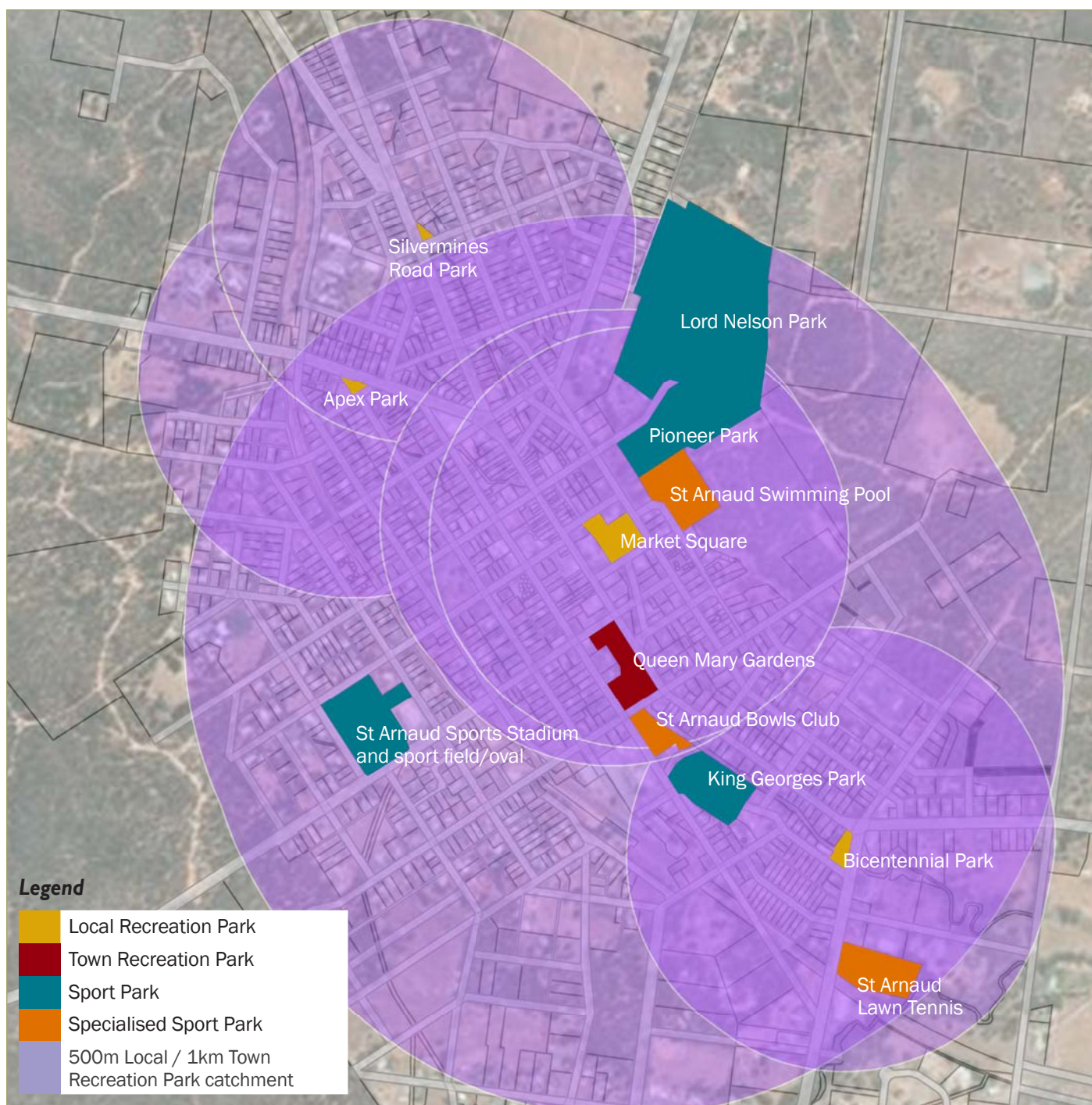


## 5.3 St Arnaud core open space network analysis

### 5.3.1 St Arnaud: Local Recreation Park within 500m Or Town Recreation Park within 1km

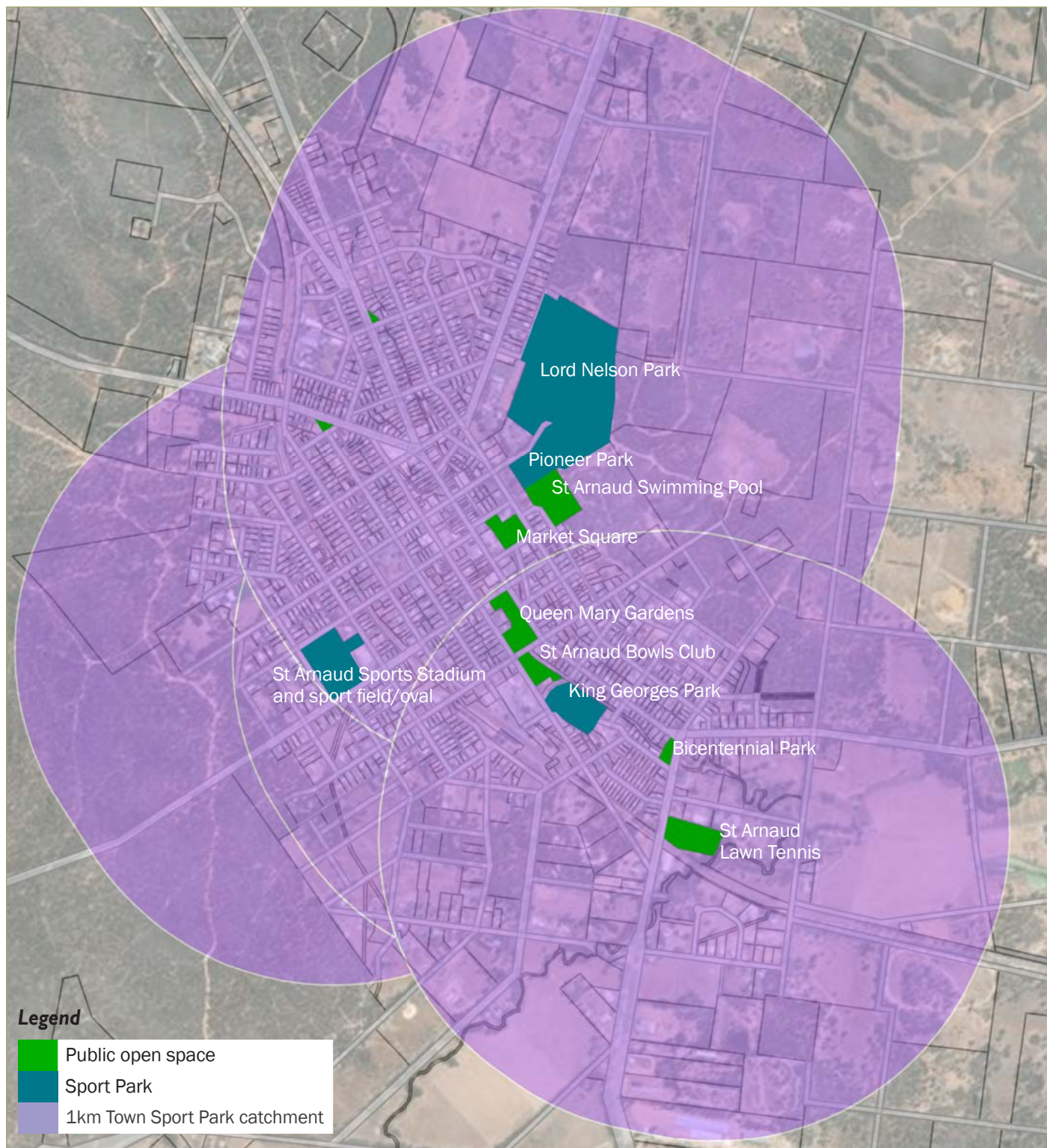
When a catchment area of 500m (or 5-7 minute walk) or 1km (10-15 minute walk) is overlaid with existing recreation and sport parks, the majority of residents can access a park relatively quickly.

The settlement pattern and location of existing Recreation Parks means that the vast majority of residents can access at least a Local Park relatively quickly and easily.



### 5.3.2 St Arnaud: Sport Parks within 1km

When a catchment area of 1km is overlaid with existing sport parks, the majority of residents can access sport parks and opportunities relatively easily.



### 5.3.3 St Arnaud: Play space accessibility

Play spaces across St Arnaud were mapped and 500m catchments assessed. The analysis indicated:

- ❑ an estimated 95% of the population has access to play space facilities within 500m of their residence
- ❑ the quality of local park play spaces is generally good, however it does vary, with shade a significant missing element
- ❑ some playgrounds are tired and aging and require replacement or removal through Council's asset management planning
- ❑ there are opportunities for more contemporary play space creation including imagination and nature play elements in addition to traditional play equipment.

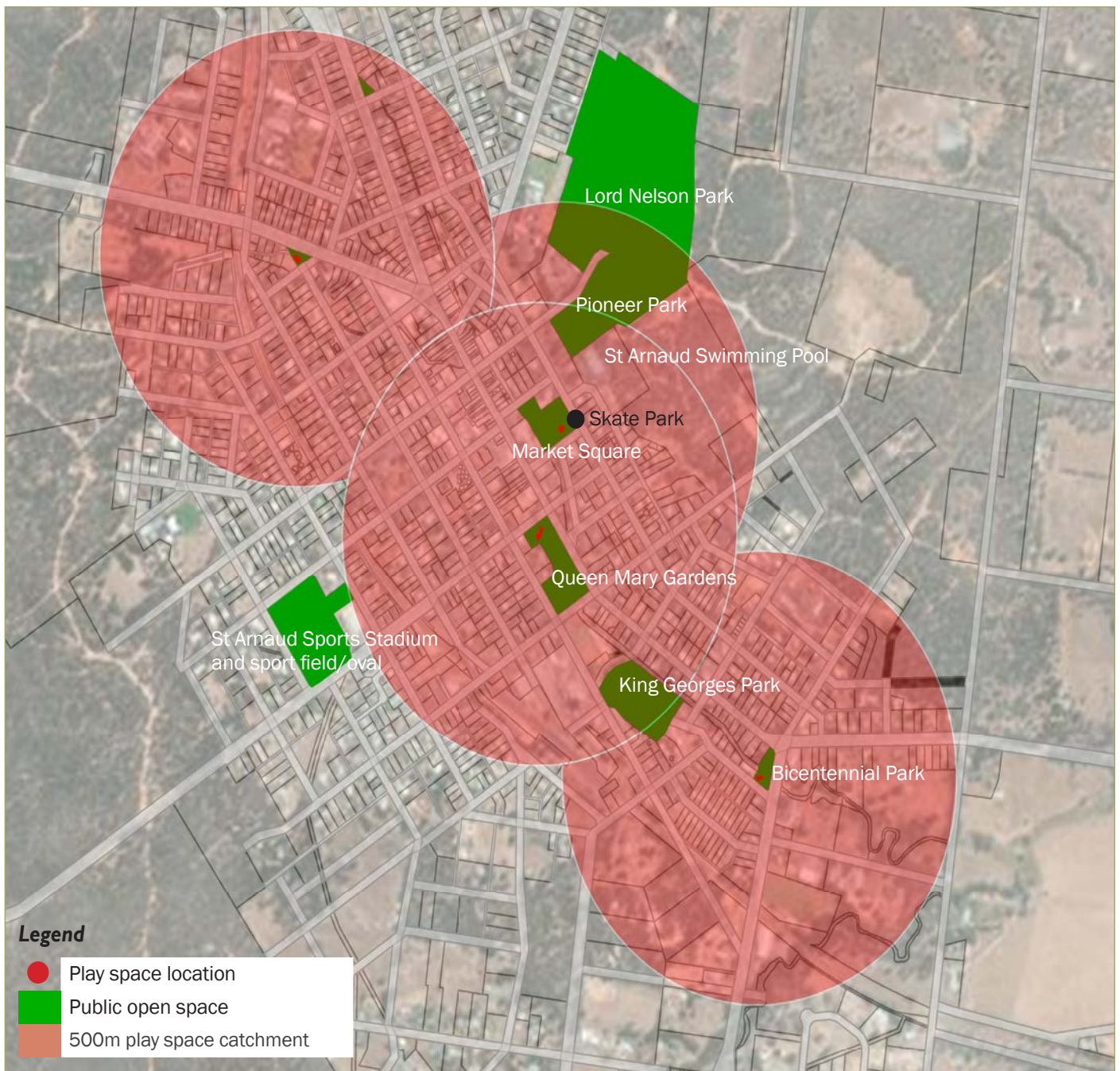
### 5.3.4 St Arnaud: Skate Park accessibility

Youth are typically people in the 15-24 age group and from a recreation planning perspective this group has characteristics including:

- ❑ significant 'free time'
- ❑ are high users of public transport
- ❑ are attracted to town centres and public spaces to socialise and gather
- ❑ are going through a challenging period of transition (from childhood to adulthood) and change.

A 'youth space' is a public space deliberately designed to attract youth to participate in recreation, socialising, events and contribute to their community.

Council has built a skate park at Market Square in St Arnaud.



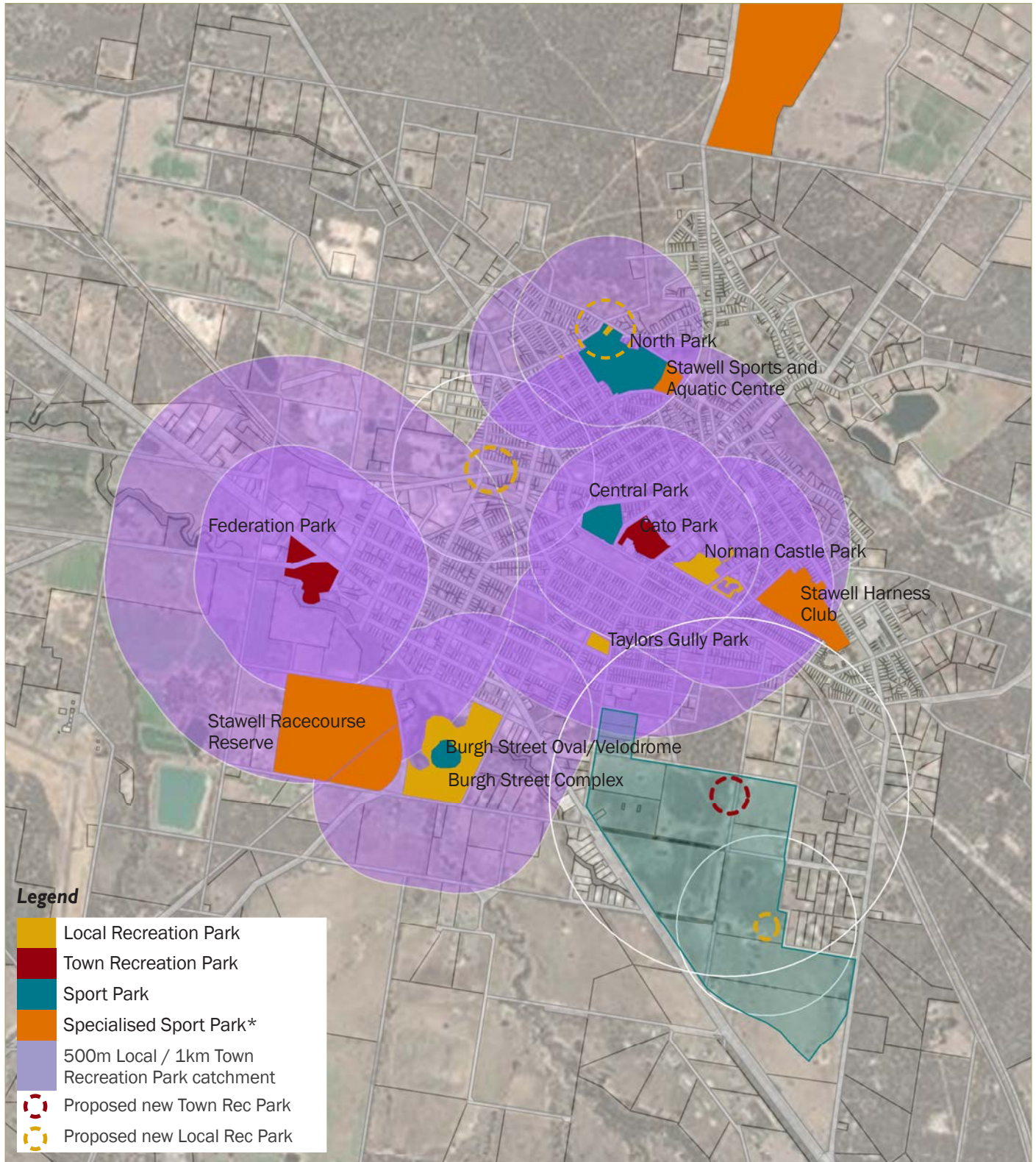
## 5.4 Proposed future core public open space

### 5.4.1 Stawell future core public open space

To achieve the Desired Standard of Service (DSS) and Core Level of Service (LoS) for Stawall, the following enhancements and additional Local and Town Recreation Parks are proposed for development:

- Upgrade Federation Park from Local to Town Recreation Park with appropriate planning, design and embellishment

- Create a play space at North Park
- Create a play space at Cypress Street Public Park Reserve
- Ensure appropriate collection of development contributions in the proposed future residential area to dedicate land and embellishment appropriate to deliver a Town Recreation Park, as well as a Local Recreation Park (depending on the extent of development and population).



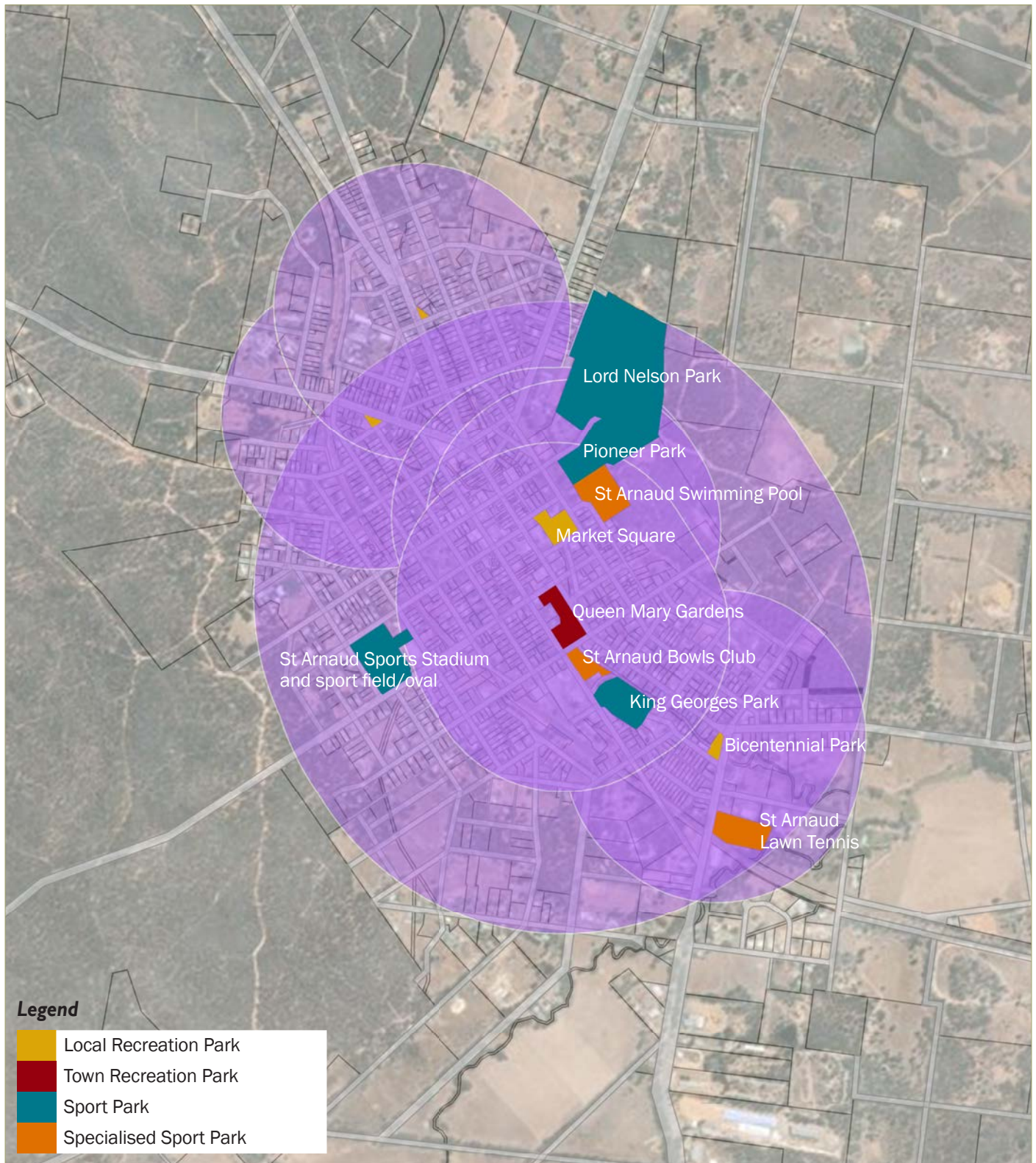
### 5.4.2 St Arnaud future core public open space

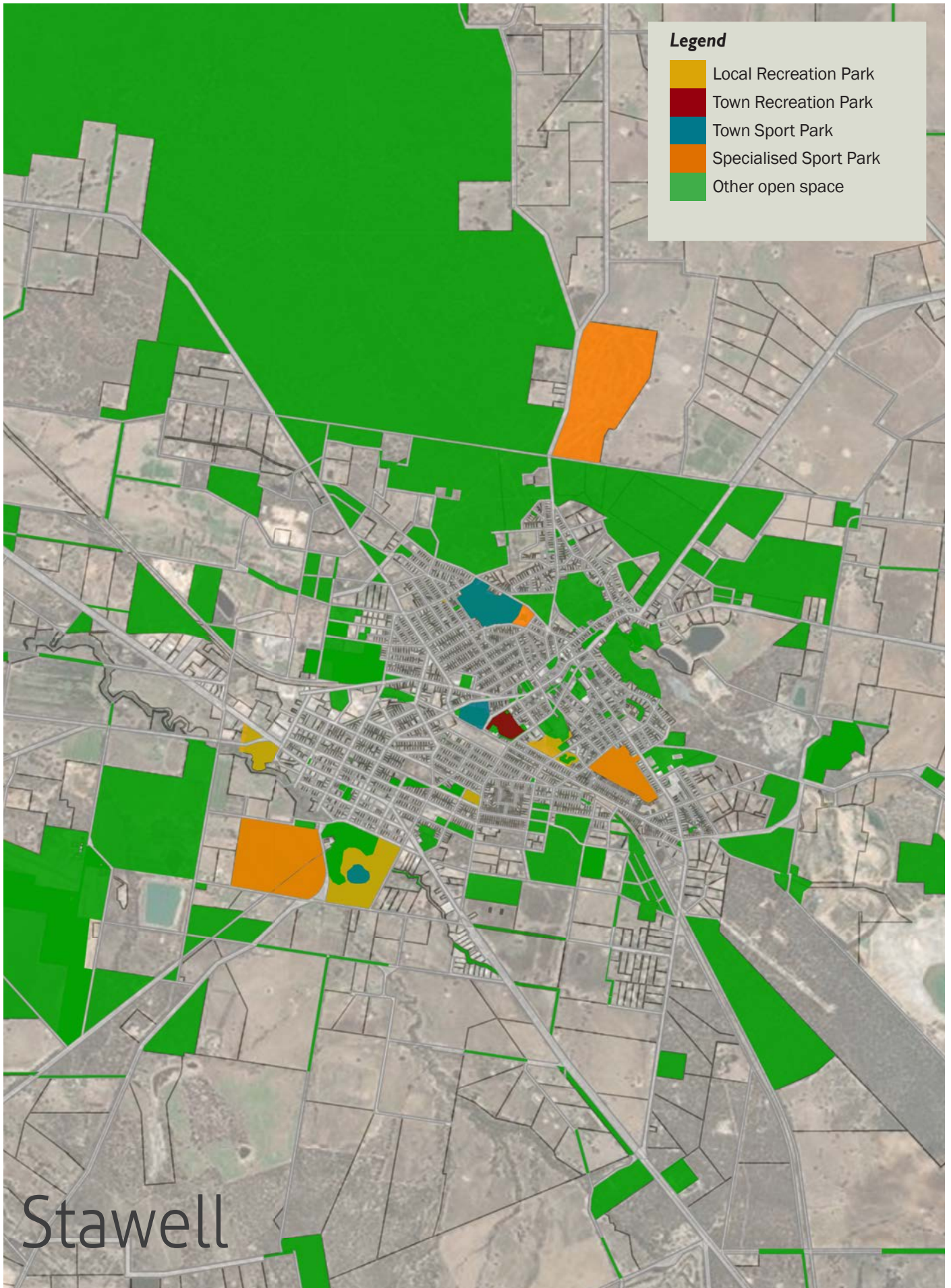
Overall, the provision, distribution and standard of public open space in St Arnaud sufficiently meets the Desired Standard of Service (DSS) and Core Levels of Service (LoS).

St Arnaud's settlement pattern, large public open spaces and the level and standard of park embellishments provide a high standard of facilities to meet the recreation needs of the

community, as well as contributing to high amenity value of the town.

It will be important in future years to ensure park embellishments meet the changing needs of the population age groups living in St Arnaud.





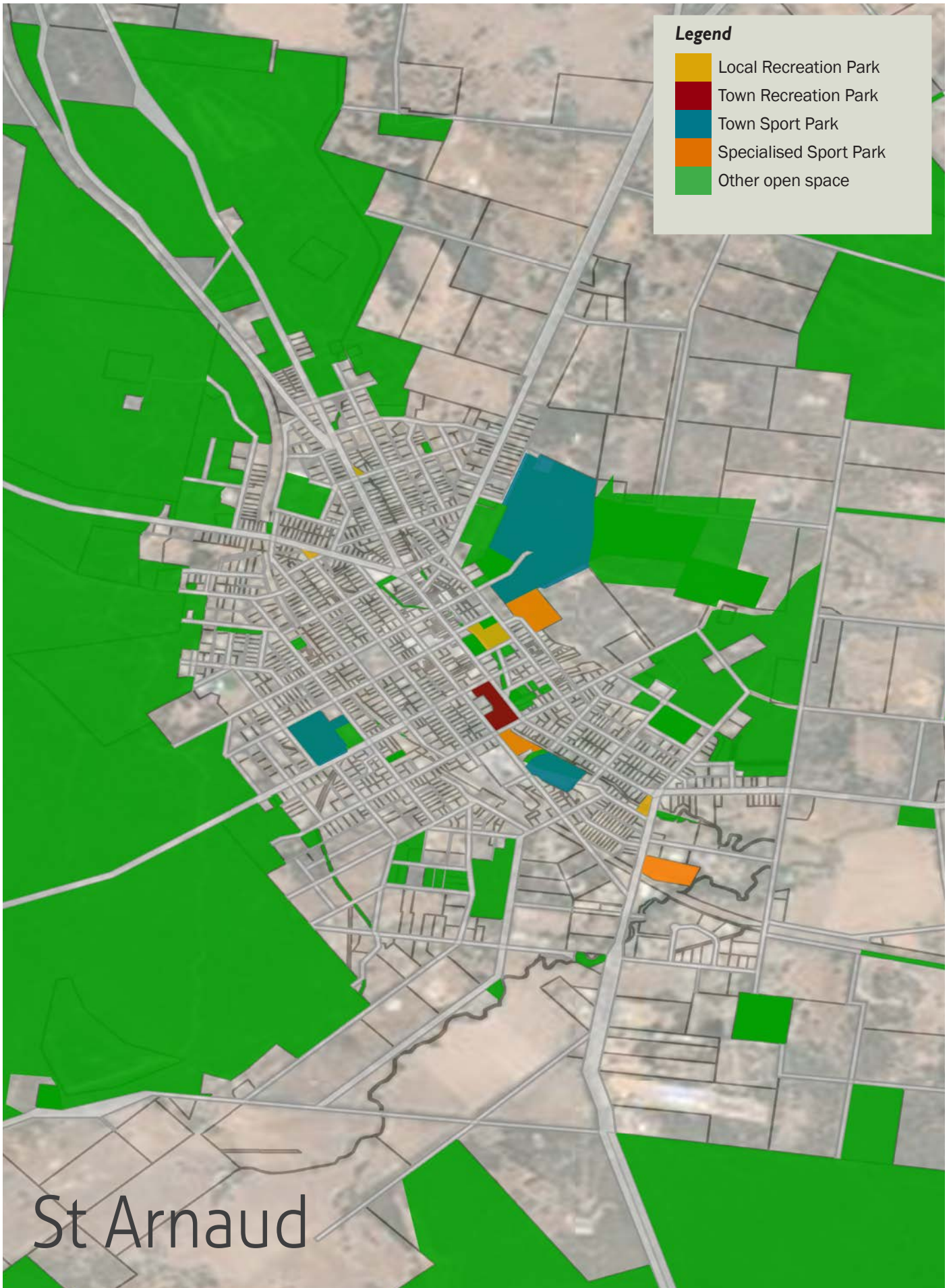
**Legend**

- Local Recreation Park
- Town Recreation Park
- Town Sport Park
- Specialised Sport Park
- Other open space

# Stawell

Stawell - all open space





**Legend**

- Local Recreation Park
- Town Recreation Park
- Town Sport Park
- Specialised Sport Park
- Other open space

# St Arnaud

St Arnaud - all open space



# Planning area directions

Planning areas have been identified across the Shire to allow strategic analysis and direction for public open space, specific parks and reserves, and active transport. The planning areas are in alphabetical order and are:

- Glenorchy
- Great Western
- Halls Gap
- Marnoo
- Navarre
- St Arnaud
- Stawell
- Stuart Mill.

It is important to note that this Strategy is primarily concerned with ensuring public open space and active transport meets relevant desired standards of service and infrastructure standards to meet the broad recreation needs of the community.

Additional recommendations for specific parks and reserves are also included in the Sport and Active Recreation Strategy.



## 6.1 Glenorchy

### Snapshot

131	population
53	median age
55	(42.8%) female
76	(57.2%) male
2.1	average people per household
\$1,020	median weekly household income
4	(6.7%) unoccupied dwellings



### 6.1.1 Locality

Glenorchy is an outlying community located on the Wimmera River about 23km north-west of Stawell via the Western Highway and the Stawell-Warracknabeal Road.

The planning area is comprised of low density residential township zone, rural living zone, and farming zone under Council's Planning Scheme.

### 6.1.2 Public open space

A needs-based approach has been applied to open space planning in Glenorchy.

The planning area contains the following public open space:

- Clarke Street Playground
- Glenorchy Tennis Club Reserve
- Glenorchy Golf Club.

No additional public open space is required.

In addition to public open space, residents can access additional open spaces such as natural areas and waterways. The Wimmera River travels along the southern boundary of the community in a generally north-west to south-east direction. Glenorchy I5 Bushland Reserve borders the western side of the community and the Glenorchy Streamside Reserve is located about 6km east of the village via Campbell's Bridge Road.

### 6.1.3 Active transport

There are no existing footpaths or cycle lanes within the village to connect people to key destinations such as the Community Hall and Postal Agency, bus stop, sport facilities or playground.

#### Active Transport Directions

- design and construct the primary and secondary active transport routes as indicated in the Active Transport Strategy Glenorchy map on page 56 to provide safe walk and cycle infrastructure for residents.

## 6.2 Great Western

### Snapshot

425	population
52	median age
207	(48.7%) female
218	(51.3%) male
2.2	average people per household
\$1,474	median weekly household income
25	(12.2%) unoccupied dwellings



### 6.2.1 Locality

Great Western is located about 15km south-east of Stawell, on the Western Highway, and could be described as a gateway to the Shire, when travelling from Melbourne. The Western Highway travels through the centre of the community.

The planning area is comprised of low density residential town zone, rural living zone, and farming zone under Council's Planning Scheme.

### 6.2.2 Public open space

A needs-based approach has been applied to open space planning in Great Western.

The planning area contains the following public open space:

- Great Western Memorial Park
- Great Western Public Park Reserve
- Great Western Racecourse and Reserve.

No additional public open space is required.

In addition to public open space, residents can access additional open spaces including the following natural areas (not an exhaustive list):

- Great Western Lead Bushland Reserve
- Great Western Lead Mine Historic and Cultural Features Reserve
- Concongella H8A Bushland Reserve
- Hyde Park Bushland Reserve
- Black Range Scenic Reserve.

### 6.2.3 Active transport

There are no existing footpaths or cycle lanes within the village to connect people to key destinations such as the Community Hall and Postal Agency, bus stop, sport facilities or playground.

#### Active Transport Directions

- design and construct the primary and secondary active transport routes as indicated in the Active Transport Strategy Great Western map on page 57 to provide safe walk and cycle infrastructure for residents.



## 6.3 Halls Gap

### Snapshot

495	population
44	median age
227	(45.9%) female
268	(54.1%) male
2	average people per household
\$1,196	median weekly household income
230	(55.2%) unoccupied dwellings



### 6.3.1 Locality

Halls Gap is a small rural town at the southern edge of the Northern Grampians Shire and located in a narrow valley at the foothills of the Grampians National Park. During the peak of the tourism season, the population can swell to 10,000 people.

The planning area is comprised of low density residential zone, general residential zone, rural activity zone, rural conservation zone, farming zone, public conservation and resource zone, and public park and recreation zone under Council's Planning Scheme.

### 6.3.2 Public open space

A needs-based approach has been applied to open space planning in Halls Gap.

The planning area contains the following public open space:

- Halls Gap Recreation Reserve
- Halls Gap Caravan Park
- Halls Gap Swimming Pool
- Halls Gap Botanical Gardens
- Halls Gap Community Gardens.

No additional public open space is required.

The Grampians National Park is a world-famous conservation area known for its natural environment and hiking trails. Traditionally known as Gariwerd, the region is part of the Gariwerd Aboriginal cultural landscape and is home to the largest collection of significant and ancient Aboriginal rock

art paintings and shelters in southern Australia. In addition to bushwalking and hiking, other outdoor recreation activities include fishing, kayaking or canoeing, and rock-climbing. Shared paths and trails also attract mountain bike riders and cyclists.

### 6.3.3 Active transport

There are existing footpaths and shared paths within the village to connect people to key destinations such as the retail shopping strip, Community Hall, bus stop, sport facilities, recreation reserve and play space.

#### Active Transport Directions

- design and construct the primary and secondary active transport routes as indicated in the Active Transport Strategy Halls Gap map on page 58 to provide safe walk and cycle infrastructure for residents.

## 6.4 Marnoo

### Snapshot

99	population
52	median age
46	(46.7%) female
53	(53.3%) male
2.1	average people per household
\$900	median weekly household income



### 6.4.1 Locality

Marnoo is a small outlying community in the north of the Shire surrounded by rural farming properties.

The planning area is comprised of township zone, farming zone, and public conservation and resource zone under Council's Planning Scheme.

### 6.4.2 Public open space

A needs-based approach has been applied to open space planning in Marnoo.

The planning area contains the following public open space:

- Shanahan Park
- Marnoo Recreation Reserve.

No additional public open space is required.

In addition to public open space, residents can access additional open spaces such as the Wallaloo Creek that travels along the western edge of the settlement.

### 6.4.3 Active transport

There are no existing footpaths or cycle lanes within the village to connect people to key destinations such as the sport facilities or playground.

#### Active Transport Directions

- design and construct the primary and secondary active transport routes as indicated in the Active Transport Strategy Marnoo map on page 59 to provide safe walk and cycle infrastructure for residents.

## 6.5 Navarre

### Snapshot

99	population
54	median age
54	(54.9%) female
45	(45.1%) male
2.2	average people per household
\$814	median weekly household income



### 6.5.1 Locality

Navarre is a small outlying community located north-east of Stawell on the Stawell-Avoca Road.

The planning area is comprised of township zone, farming zone, state transport infrastructure zone, public park and recreation zone, and rural living zone under Council's Planning Scheme.

### 6.5.2 Public open space

A needs-based approach has been applied to open space planning in Navarre.

The planning area contains the following public open space:

- Navarre Recreation Reserve
- Stawell-Avoca Road Playground.

No additional public open space is required.

In addition to public open space, residents can access additional open spaces such as Kara Kara National Park to the east, Landsborough Hill Nature Conservation Reserve to the south, and several conservation reserves to the north. Wattle Creek travels along the southern edge of the settlement.

### 6.5.3 Active transport

There are no existing footpaths or cycle lanes within the village to connect people to key destinations such as the sport facilities or playground.

#### Active Transport Directions

- design and construct the primary and secondary active transport routes as indicated in the Active Transport Strategy Navarre map on page 60 to provide safe walk and cycle infrastructure for residents.

## 6.6 St Arnaud

### Snapshot

2,318	population
52	median age
1,203	(51.9%) female
1,115	(49.3%) male
2	average people per household
\$920	median weekly household income
54	Aboriginal/ Torres Strait Islander people
1,042	(86.6%) occupied private dwellings
160	(13.3%) unoccupied private dwellings



### 6.6.1 Locality

St. Arnaud is a historic and picturesque town with a distinctive urban layout, surrounded by fertile agricultural land and offering a range of outdoor and recreational opportunities. Its population is modest, but its rich history and community spirit make it a welcoming and attractive destination for both residents and visitors.

St Arnaud is located in the northern part of the Shire and has a compact and well-defined town centre, with a mix of historic and modern buildings. The town's layout is a grid-pattern, with wide streets and a town centre. This layout reflects the town's origins in the mid-19th century as a gold mining and agricultural service centre.

The town features a coordinated network of parks and green spaces making it an attractive area for outdoor recreation, and easy to travel around by walking or cycling.

The town is located in close proximity to several natural features, including the St. Arnaud Range to the south, which provides a scenic backdrop to the town. The presence of several nearby lakes and wetlands enhances the local landscape and provides opportunities for recreational activities.



## 6.6.2 Public open space network

A desired standard of service (DSS) approach has been applied to open space planning in St Arnaud.

The following table summarises directions to ensure the public open space network can function to deliver the required levels of service and remain fit-for-purpose.

PARK NAME	HIERARCHY & CLASSIFICATION	DIRECTIONS
Lord Nelson Park	Town sport park	<input type="checkbox"/> continue to implement the Lord Nelson Park Precinct Plan 2015 <input type="checkbox"/> refer to NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Plan
Pioneer Park	Local recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> partner with the Kara Branch of the Central Wimmera Group Country Women's Association (CWA) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» review the 'Initial Report on Pioneer Park' by Edna Walling and the 'Restoration Plan' prepared by Trisha Dixon (this could be in the form of an 'As Constructed' initial drawing of Pioneer Park)</li> <li>» develop a landscape master plan that recognises the original design intent and restoration elements, as well as additional upgrades and new features to meet the needs of the community</li> <li>» replace signage that has reached the end of its useful life, and particularly those that convey the important history of the park.</li> </ul>
St Arnaud Swimming Pool	Specialised public swimming pool	<input type="checkbox"/> refer to NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy
Silvermines Road Park	Local recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> change hierarchy and classification to Civic as this land parcel is not sufficient size to be developed into a recreation park <input type="checkbox"/> additional tree planting and landscaping
Apex Park	Local recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> develop a landscape plan for the park including additional embellishments (facilities) to enhance its use. Consider including elements such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» picnic shelter(s) with table and chairs settings</li> <li>» shade structure over play space</li> <li>» appropriate treatment of stormwater treatment through site in accordance with WSUD principles</li> <li>» additional landscaping including tree planting</li> </ul>
Market Square	Local recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> review and renew the Market Square Master Plan 2019, particularly pedestrian walkways and safety improvements
Queen Mary Gardens	Town recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> continue to maintain Queen Mary Gardens consistent with the Landscape Plan and to support community activities and events
St Arnaud Bowls Club	Specialised sport park	<input type="checkbox"/> refer to NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy
King Georges Park	Town sport park	<input type="checkbox"/> refer to NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy
St Arnaud Sports Stadium and sports field/oval	Specialised sport indoor facility and sports field/oval	<input type="checkbox"/> refer to NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy
Bicentennial Park	Local recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> install shade over the play space <input type="checkbox"/> develop a landscape plan for Bicentennial Park focused on additional tree planting and native garden beds to beautify the Park
St Arnaud Lawn Tennis	Specialised sport park	<input type="checkbox"/> refer to NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy

## 6.2.3 Active transport network

There are existing footpaths, shared paths, cycle lanes and trails within St Arnaud that support walking and cycling for recreation and active transport.

### Active Transport Directions

- design and construct the primary and secondary active transport routes as indicated in the Active Transport Strategy St Arnaud map on page 55 to provide safe walk and cycle infrastructure for residents.

## 6.7 Stawell

### Snapshot

5,627	population
48	median age
2,853	(50.7%) female
2,774	(49.3%) male
2.1	average people per household
\$1,089	median weekly household income
118	Aboriginal/ Torres Strait Islander people
2,384	(88.9%) occupied private dwellings
294	(11%) unoccupied private dwellings



### 6.7.1 Locality

Stawell is located in the southern portion of the Shire with a settlement pattern primarily concentrated around the town centre. The topography of the area is characterised by rolling hills and scenic landscapes, making it a popular destination for nature enthusiasts and hikers.

Stawell is perhaps best known for annual Stawell Gift event, a prestigious footrace that has been held since 1878, drawing athletes and spectators from far and wide. This event adds a unique and vibrant dimension to the town's cultural heritage.

The population of Stawell is modest, with a close-knit community that enjoys a relaxed, small-town atmosphere. Residents take pride in their rich mining history, which is evident in the town's architecture and local museums.

Stawell is the Shire's largest population centre, and is approximately 30 minutes drive to the stunning Grampians National Park, where visitors can explore waterfalls, wildlife, and indigenous rock art. The town is also famous for its gold mining heritage, with historical sites and museums that offer a glimpse into the region's past. Stawell is a place where natural beauty and history combine to create a welcoming and intriguing destination for both locals and tourists alike.





## 6.7.2 Public open space network

A desired standard of service (DSS) approach has been applied to open space planning in Stawell.

The following table summarises directions to ensure the public open space network can function to deliver the required levels of service and remain fit-for-purpose.

Of note, two new recreation parks have been proposed in the proposed urban growth area to meet the DSS levels of services and performance standards, particularly distribution. Enhancements to existing parks have been recommended to eliminate distribution gaps in the public open space network, namely at North Park and Cypress Street Public Park Reserve.

PARK NAME	HIERARCHY & CLASSIFICATION	DIRECTIONS
Proposed new	Town recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure appropriate land and embellishments are dedicated to develop a Town Recreation Park in the potential urban growth area
Proposed new	Local recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure appropriate land and embellishments are dedicated to develop a Local Recreation Park in the potential urban growth area
Stawell Golf Club	Specialised sport park	<input type="checkbox"/> refer to NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy
North Park	Town sport park (and including recreation elements such as fenced dog park and proposed future play space)	<input type="checkbox"/> continue to implement the North Park Master Plan November 2022 <input type="checkbox"/> identify an appropriate area and for a play space at North Park <input type="checkbox"/> develop a detailed design for a children's play space at North Park to ensure adequate access by surrounding families <input type="checkbox"/> identify appropriate access to toilets for unstructured recreation users of North Park
Stawell Sports and Aquatic Centre	Specialised sport indoor facility	<input type="checkbox"/> refer to NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy
Cypress Street Public Park Reserve	Local recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> Cypress Street is a relatively small park (just over 5,000m <sup>2</sup> ) and is located at a busy road intersection used by heavy vehicles. It is acknowledged that safe use of this park is a key consideration. Despite these constraints however, if designed and developed carefully this park could provide local recreation benefits to surrounding residents. It is recommended that Council develop a landscape plan for the park including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» appropriate treatments (fencing, landscaping) to manage and mitigate safety concerns relating to adjacent roads</li> <li>» enhance its use as a small local play space with broad age appeal (e.g. swings, climbing and imagination play)</li> <li>» additional landscape elements and seating</li> <li>» consider line marked car parking and traffic calming along Barnes Street</li> </ul>
Central Park	Town sport park	<input type="checkbox"/> continue to implement the Stawell Parks Precinct Plan <input type="checkbox"/> refer to NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy <input type="checkbox"/> investigate treatments to pedestrianise Victoria Street between Central and Cato Parks <input type="checkbox"/> investigate treatments to enhance the road frontage along Napier Street for the length of Central and Cato Parks <input type="checkbox"/> investigate treatments to enhance the road safety of the intersection including Taylor, Frayne, Main and Napier Streets <input type="checkbox"/> investigate landscaping treatments to enhance the visual appeal and functionality of the corner of the park at the intersection of Napier and Main Streets
Cato Park	Town recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> continue to implement the Stawell Parks Precinct Plan <input type="checkbox"/> when due for asset renewal/replacement, consider upgrading the children's playground to create a destination play space for multiple age groups (infants through to teens) with consideration of improved accessibility <input type="checkbox"/> partner with Neighbourhood House to assess that the existing amenities comply with relevant accessibility codes and standards (refer to 'Changing Places' design standards), and support any modifications and works to rectify non-compliance

PARK NAME	HIERARCHY & CLASSIFICATION	DIRECTIONS
Norman Castle Park	Local recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> continue to implement the Stawell Parks Precinct Plan
Stawell Harness Club	Specialised sport	<input type="checkbox"/> refer to NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy
Taylor's Gully Park	Local recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> develop a landscape plan for the park including additional embellishments (facilities) to enhance its use for a broader age demographic of the community. Consider including elements such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» picnic shelter(s) with table and chairs settings</li> <li>» area designed for youth, separate to the children's play space</li> <li>» investigation and rectification of play space soft fall drainage issues</li> <li>» internal circuit pathway around the perimeter and connecting to key facilities within the park</li> <li>» additional landscaping</li> </ul>
Gladstone Park	Local recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> include additional embellishment to enhance and increase use of the park including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» picnic shelter(s) with table and chairs settings</li> <li>» additional shade tree planting and landscaping</li> <li>» internal pathways connecting to key facilities within the park</li> </ul>
Federation Park	Town recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> change hierarchy from local (existing) to town (proposed) recreation park <input type="checkbox"/> confirm Federation Park as the Grampians Rail Trail trailhead <input type="checkbox"/> develop a landscape master plan for the park recognising and retaining its semi-natural setting and including appropriate embellishments to enhance its use, including as a destination for travellers to showcase the town and region
Burgh Street Complex	Local recreation park	<input type="checkbox"/> create a clearly marked trail network with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» trails that are easy to locate and navigate with clear entries/exits</li> <li>» well formed trails that are easily identified</li> <li>» develop a trailhead, including signage and maps (trail network, interest points, distances, grading, regulatory information)</li> </ul>
Burgh Street Oval/Velodrome	Town sport park	<input type="checkbox"/> refer to NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy
Stawell Racecourse Reserve	Specialised sport park	<input type="checkbox"/> refer to NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy

### 6.7.3 Active transport network

There are existing footpaths, shared paths, cycle lanes and trails within Stawell that support walking and cycling for recreation and active transport.

#### Active Transport Directions

- design and construct the primary and secondary active transport routes as indicated in the Active Transport Strategy Stawell map on page 54 to provide safe walk and cycle infrastructure for residents.

## 6.8 Stuart Mill

### Snapshot

78	population
57	median age
38	(48.8%) female
40	(51.2%) male
2.1	average people per household
\$1,042	median weekly household income



### 6.8.1 Locality

Stuart Mill is a small outlying community positioned toward the north-eastern part of the Shire.

The planning area is comprised of township zone, rural living zone, farming zone, and public conservation and resource zone under Council's Planning Scheme.

### 6.8.2 Public open space

A needs-based approach has been applied to open space planning in Stuart Mill.

The planning area contains one public open space area: the Stuart Mill Recreation Reserve (also known as the Cricket and Recreation Reserve).

No additional open space is required.

In addition to public open space, residents can access additional open spaces such as nearby Stuart Mill Nature Conservation Reserve, Kara Kara National Park, and Dalyenong Nature Conservation Reserve. The Strathfillan Creek travels along the north-western edge of the village with minor ephemeral tributaries running through the community.

### 6.8.3 Active Transport

There are no existing footpaths or cycle lanes within the community to connect people to key destinations such as the sport facilities or playground.

#### Active Transport Directions

- design and construct the primary and secondary active transport routes as indicated in the Active Transport Strategy Stuart Mill map on page 61 to provide safe walk and cycle infrastructure for residents.



# Implementation plan

Implementation of the directions outlined in this Strategy will require strong leadership, appropriate resources from Council, a partnership approach, and a commitment to making some difficult decisions. Importantly, the directions do not commit Council as sole lead for implementation. Rather, the report engenders ongoing Council, government, business, and community partnerships and provides evidence and support for all groups to seek grant funding and other investment opportunities.

The directions recommended in this Strategy are summarised in this section and are grouped by planning area - Council-wide first followed by each of the localities within the LGA. This allows interested readers easy access to those actions most directly related to them.

Priorities are assigned for each action:

Immediate - an immediate action should be undertaken as soon as resources allow.

High - a high priority should be undertaken within the next 1 - 3 years.

Medium - a medium priority should be undertaken within the next 4 - 6 years

Low - a low priority should be undertaken within the next 7 - 10 years.

Excepting immediate priorities, the recommended priorities are provided as a guide—changes in community requirements or earlier opportunities for funding may alter development.

Project leaders have not been assigned for each action. However, each project identified requires a responsible party to take action, form a project team and drive each project to its successful completion. It is recommended that project leaders identify other groups and individuals in the community for assistance and support to achieve projects identified in the Strategy.

## 7.1 Key directions

NO.	KEY DIRECTION	PRIORITY
<b>OPERATIONAL</b>		
OP1	Ensure budget allocation for identified projects is included in Council's capital works plan and annual operational plan	Ongoing
OP2	Ensure that the Open Space and Active Transport Strategy is consistently referenced to develop operational plans and budgets, and capital budgets, effectively being utilised as a 'work plan' for relevant Council Officer(s), recognising that the lead role for implementation of directions requires allocation to the most appropriate officer with the most relevant skill set/area of responsibility	Ongoing
<b>PARTNERSHIPS</b>		
PA1	Collaborate with businesses and relevant government agencies to develop new and promote existing campaigns to specific destinations within the Northern Grampians to increase awareness and access to existing recreation and outdoor recreation opportunities to residents and potential visitors	Ongoing
PA2	Collaborate with health and health promotion agencies and media outlets in the Northern Grampians to promote <i>Australia's Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines</i> , highlighting each of the guides applicable to age brackets and distinct groups and promote current activities available in towns and communities	High
<b>PLANNING</b>		
PL1	Ensure the Desired Standards of Service (DSS), hierarchy and open space embellishment guidelines detailed within this Strategy are included in key Council planning instruments such as the Planning Scheme, Structure and Master Plans, and any developer guidelines	High
PL2	Prepare a Clause 52.01 schedule for open space contributions using the information in Section 4 - Strategic framework and Section 5 - Open space gap analysis	Immediate
PL3	Develop a shade tree planting program by undertaking a planning process to identify open spaces (particularly recreation and sport parks) and walking routes/circuits in each town that require shade.  This could also contribute to any climate change adaptation and mitigation planning Council undertakes.	High
PL4	Apply Universal Design principles to guide design of parks including embellishments, buildings, internal pathways and playground equipment	Ongoing
PL5	Develop a Signage Strategy for parks identifying the style and best locations for name, information, direction, interpretation and wayfinding signage to support independent and confident navigation to sport and recreation parks, particularly via active transport routes, by residents and visitors.  Standardise park signage across the Shire including park naming signs, park directional signs and walk/cycle opportunity signs	Medium
PL6	Conduct an information session for councillors, the executive team and senior officers regarding modern play opportunities and trends in play space design to support their understanding of design intent, importance to healthy childhood development, and cost implications	High
PL7	Undertake a feasibility study to identify the costs, benefits and whether a continuous connection from Stawell to Halls Gap can be achieved, including the existing Grampians Rail Trail and Halls Gap Zoo connection. Ongoing maintenance considerations should also be identified	Medium
<b>POLICY</b>		
PO1	Adopt the Northern Grampians Shire Council Open Space and Active Transport Strategy as a policy document to guide operational planning and budget allocation, and capital budget allocation over the next 10 years	Immediate
PO2	Adopt the Infrastructure Design Manual (IDM) and standard drawings to ensure that Northern Grampians Shire Council is designing and developing infrastructure that is consistent with other rural and regional Victorian Councils	Immediate
PO3	Identify and implement a continuous walk and cycle route connecting the Grampians Rail Trail and Federation Park Trailhead with the Stawell Railway Station allowing visitors to confidently travel to the area without a private vehicle	Medium

NO.	KEY DIRECTION	PRIORITY
<b>ST ARNAUD PUBLIC OPEN SPACE</b>		
Apex Park		
SA POS1	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a landscape plan for the park including additional embellishments (facilities) to enhance its use. Consider including elements such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» picnic shelter(s) with table and chairs settings</li> <li>» shade structure over play space</li> <li>» appropriate treatment of stormwater treatment through site in accordance with WSUD principles</li> <li>» additional landscaping including tree planting</li> </ul>	Medium
Bicentennial Park		
SA POS2	<input type="checkbox"/> Install shade over the play space	High
SA POS3	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a landscape plan for Bicentennial Park focused on additional tree planting and native garden beds to beautify the Park	Medium
King Georges Park		
SA POS4	<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to the NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy	NA
Lord Nelson Park		
SA POS5	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to implement the Lord Nelson Park Precinct Plan 2015 <input type="checkbox"/> Refer to the NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy	Various
Market Square		
SA POS6	<input type="checkbox"/> Review and renew the Market Square Master Plan 2019, particularly pedestrian walkways and safety improvements	
Pioneer Park		
SA POS7	<input type="checkbox"/> Partner with the Kara Branch of the Central Wimmera Group Country Women's Association (CWA) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» review the 'Initial Report on Pioneer Park' by Edna Walling and the 'Restoration Plan' prepared by Trisha Dixon (this could be in the form of an 'As Constructed' initial drawing of Pioneer Park)</li> <li>» develop a landscape master plan that recognises the original design intent and restoration elements, as well as additional upgrades and new features to meet the needs of the community</li> <li>» replace signage that has reached the end of its useful life, and particularly those that convey the important history of the park.</li> </ul>	
Queen Mary Gardens		
SA POS8	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to maintain Queen Mary Gardens consistent with the Landscape Plan and to support community activities and events	
Silvermines Road Park		
SA POS9	<input type="checkbox"/> Change hierarchy and classification to Civic as this land parcel is not sufficient size to be developed into a recreation park <input type="checkbox"/> Additional tree planting and landscaping	
St Arnaud Sport and Aquatic Facilities		
-	<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to the NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy for actions relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» St Arnaud Swimming Pool</li> <li>» St Arnaud Bowls Club</li> <li>» St Arnaud Sports Stadium and sports field/oval</li> <li>» St Arnaud Lawn Tennis.</li> </ul>	
<b>STAWELL PUBLIC OPEN SPACE</b>		
Proposed new recreation parks		
ST POS1	<input type="checkbox"/> Town Recreation Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» ensure appropriate land and embellishments are dedicated to develop a Town Recreation Park in the potential urban growth area</li> </ul>	
ST POS2	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Recreation Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» ensure appropriate land and embellishments are dedicated to develop a Local Recreation Park in the potential urban growth area</li> </ul>	

NO.	KEY DIRECTION	PRIORITY
<b>Burgh Street Complex</b>		
ST POS3	<input type="checkbox"/> Create a clearly marked trail network with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» trails that are easy to locate and navigate with clear entries/exits</li> <li>» well formed trails that are easily identified</li> <li>» develop a trailhead, including signage and maps (trail network, interest points, distances, grading, regulatory information)</li> </ul>	High
<b>Cato Park</b>		
ST POS4	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to implement the Stawell Parks Precinct Plan	Ongoing
ST POS5	<input type="checkbox"/> When due for asset renewal/replacement, consider upgrading the children's playground to create a destination play space for multiple age groups (infants through to teens) with consideration of improved accessibility	Medium
ST POS6	<input type="checkbox"/> Partner with Neighbourhood House to assess that the existing amenities comply with relevant accessibility codes and standards (refer to 'Changing Places' design standards), and support any modifications and works to rectify non-compliance	High
<b>Central Park</b>		
ST POS7	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to implement the Stawell Parks Precinct Plan	Ongoing
ST POS8	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigate treatments to pedestrianise Victoria Street between Central and Cato Parks	Medium
ST POS9	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigate treatments to enhance the road frontage along Napier Street for the length of Central and Cato Parks	Medium
ST POS10	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigate treatments to enhance the road safety of the intersection including Taylor, Frayne, Main and Napier Streets	High
ST POS11	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigate landscaping treatments to enhance the visual appeal and functionality of the corner of the park at the intersection of Napier and Main Streets	High
<b>Cypress Street Park</b>		
ST POS12	<input type="checkbox"/> Cypress Street is a relatively small park (just over 5,000m <sup>2</sup> ) and is located at a busy road intersection used by heavy vehicles. It is acknowledged that safe use of this park is a key consideration. Despite these constraints however, if designed and developed carefully this park could provide local recreation benefits to surrounding residents. It is recommended that Council develop a landscape plan for the park including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» appropriate treatments (fencing, landscaping) to manage and mitigate safety concerns relating to adjacent roads</li> <li>» enhance its use as a small local play space with broad age appeal (e.g. swings, climbing and imagination play)</li> <li>» additional landscape elements and seating</li> <li>» consider line marked car parking and traffic calming along Barnes Street</li> </ul>	
<b>Federation Park</b>		
ST POS13	<input type="checkbox"/> Change hierarchy from local (existing) to town (proposed) recreation park	
ST POS14	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm Federation Park as the Grampians Rail Trail trailhead	
ST POS15	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a landscape master plan for the park recognising and retaining its semi-natural setting and including appropriate embellishments to enhance its use, including as a destination for travellers to showcase the town and region <input type="checkbox"/> Identify and implement a continuous walk and cycle route connecting the Grampians Rail Trail and Federation Park Trailhead with the Stawell Railway Station allowing visitors to confidently travel to the area without a private vehicle	
<b>Gladstone Park</b>		
ST POS16	<input type="checkbox"/> Include additional embellishment to enhance and increase use of the park including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» picnic shelter(s) with table and chairs settings</li> <li>» additional shade tree planting and landscaping</li> <li>» internal pathways connecting to key facilities within the park</li> </ul>	

NO.	KEY DIRECTION	PRIORITY
North Park		
ST POS17	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to implement the North Park Master Plan November 2022	
ST POS18	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify an appropriate area and for a play space at North Park	
ST POS19	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a detailed design for a children's play space at North Park to ensure adequate access by surrounding families	
ST POS20	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify appropriate access to toilets for unstructured recreation users of North Park	
Norman Castle Park		
ST POS21	<input type="checkbox"/> continue to implement the Stawell Parks Precinct Plan	
Stawell Sport and Aquatic Facilities		
-	<input type="checkbox"/> Refer to the NGSC Sport and Active Recreation Strategy for actions relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Stawell Golf Club</li> <li>» Stawell Sports and Aquatic Centre</li> <li>» Stawell Harness Club</li> <li>» Stawell Racecourse Reserve</li> </ul>	
Taylors Gully Park		
ST POS22	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a landscape plan for the park including additional embellishments (facilities) to enhance its use for a broader age demographic of the community. Consider including elements such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» picnic shelter(s) with table and chairs settings</li> <li>» area designed for youth, separate to the children's play space</li> <li>» investigation and rectification of play space soft fall drainage issues</li> <li>» internal circuit pathway around the perimeter and connecting to key facilities within the park</li> <li>» additional landscaping</li> </ul>	
<b>ACTIVE TRANSPORT STRATEGY</b>		
1.0 Increase the provision of quality on-road and off-road active transport infrastructure across the Shire		
AT1.1	Address gaps in connections and facilitate the creation of circuits (loops)	
AT1.2	Improve the provision of a walk and cycle network both on- and off-road (refer to maps)	
AT1.3	Increase the length of off-road cycle routes that are safe, accessible, convenient, comfortable and attractive	
AT1.4	Improve the level of safety for cyclists/pedestrians during infrastructure upgrades	
2.0 Effective maintenance of the active transport network		
AT2.1	Improve maintenance systems of current active transport infrastructure	
3.0 Align the Council Planning Scheme and recognise the role of active transport		
AT3.1	Embed active transport and Healthy by Design values into Council's strategic objectives	
4.0 Raise the profile and increase the prestige of active transport options		
AT4.1	Increase awareness within the community of places to walk and cycle	
AT4.2	Promote the benefits of walking and cycling	
AT4.3	Support events, activities and infrastructure upgrades that will promote walking and cycling	
AT4.4	Identify community leaders and ambassadors from key organisations and the community	
5.0 Enable more people to confidently walk and cycle and maintain a bicycle		
AT5.1	Support an increase in the level of cycling skills and knowledge of relevant rules	
AT5.2	Reduce barriers to walking and cycling	
6.0 Enable cyclists, pedestrians and motorists to interact more considerately and safely		
AT6.1	Promote road rules and mutual respect between cyclists, pedestrians and motorists	
7.0 Monitor and report walking and cycling participation data		
AT7.1	Establish methods to monitor levels of walking and cycling across the Shire	





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### **National Reserve System**

The National Reserve System is a network of protected areas aimed at conserving examples of Australia's natural landscapes and native plants and animals for future generations. Underpinned by a scientific framework, it is the nation's natural safety net against our biggest environmental challenges.

At the time of writing this report, the reserve system includes 13,540 protected areas covering 19.75 per cent of the country, which is over 151.8 million hectares. The network includes Commonwealth, state and territory reserves, Indigenous lands and protected areas run by non-profit conservation organisations, as well as ecosystems protected by farmers on their private working properties.

The places that make up the National Reserve System provide an extensive range of diverse outdoor recreation locations, where these activities are appropriate.

### **National Landcare Program**

The National Landcare Program (NLP) was established in 1990 to focus on supporting natural resource management and sustainable agriculture, and protecting Australia's biodiversity.

A robust outcomes-based reporting framework is an important part of the program and this has helped to improve monitoring and evaluation of program outcomes.

Landcare programs operating in Northern Grampians Shire include the West Wimmera Landcare Network and Project Platypus.

### **Healthy Active by Design**

Healthy Active by Design is a website created by the Heart Foundation to highlight best-practice planning and design and includes research, advice and case studies to assist develop healthy and active neighbourhoods. Several of the resources will be applied to the investigation and development of the NGSC strategies including:

- What Australia Wants Living Locally in Walkable Neighbourhoods (Vic Summary)
- Active Streets - the new normal for public space
- Active Travel to School - Urban Design Study
- Quality Green Space Supporting Health, Wellbeing and Biodiversity: A Literature Review.

### **National Cycling Strategy 2011-2016**

The National Cycling Strategy includes six key priorities. These are:

- Cycling promotion: Promote cycling as both a viable and safe mode of transport and an enjoyable recreational activity
- Infrastructure and facilities: Create a comprehensive network of safe and attractive routes to cycle and end-of-trip facilities
- Integrated planning: Consider and address cycling needs in all relevant transport and land use planning activities
- Safety: Enable people to cycle safely
- Monitoring and evaluation: Improve monitoring and evaluation of cycling programs and develop a national decision making process for investment in cycling
- Guidance and best practice: Develop nationally consistent technical guidance for stakeholders to use and share best practice across jurisdictions.

Table 09: Relevant legislation, policy options, and guidelines relevant to the Strategy

LEGISLATION	APPLICATION
Planning legislation	
Planning and Environment Act 1987	<p>Land use in Victoria is regulated by the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (The Act) allows plans to be made to guide the process of development and to regulate competing land uses. The Act enables planning through subordinate instruments including the Victoria Planning Provisions, planning scheme, regulations and Ministerial directions.</p> <p>The Northern Grampians Planning Scheme is the principal land use planning instrument applying to land in the Northern Grampians local government area.</p>
Ministerial Directions	<p>Directions can be issued by the Minister for Planning to planning authorities about the preparation of planning schemes and amendments to planning schemes. These directions apply to planning scheme layout and required information, including amendments to those planning schemes, and should be read in conjunction with the Victoria Planning Provisions. When preparing a planning scheme or an amendment, planning authorities must consider all Ministerial directions.</p>
Subdivision Act 1988	<p>Northern Grampians Shire Council does not currently have an Infrastructure Contributions Plan and Policy. Therefore it currently relies on the Subdivision Act for open space contributions.</p> <p>The Act governs the requirements and guidelines for subdividing land. The Act is an important piece of legislation that helps to balance the need for urban development with the preservation of green spaces and public recreation areas.</p> <p>One of the provisions of the act pertains to open space contributions. When a piece of land is subdivided, the act requires that a certain amount of open space must be set aside for public use. This open space contribution is calculated as a percentage of the total area of the subdivision and must be provided in the form of parks, embellishments such as playgrounds, or other public recreation areas. The aim of this requirement is to ensure that new developments have adequate public open space for residents to enjoy, thus enhancing the liveability of the area.</p> <p>It is Council's intent to develop a contributions policy to guide open space contributions, after completion of the Open Space and Active Transport Strategy.</p>
Contributions Policy	<p>A Contributions Policy outlines how the open space contributions required by the Subdivision Act 1988 will be implemented within the jurisdiction of that specific local government authority. The policy will establish Desired Standards of Service including the percentage of open space that must be set aside for public use, as well as the characteristics of open spaces that are considered acceptable. The policy may also outline the process for obtaining approval for a subdivision, including the submission of plans and documentation, as well as any fees that may be payable.</p> <p>It's important to note that the requirements for open space contributions can vary between localities, as the open space and recreation needs of different communities vary.</p> <p>A Contributions Policy provides a level of detail and specificity to the open space contribution requirements outlined in the Subdivision Act 1988. It ensures that new developments are providing adequate public open space for residents to enjoy, while also ensuring that these open spaces meet the specific needs and requirements of the local community.</p>
Other relevant legislation	
Local Government Act 2020	<p>The Act aims to achieve improved service delivery, innovation, collaboration, and sustainable futures through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> better financial management and community engagement</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> clearer standards of behaviour for elected representatives</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> increased council and councillor accountability</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> changes to election processes and candidate requirements</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> increased transparency of council decisions.</li> </ul>

LEGISLATION	APPLICATION
Victorian Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994	<p>The Act is aimed at protecting the state’s natural resources, including soil, water, and vegetation, from degradation and depletion. The Act establishes the framework for managing land, water, and other natural resources in a sustainable manner, with a focus on preserving the environment for future generations. It also provides the basis for regulation and enforcement of environmental standards, and ensures that development is carried out in an environmentally responsible manner.</p> <p>The Act is widely recognised as one of the most comprehensive pieces of environmental legislation in Australia, and has had a significant impact on the protection and preservation of the state’s natural resources</p>
Infrastructure, design guides and strategies	
Urban Design Guidelines for Victoria	<p>The Victorian Government has developed guidelines to support the delivery of functional and enjoyable places for people to live, work and spend leisure time. The following guidelines are of particular relevance to the NGSC strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrian priority streets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrian and bicycle paths</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrian and bicycle crossings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Public spaces principles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Local parks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Communal open spaces</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Principles for objects in the public realm</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Street and park furniture</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Trees and planting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Barriers and fencing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lighting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Signs and way-finding</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Small public buildings and structures.</li> </ul>
Design for Everyone Guide	<p>Victoria’s Design for Everyone Guide is a practical resource to assist the planning, design and development of inclusive sport and recreation facilities. The principles underpinning the guide will be applied to both Strategies to support inclusive design.</p>
Victoria’s Cycling Strategy 2018-2028	<p>The strategy aims to increase the number, frequency, and diversity of Victorians cycling for transport by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> investing in safer, lower-stress, better connected network, prioritising strategic cycling corridors</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> making cycling a more inclusive experience.</li> </ul> <p>It includes initiatives that will result in more direct, separated cycle paths to important destinations, like workplaces, schools and public transport stops, and make it easier for cyclists to park their bikes at stations or take them on a train or bus. The strategy will also support local councils in their crucial role as providers and managers of parts of the cycling network.</p>
Victorian Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030	<p>The Strategy aims to halve road deaths by 2030 and put the State on a strong path to eliminate all road deaths by 2050. It also seeks to reduce the incidence of serious injury resulting from road crashes. The Strategy’s aims and objectives will be delivered via a series of short-term action plans over the life of the Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Be safe: ensure all Victorians are safe and feel safe, on and around our roads.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> 10 year reduction: halve road deaths and progressively reduce serious injuries by 2030.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A culture of safety: embed a culture of road safety within the Victorian community.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Deliver initiatives: deliver a suite of initiatives that are achievable and have an impact in the short-term, but also prepare the state for the future.</li> </ul> <p>The Strategy’s objectives will be achieved through a combination of methods using policy, innovation and technology, infrastructure improvements, public information campaigns, education programs, enforcement and other mechanisms available to government.</p>

### Regional Growth Plan

The Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Growth Plan is aimed at guiding a coordinated regional response to population growth and regional change over the next 30 years. The Plan recognises key environmental, cultural, recreational, economic, tourism and natural resources of value that require preservation, maintenance or development. The Plan supports growth in

the Northern Grampians Shire, particularly in the district towns of Stawell and St Arnaud that support communities of interest across the Shire.

### **Western Region Sustainable Water Strategy**

The Western Region covers around one-third of Victoria from Colac and Lorne in the south-east to Ouyen in the north-west. Its agricultural and urban centres include Colac, Port Campbell, Horsham, Stawell, Ararat, Hamilton, Warrnambool and Portland.

The Western Region Sustainable Water Strategy includes policy statements and 69 actions for implementation at a regional and local scale.

Waterways and water bodies often have cultural significance and contribute to the landscape character. They also can provide recreation opportunities for residents and visitors, if safe and appropriate.

Council is reaping the benefits of securing ample water supply for a range of uses and applications, including irrigation of recreation and sport parks.

### **Grampians Region Climate Adaptation Strategy**

The Grampians Region Climate Adaptation Strategy is a comprehensive plan developed to address the impacts of climate change. The Strategy aims to help the region prepare for and respond to the impacts of a changing climate, including increased frequency and severity of extreme weather events, changes in rainfall patterns, and rising temperatures. The Strategy outlines a range of actions that can be taken to reduce the vulnerability of the region and its communities to the impacts of climate change, and to ensure that the region is better able to adapt to these changes over time.

The Strategy takes a collaborative approach with a range of stakeholders including local government, businesses, community organisations, and government agencies. Based on the latest climate science, the Strategy considers the unique characteristics and needs of the Grampians region, and focuses on key sectors such as agriculture, forestry, water management, and infrastructure, identifying practical actions that can be taken to enhance the resilience of these sectors to the impacts of climate change. The Strategy is an important step towards building a more resilient and sustainable future for the region and its communities.

Planning for open space and active transport for the future requires consideration of the impact of climate change, and can form part of adaptation and mitigation actions.

### **Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy**

The Wimmera Regional Catchment Strategy is a long-term plan for the management of the Wimmera region's water resources. This Strategy is aimed at balancing the region's economic, environmental, and social needs by managing water resources in a sustainable and integrated manner. The Strategy provides a framework for the protection and management of the region's rivers, wetlands, and groundwater resources, and sets out a vision for a sustainable future that supports the growth and development of the region while also safeguarding its natural assets.

The Strategy focuses on a range of key issues, including water quality, water availability, and the protection of important ecological assets such as wetlands. It also provides a framework for the integration of water management into broader planning processes, such as land use planning and economic development. By taking a collaborative and integrated approach, the Strategy helps to ensure that the region's water resources are managed in a way that meets the needs of the current and future generations.

Access to and proximity to water bodies has numerous benefits to people's health and wellbeing. Swimming, fishing, boating, and other water-based activities are popular recreational pursuits and offer a chance to exercise, relax, and connect with nature. The sound (waves, flowing water) and presence of water can also have a calming effect, reducing stress and improving mental health. Additionally, the natural beauty of waterways can also serve as a source of inspiration for artists, photographers, and writers, helping to foster creativity and a sense of purpose. Overall, the value of access and proximity to water bodies in Australia is widely recognised as a crucial aspect of a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

### **Greater Gariwerd Landscape Management Plan 2021**

The Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park is part of the Greater Gariwerd Landscape, along with 16 other Parks and Reserves. A Management Plan for the area was finalised in 2021 and recognises the extensive and enduring connections of Traditional Owners to Gariwerd. Grampians (Gariwerd) National Park is included on the Australian Heritage Council's National Heritage List for its outstanding heritage value to the nation.

The second part of the Plan provides management strategies to conserve and enhance the natural values of the landscape while allowing compatible use for recreation. The Park is a popular drawcard for visitors.

### **Activate Plan 2020-2030**

Activate 2020-2030 is a 10-year regional strategic plan enabling a coordinated and collaborative approach aimed at increasing participation in sport and active recreation for livability, health and wellbeing of the Central Highlands and Grampians Pyrenees region





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