

A collage of people engaged in various sports. The top half shows a group of people playing basketball, with one person in a white jersey reaching for a red ball. The bottom half shows a soccer player in a white kit and a tennis player in a purple shirt and white shorts. The background is white with faint, light-colored outlines of the same sports scenes.

DOWERIN RECREATION STRATEGY 2015-2025

Executive Summary

The Dowerin Recreation Strategy (2015-2025) analyses a range of factors and influences before recommending a series of projects to be delivered across the district over the next 10 years.

The objectives of this strategy, its recommendations and priority areas have been linked to broader Shire of Dowerin vision to be:

A thriving rural community which will be a lifestyle choice for generations, a preferred location for business development and a recognised leader in environmental management

The recommendations are supported by an action, implementation and prioritisation framework based on feedback from the local community and local clubs, across the areas of aquatics, parks and playgrounds, active transport, grounds and pitches, change rooms and amenities, greens and courts, gym and rifle range.

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1. Introduction

1.1 What is the purpose of this Recreation Strategy

Dowerin is a unique rural township, offering a diverse and plentiful range of sports and recreational assets for the enjoyment and recreation of its residents and those of the broader region. To ensure that the quality and access to sport and recreation based infrastructure and facilities are enhanced, this recreation strategy must reflect the specific issues that Dowerin faces now and into the future.

This Recreation Strategy has been developed through feedback from the community (via surveys and comments register) and key stakeholders (sporting clubs/associations) in order to provide a ten year strategic direction for the future provision and management of recreation assets, programs and services in the Shire of Dowerin. The Strategy aims to identify the recreational needs of our community, the opportunities which currently exist and the appropriate actions to meet identified gaps and improve current provision.

This Strategy does not attempt to provide the answers to all the recreation issues in Dowerin; it instead provides a strategic framework to determine the priority needs and issues and assist long term planning for recreation.

The Recreation Strategy aims to facilitate the provision of a wide range of appropriate, sustainable and quality recreational opportunities in which the community can participate, now and in the future.

1.2 What is recreation?

In this Strategy the term 'recreation' refers to a wide range of organised and less structured physical activities that are pursued for enjoyment, health or self-satisfaction outside of the home, including:

- Playing organised sport: e.g. Football, netball, cricket or hockey
- Informal, unstructured activity: e.g. playing with friends, walking the dog, swimming
- Outdoor recreation activities that make use of the natural environment: e.g. bushwalking, jogging, bike riding
- Indoor recreation activities that take place within a purpose built facility: e.g. gym and fitness activities, badminton and squash

1.3 Why is local government involved in recreation?

The Shire of Dowerin currently provides and facilitates access to a range of sport, recreation and leisure opportunities across the district. These add to the culture, lifestyle and character of the region as well as enhance the liveability of the town and are therefore recognised as an important part of a well-balanced lifestyle.

Local councils commonly play a vital role in the provision and management of assets, programs and services that are often financially unviable for the commercial sector but has an immense community benefit e.g. the management of sports fields, natural areas and passive open space. Local government plays a key role in promoting, facilitating and funding recreation at a local level.

Councils are custodians and managers of public land and have responsibilities under the Local Government Act (1995) to manage such land for the benefit of the community and environment. Over 25 hectares of land managed by the Shire of Dowerin is used for recreation.

Local Government plays a pivotal role in the provision of safe, affordable, appropriate and accessible recreation opportunities to local communities.

1.4 What are the benefits of participating in recreation?

The benefits associated with participating in sport and physical activity include personal enjoyment, social interaction, physical and mental health, personal achievement, community involvement (social capital), community resilience and opportunities for the expression of community pride. Recreation ultimately contributes to the quality of a person's life and their ability to be involved in their community.

The health benefits of participation in regular physical activity have been well documented and include:

- Reduced incidence of cardiovascular disease, stroke, obesity and other preventable illnesses;
- Increased life expectancy;
- Reduced incidence of bowel cancer and certain other cancers
- Reduced incidence of stress, anxiety, depression and improved overall mental health; and
- Reduced incidence of chronic conditions such as diabetes, arthritis and asthma.

Participation in physical activity helps to build self-esteem and positive self-image, further to this regular club based participation can assist in reducing destructive behaviour and negative social activity.

Quality parks and recreation opportunities also provide safe, developmental opportunities for children and young people to build social skills and stimulate participation in community life. Recreation facilities are recognised as important physical assets that contribute to providing a social focus and influencing people's perception of their community. Quality facilities facilitate broad community use, events, tourism and contribute to the overall economic sustainability of the communities in which they exist.

Therefore, sport and recreation facilities contribute to physical health, mental health, community connectedness, general well-being and economic sustainability.

2. Community Profile

Dowerin is an active and successful sporting based community located 156km north east of Perth within the Wheatbelt Region of Western Australia. Dowerin's economy is primarily driven by agricultural production, typically wheat and sheep production for meat and wool. The community of Dowerin has a heavy emphasis on traditional team based sport as a social, leisure and fitness activity.

The community of Dowerin has a proud and successful sporting history with recent flags, premierships and other accolades for both teams and individuals attained over the past 10 years in various sports including Bowls, Tennis, Hockey, Football, Rally Car Racing and Cricket.

Dowerin is host to the annual GWN7 Machinery Field Days – a two day event which attracts an average of 600 exhibitors and 20,000 patrons each year. Whilst difficult to quantify, it is estimated that in 2014 alone the Dowerin Field Days put \$70,000 back into the local economy through volunteer hours alone

The Shire of Dowerin (the Shire) places a very high priority on the provision of recreation and community facilities. The Shire has a history of quality community infrastructure provision which is demonstrated by the range of facilities established in Dowerin such as the state of the art Dowerin Community Club which was finalised in 2013. The Shire and shire staff supports the development of sustainable sport and recreational facilities as a way of encouraging increased physical activity and community wellbeing.

The Shire will support and fund the development of sporting facilities which have full community support. It recognises the need to provide a facility which does not discriminate against any sector of the community.

2.1 Demographic Profile

2.1.1 Age & Gender Structure

According to the 2011 census¹, the median age of people in Dowerin was 41 years. Children aged 0 - 14 years made up 21.7% of the population and people aged 65 years and over made up 20.3% of the population. A significant proportion of Dowerin's population is aged 14 years or younger – much higher than in the Perth Metropolitan region, indicating that Dowerin is consistent with other towns in the Wheatbelt and is expected to experience significant ageing in the population over the coming decade, with 30% of the population estimated to be aged over 65 in 2021.

Age	6461, WA	%	Western Australia	%	Australia	%
<i>People</i>						
0-4 years	32	8.6	151,262	6.8	1,421,050	6.6
5-9 years	28	7.5	142,774	6.4	1,351,921	6.3
10-14 years	21	5.6	146,035	6.5	1,371,054	6.4
15-19 years	3	0.8	148,208	6.6	1,405,798	6.5
20-24 years	16	4.3	159,010	7.1	1,460,673	6.8
25-29 years	23	6.2	167,944	7.5	1,513,236	7.0
30-34 years	28	7.5	156,152	7.0	1,453,775	6.8
35-39 years	21	5.6	161,526	7.2	1,520,138	7.1
40-44 years	23	6.2	166,731	7.4	1,542,879	7.2
45-49 years	18	4.8	159,859	7.1	1,504,142	7.0
50-54 years	17	4.6	150,369	6.7	1,447,404	6.7
55-59 years	36	9.7	133,894	6.0	1,297,244	6.0
60-64 years	31	8.3	120,531	5.4	1,206,116	5.6
65-69 years	22	5.9	86,324	3.9	919,319	4.3
70-74 years	19	5.1	66,219	3.0	708,090	3.3
75-79 years	11	2.9	49,832	2.2	545,263	2.5
80-84 years	11	2.9	38,284	1.7	436,936	2.0
85 years and over	13	3.5	34,217	1.5	402,681	1.9
Median age	42	--	36	--	37	--

2.1.2 Population

With a population of just 683² the Shire of Dowerin is the 11th (out of 43) smallest Local Government area within the Wheatbelt region of Western Australia.

However, despite a relatively small, declining population Dowerin boasts low unemployment, ranked 21 out of 563 local governments across Australia in terms of employment participation rate. Further to this, on a national scale Dowerin is ranked 3rd out of 563 Local Government organisations across the Country for Volunteerism which is a fantastic achievement for a community of this size and nature.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Quick Data: www.censusdata.abs.gov.au

² Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Regional Population Growth, Australia, cat. No. 3218.0 released 31 March 2015

3. Current Provision of Recreation

3.1 Background

Dowerin has a broad range of community and recreation facilities for a community of its size and location. Over the past 7 years the Shire of Dowerin has invested heavily in the upgrading of facilities addressing issues of duplication, accelerating deterioration and maintenance cost associated with many aging facilities which was not economically sustainable.

The Dowerin Community Club opened in 2013 and has been designed and managed in order to meet the current and future needs of the community by way of co-locating and rationalising facilities (tennis, cricket, football, bowls), implementing effective management of facilities and applying stringent forward financial planning for the replacement of sports surfaces in years to come.

The current circumstance of sport and recreation in Dowerin is characterised by the ongoing upkeep of current facilities which have now, in the most part, been rationalised to meet the needs of our community. However, some elements of the sport and recreation provision in Dowerin remain a high priority in terms of accelerating deterioration and maintenance costs associated with aging facilities, specifically the swimming pool.

3.2 Methodology

This Recreation Strategy has been based on the outcome of both club and community surveys in conjunction with research documents including the Dowerin Community Strategic Plan, GHD Aquatic Feasibility study 2014 and GHD Feasibility Study 2011.

There are a range of factors that are significant in assessing emerging recreational demand and the appropriate provision of recreation and community facilities and services:

- Dowerin is classed as rural located two hours away from Perth
- Most residents depend on facilities within Dowerin for their recreation, leisure and sporting requirements.
- The current facilities provide for a broad range of community activities.
- The Dowerin Community Club is an excellent example in the co-location and sharing of services and amenities by different groups and activities. Any proposed future facilities development should be designed to supplement the existing facilities and build upon existing user preferences.
- There is no indication of any circumstance that will induce a significant change in population numbers or preferences in the foreseeable future.
- The swimming pool is very old and require revitalisation to meet community needs, improve safety and increase utilisation.
- There is an increasing demand for unstructured recreation opportunities.
- There is a shortage of recreation opportunities for youth and seniors.
- Access to training programs for volunteers and staff is limited.
- Many organisations survive on limited resources and volunteers are suffering from burnout.

3.3 Research Findings

The pattern of sports usage in Dowerin is consistent to that in 2008 which indicates regular participation in relatively small groups however the co-location of facilities has ensured that a variety of sport is played at one venue (the Dowerin Community Club). The success of this venture is confirmed through a significant increase in membership of the Dowerin Tennis Club since the colocation of facilities in 2012/13 with members expressing that the colocation of Bowls and Tennis specifically has eased pressure on local families who wish to participate in both sports on a social and competitive level.

Further to this, the Shire has been proactive in addressing the needs and wants of the community through the development and improvement to infrastructure and facilities that cater for unstructured physical activity such as walking trails, footpaths and the launch of the Dowerin All Hours Gym in 2015. Activities and projects of this nature should be encouraged and continue to develop.

3.3.1 Summary of issues

Dowerin boasts an excellent range of sport and recreational infrastructure for a community of its size and location, however to ensure the quality and access to such facilities are enhanced, this recreation strategy must reflect the specific issues that Dowerin faces now and into the future. The following issues will be of significance to the provision of community and recreation facilities in Dowerin over the next 5 – 15 years:

- The existing swimming pool requires significant expenditure within the immediate future to maintain operational and safety standards. While a swimming pool is highly rated as a community facility, the operational cost of an six lane Olympic-size swimming pool is not justifiable for the current and prospective user population. A re-design and redevelopment of the pool is required.
- The floor surface at the basketball/netball court was illustrated as not preferable in 2008 improved for sporting activities and has yet to be. Previous leaks in the ceiling have been fixed however an issue of ventilation in the facility now needs to be addressed. Any new floor surface would need to withstand traffic associated with the Dowerin Field Days.
- Upgrading of ablution facilities servicing the Gym, Badminton and female sports (Netball & Hockey) is required.
- Playground facilities are aging, a strategic plan for the maintenance and upgrade of these facilities is required.
- The Dowerin Community Gym is small and is currently heavily utilised. Some thought should be given to the expansion of this facility in the future
- Walking and cycling are emerging exercise pursuits but most roads are unsafe for cyclists and walkers (especially with prams). There is a need for strategic development of footpaths and cycle ways.
- Training in the acquisition and management of funding and sponsorship is a priority in the region.

4. Implementation of this Plan

The directions outlined in this Strategy provide guidance and direction to Council in facilitating the best possible recreational outcomes for Dowerin's community for the next ten years. This strategy has considered all active sporting facilities within the Shire of Dowerin and prioritised the work required in each into three categories Immediate Priority, Medium Priority and Low Priority based on feedback from community and club consultation as well as supporting documentation including the GHD Feasibility Study, Dowerin Strategic Plan and Dowerin Corporate Plan. A report outlining survey results can be found in Appendix 1.

Immediate Priority (2015 – 2018)

Those projects outlined as 'immediate priority' are those in need of immediate attention due to the fact that facilities may be dangerous, are significantly lacking, aging and require significant maintenance expenditure or in a state of accelerated decline. All projects prioritised in this category require immediate attention in terms of planning, budgeting and the gathering of information for grant funding purposes.

Moderate Priority (2018- 2021)

Those projects outlined as 'moderate priority' are those in need of attention within the next 6 years. These projects are characterised as important however budgetary requirements do not permit them to be completed immediately due to the fact that they do not pose any immediate risk to users and/or require significant maintenance expenditure. All projects prioritised in this category should be considered in a 10 year financial plan.

Low Priority (2021 – 2025)

Those projects outlined as 'low priority' are important projects that will be required within the next 10 years. All projects prioritised in this category require forward planning over the next ten years to ensure that facilities are appropriately managed until this time and funding is in place for appropriate action to be taken when it is required

IMMEDIATE PRIORITY

4.1

AQUATICS FACILITIES

PLAY EXPERIENCES

GROUNDS & PITCHES

CHANGEROOM & ABULTION FACILITIES

ACTIVE TRANSPORT

4.1.1 AQUATICS FACILITIES

Background & Context

The Memorial Swimming Pool is an unheated outdoor pool located within the north-eastern part of the township of Dowerin. It is located a few hundred metres from the recently developed Dowerin Community Club. It is open from November to March each year and is the only aquatic facility in the Shire. Its opening hours are 11am to 6 pm every day except Tuesdays during these months. There are 35 members of the Dowerin Swimming Club as well as many more regular community users.

The facility's main structures comprise a 50 metre pool, a combined wading/toddler's pool, a sand filter and a balance tank, all constructed from reinforced concrete. The main pool lies from south (shallow end) to north (deep end), with the toddler's/wading pool situated to the south of the main pool. The sand filter is situated approximately 10 metres to the north of the main pool; with the balance tank approximately 5 metres east of the sand filter.

Issues/Feedback

- There has been a major issue impacting the pools financial situation with water consumption doubling over the past five years due to water leakages.
- Respondents indicated that the facility is old, tired and too cold
- Respondents indicated that consideration should be made as to the opening times of the swimming pool

Trends

State, national and international trends are moving away from the construction of 50m swimming facilities and toward the construction of more serviceable 25m pools with aquatic play and aquatic play spaces. The trends suggest that 50m pools service a small cohort of the community, whilst aquatic play areas engage and service a much larger section of the community.

Narembeen and Quairading are two Wheatbelt community's that have recently rationalised facilities from 50m pool constructions to 25m pools with aquatic play facilities and learn to swim areas.

Consultation & Engagement

Over the past 10 years extensive engagement has been undertaken in Dowerin in relation to the provision of aquatic facilities. In 2004 the GHD Needs Analysis highlighted that the pool is a valued asset to the community however the current condition is poor and it had reached the end of its expected economic life cycle. In 2014, GHD were commissioned to produce an Aquatic Facility Feasibility Study which gives strategic direction to council for the relocation and redevelopment of Dowerin's Aquatic Facilities to be co-located at the sporting hub in Dowerin.

In 2015, the Dowerin Sport and Recreation Facilities survey was undertaken with the community indicating very strong support for improvements to be made to Dowerin Aquatics Facilities.

Key Priorities 1-3years

- Decommission the Dowerin Memorial Swimming Pool following the construction of a 25m new aquatic facility to be located adjacent to the Dowerin Community Club. Refer to GHD Feasibility Study
- Include a pool cover in the development of the new facility in an attempt to save water and warm the pool.
- Re-asses the opening hours of the pool

Spend Priorities

- Budget for the commission of qualified architect to assess the best possible location, design and plan for the redevelopment of Dowerin's aquatic facilities

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- Apply for funding assistance from the Department of Sport & Recreation for funding in 2017/18
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4.1.2 PLAY EXPERIENCES

Background & Context

Play is an essential part of the growth and development of children and is a critical element of their physical, social, cognitive and emotional development. Dowerin is fortunate to have excellent children's playground facilities located at Centenary Park and adjacent to the Dowerin Community Club as well as a dedicated Skate Park located to the east end of Centenary Park.

Dowerin Centenary Park is a popular area to stop for both local residents and people travelling through the district and often receives a great deal of positive feedback from users. The playground itself includes slides, swings and climbing structures. There is a sand soft fall throughout with attractive shade structures and picnic area. The main playground structure was installed in the 1990's with improvements including a toddler area, shade and a fence constructed around the perimeter of the park by the Apex Group throughout the past 20 years. The Skate Park was developed by the community in the early 2000's and features a good range of skate boarding infrastructure as well as a basketball/netball hoop and hang out shed.

There is a small playground area adjacent to the Dowerin Community Club at the Recreation Grounds. This area was established in 2011 and includes a climbing structure, slides and swings. There is rubber soft fall throughout and shade sails overhead.

Trends

Research indicates that parks and open space play a vital role in the physical, social and emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people. The increasing incidence of obesity and sedentary lifestyles in all age groups is an important consideration in the planning of play spaces that can cater for a diverse range of interest and ages.

It is important to provide 'youth friendly' places and spaces for young people and that consultation and engagement is genuine and collaborative when developing such spaces. This is likely to increase ownership and commitment to using spaces that are created for everyone, with young people as the key focus.

In recent times, trends have shifted to the development of 'nature play' whereby public play spaces are currently undergoing a resurgence of nature play, where the use of natural materials and undulating surfaces provides stimulating and imaginative landscapes for play.

Consultation & Engagement

Findings are based on feedback from the community via the Dowerin Sport and Recreation Community survey which indicates strong support for the enhancement of play experiences in Dowerin. The development of a strategic play space document should incorporate extensive consultation with local youth representatives including the PCYC and a youth survey.

Key Priorities 1-3 years

- A Play Space Planning framework to be developed to incorporate the revitalisation of existing facilities that are reaching the end of their life span including the Skate Park and Centenary Park playground. The development of a Nature play area to be investigated as part of this process
- Engage local groups and youth representatives in the consultation, planning and development of these areas

Spend Priorities

- Preparation and development of a Play Space Planning Framework for Dowerin

4.1.3 **GROUNDS & PITCHES**

Background & Context

There are two main grounds/pitches serviced by the community of Dowerin, the Dowerin Football Oval and Hockey Field are located within the recreation grounds, central to the Dowerin Sporting Precinct. The Football Oval is utilised year round for Football in winter and Cricket in the summer. Central to the Football Oval is a permanent cricket wicket. These facilities also include associated infrastructure such as shed's, practise wickets and dugouts. Both sporting fields must withstand traffic from the Annual Dowerin Field Day in August.

The standard of Dowerin's grounds/pitches are maintained to a very high standard thanks to the dedication and care of the Dowerin Shire Grounds Keepers, however these facilities are severely impacted by climatic conditions and there exists a need to provide an extensive program of maintenance and renewal. This strategy aims to address the venue specific issue through the provision of irrigation, drainage and resurfacing works.

Issues/Feedback:

- Hard Football Oval which has a rough outfield come cricket season
- Centre wicket in need of replacement
- Improvements required for spectators at Hockey Field and Football Oval
- Football Field Fencing requires fixing

Trends

Due to climate change and variability in rainfall, maintaining the condition of grounds and pitches is a legitimate concern for local governments and users. Several local governments in Victoria and Queensland have installed and are testing fully synthetic football and cricket ovals, to match the synthetic soccer pitches that are used throughout Australia and globally.

Consultation & Engagement

Direct consultation with clubs and club members
Community Sport and Recreation Survey
Extensive consultation with Works Manager and Grounds Keepers.

Key Priorities 1-3years

- Development of a Sports Ground Maintenance Plan that will encompass an extensive program of maintenance and renewal to be implemented prior to the summer and winter sports season.
- Purchase new mower for Football/Cricket oval
- Installation of new centre wicket for cricket
- Installation of shade and bench seating at Hockey Field and Football Oval
- Budget for replacement fencing around the Football/Cricket Oval

Spend Priorities

- Development of Sports Ground Maintenance Plan
 - Investigate the replacement of centre wicket
 - Investigate funding/fundraising/budget the replacement of fencing around Football Oval
-

4.1.4 CHANGE ROOM AND ABLUTION FACILITIES

Background & Context

There are two sets of change room and ablution facilities located within the sports precinct in Dowerin. The Dowerin Community Club has a Home and Away men's change room and a female change room. There are 13 showers and 6 toilets in this facility in total, including disabled facilities. This facility was constructed in 2012 and is in excellent condition.

To the east of the Football Oval within the Recreation Centre, there is a second set of change room and ablution facilities which currently service the sports of hockey, netball and Badminton. Since February 2015, these facilities have been heavily utilised on a daily basis due to the launch of the Dowerin All Hours Gym.

Constructed in 1994 these facilities are serviceable however require modernisation for ease of cleaning and to appear more in-keeping with the high quality, up to date and well-presented facilities within the sporting precinct.

Trends

The typical 1960's and 70's change room facilities tended to be a cavernous, uncomfortable, smelly public space whose functional design focused less on personal space and more on efficiently serving a large number of people. Modern change rooms accommodate a wide variety of users, are easy to clean, are durable, have ease of maintenance, and of course, are safe.

Consultation & Engagement

Community Sport and Recreation Survey
Dowerin Community Gym survey

Key Priorities 1-3years

- Facilities within the Recreation building are dated and requires modernisation

Spend Priorities

- Budget to refurbish and modernise the toilet, change room and shower facilities in the Dowerin Recreation Centre including replacement of cubicle partitioning, tiling, toilets, hand washing facilities in ablutions and gyprocking of walls complete with new bench seating in change room areas.
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4.1.5 ACTIVE TRANSPORT

Background & Context

As well as walking trails and paths, Dowerin has a number of shared cycle ways/footpaths and scope to develop a wide variety of on and off road bicycle opportunities throughout the district should appropriate planning take place. Cycling is an increasing form of passive recreation and a healthy alternative to driving, further to this the development of an off road cycle path/BMX facilities may provide another outlet for Youth to be engaged in Dowerin and therefore should be encouraged wherever possible.

The Shire of Dowerin secured external funding in 2015 from the Department of Transport to engage a consultant in order to renew and redevelop the Dowerin Bike Plan (last updated in 2006). The new Bike Plan will involve public comment and review over the upcoming months and is anticipated to be finalised early 2016.

In terms of walking trails, Dowerin's most established route is The Tin Dog Walk Trail which has two well established routes (one shorter, one longer). The walk trail explores natural bushland with picnic benches along the way and a bird hide. The trail is popular amongst tourists and visitors to the district. There is scope in Dowerin to develop a town site walk trail which is basic at present and has no developed form of interpretation. This should be something that is explored in the future in conjunction with other strategic priorities in terms of tourism and economic development.

Trends

With the level of obesity amongst children and adults in regional WA and across Australia dramatically increasing, the idea of active transport is becoming more popular. The use of the motor vehicle as a first point of preference is changing with walking, cycling and other modes of active transport increasing significantly. Cycling and bike use is increasing in popularity with the use of scooters and skateboards becoming popular again amongst younger members of the community.

To address numerous health and environmental challenges, global and Australian wide trends suggest that infrastructure be built and altered to encourage active transport in all its forms. Linking community education and awareness regarding the benefits of active transport with infrastructure planning and development is a strategic way for local government to promote and facilitate active transport.

Consultation & Engagement

A working group comprising of active and interested representatives from the community to work in conjunction with CARDNO (consultants) to develop the early stages of the Dowerin Bike Plan.

Extensive consultation with the community is currently taking place for the development of the Dowerin Bike Plan.

Key Priorities 1-3years

- Despite a number of walking trails and paths, Dowerin has limited cycle paths and no current designated cycle routes/trails
- Develop a plan to maintain and enhance the Tin Dog Creek Walk Trail and initiate plans for the development of a Dowerin Town Site Walking Trail.

Spend Priorities

- Develop an updated 'Dowerin Bike Plan'
 - Initiate recommendations from this plan when available
 - Budget for the redesign and modernisation of the Dowerin Brochure which includes a map
-

of the town site and tin dog creek walktrail.

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MODERATE PRIORITY

4.2

DOWERIN GYM

INDOOR AND OUTDOOR COURTS

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4.2.1 HEALTH & FITNESS

Background & Context

The Dowerin Gym is an unmanned facility accessible to members 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The gym is a small facility established in February 2015 and located in the former Tennis Club Rooms in the recreation building in Dowerin's Sporting Precinct. The gym is fully fitted with weights and cardio equipment which by majority is second hand refurbished. In its first 6mths the gym has attracted 100+ members and is a heavily utilised facility in Dowerin.

The Shire of Dowerin utilised funding from the Physical Activity Task Force between 2008-2010 in order to train up 3 personal trainers in Dowerin, capable of running classes including circuit training and water aerobics. Currently, PT Bec Windsor has taken this training further and is a qualified Gym Instructor and provides a number of group fitness classes throughout the year including water aerobics, Konga and boot camp/circuit training. All classes are well attended with feedback from participants extremely positive.

Trends

Fitness opportunities within the Wheatbelt and regional WA are historically focused on traditional team sporting pursuits (such as Football, Hockey and Netball). Over the past 10 years there has been a shift within the region to provide a community gym facility that caters for individual health and fitness needs as opposed to the traditional team sport model.

Both in Australia and internationally, business models from Gyms with low start-up costs and overhead that offer members 24-hour key card access and varied fitness routines have been most popular during the last five years. Despite the growth in individually based fitness regimes, group fitness is still a popular choice with Pilates, yoga, boxercise and circuit training ranked highly amongst active participants.

Consultation & Engagement

Community Sport and Recreation Survey
Dowerin Community Gym survey

Key Priorities 1-3years

- Small space, not big enough
- Facilities within the Recreation building are dated and requires modernisation
- Liaise with local qualified people with regards to the implementation of more group fitness activities, specifically Pilates/yoga, circuit training and boxercise

Spend Priorities

- Assess membership in 3 years' time, expand the facility both in terms of space and volume of equipment
- Budget to refurbish and modernise the toilet, change room and shower facilities in the Dowerin Recreation Centre including replacement of cubicle partitioning, tiling, toilets, hand washing facilities in ablutions and gyprocking of walls complete with new bench seating in change room areas.

4.2.2 *INDOOR & OUTDOOR COURTS*

Background & Context

The Dowerin Netball/Basketball Courts were constructed in 1990 and are housed in steel framed and clad shed with a concrete floor. Upon construction, the facilities' primary function was an exhibition pavilion for the annual Dowerin GWN7 Machinery Field Days with the use as a sports hall is incidental to the Field Days use. The floor requires resurfacing; the concrete floor is not ideal for sports activities however any new surface would need to withstand the traffic from Field Days.

Four synthetic tennis courts were laid adjacent to the north side of the Dowerin Community Club in 2012. The Tennis Club and Shire of Dowerin contribute annually to an asset replacement fund for the replacement of the synthetic surface if/when it is required.

Trends

With the majority of indoor and outdoor facilities designed to be multipurpose and cater for a large cross section of the community it would be beneficial for Basketball WA and Netball WA to jointly advocate for facility expansion / developments that are a strategic priority for both sports.

Consultation & Engagement

Community Sport and Recreation Survey

Key Priorities 1-3years

- Seek quotes and funding options available for resurfacing of at least one netball/basketball courts
- Investigate areas for the installation of a rebound wall in close vicinity to the facility.

Spend Priorities

- Budget for the resurfacing of the Dowerin Netball/Basketball Courts
 - Liaise with Tennis Club for the inclusion of a rebound wall in the vicinity of the Dowerin Tennis Courts
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LOW PRIORITY

4.3

BOWLING FACILITIES

SHOOTING FACILITIES

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4.3.1 BOWLING FACILITIES

Background & Context

A ten rink synthetic bowling green was constructed to the south side of the Dowerin Community Club in 2013. The Bowling Club and Shire of Dowerin contribute annually to an asset replacement fund for the replacement of the synthetic surface if/when it is required

Trends

Unlike natural grass, synthetic turf must be replaced at the end of its useful life. This varies from sport to sport and the timeframe in which it is replaced is dependent on a number of factors. These include the level of usage, level and type of maintenance undertaken on the surface, weather conditions and the performance requirements expected from the surface

Consultation & Engagement

Community Sport and Recreation Survey
Evergreen Synthetic Grass
Dowerin Bowling Club

Key Priorities 1-3years

Begin to regularly assess the condition of the surface

Spend Priorities

- Plan and budget for the possibility of resurfacing if required.

4.3.2 RIFLE SHOOTING FACILITIES

Background & Context

The Rifle Club is located on the Dowerin-Goomalling Road on a crown land lease whereby the Rifle Club owns the buildings and improvements made. The condition of the facility is adequate for the current level of use. Electronic Targets would better suit the facility

Trends

Most target shooting facilities in WA encompass targets that are printed on paper and scored by human visual evaluation and the use of a scoring gauge when necessary. However, over the past 25 years there has been a steady increase in clubs utilising electronic scoring targets which ensure ease of use for those utilising and running a facility and also those wishing to make shooting more a spectator sport.

Consultation & Engagement

Community Sport and Recreation Survey
Evergreen Synthetic Grass
Dowerin Bowling Club

Key Priorities 1-3years

Explore funding options available for the purchase and installation of electronic targets

Spend Priorities

- Budget, assist and support the Dowerin Rifle Club with an application for funding assistance to help with the installation of electronic targets

5. Funding Opportunities

Being able to adequately fund and manage the wide array of recreation facilities, programs and services provided is an ongoing challenge for Council. Governments at all levels are responsible for the provision and long term management and maintenance of a substantial amount of public infrastructure. Adequate provision for maintenance, depreciation and replacement has not always occurred and community demand for more services and facilities has increased the pressures on Local Government. Because of this the implementation of any strategy relies on resources, both people and financial. Allocation of resources to the priority areas of this strategy may require Council to either reallocate from existing service areas or collect additional revenue.

The funding opportunities that are currently available for the implantation of all areas of this strategy include the following:

General Rates

Council may choose to set aside funds raised through the imposition of the general rate.

Reserves

Council has \$173,751 in the Recreation Reserve as of 30th June 2015.

Loans

Council may borrow funds for specific purposes, including development of community facilities. The current loan portfolio is very low.

Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF)

The CSRFF scheme provides financial assistance from the WA Government for the development of infrastructure for sport and recreation and is administered by the Department of Sport and Recreation.

- **Annual Grants:**

This scheme provides for grant funds up to one third of the project cost to an upper limit of \$1.5 million. In special circumstances this limit may be raised. Grants are available for new facilities and for the upgrading of existing facilities that increase the opportunities for physical activities and to better suit current and future needs. Enquiries at the Department of Sport and Recreation indicate that projects that support collocation initiatives are highly regarded and are more likely to be approved by the Department than standalone facility projects.

- **Small Grants**

Released in summer and winter rounds, \$2,500–\$66,666 is allocated by the Department of Sport and Recreation to projects involving a basic level of planning. The total project cost for grant must not exceed \$200,000. Grants given in this category must be claimed in the financial year following the date of approval. For projects with a grant request below \$2,500 it is expected that the applicant should be able to fully fund these.

LotteryWest

The Lotteries Commission does not provide funds for sport specific facilities. However, funds are available for multi-purpose community facilities such as: meeting rooms, ablution facilities, and community facilities/spaces geared towards youth, children and families. Funding is available for assistance with operational costs as well as capital projects.

Community Fundraising

Community groups could raise funds through a variety of fundraising initiatives. Given the current volunteer workload and limited local population, there seems little scope for significant fundraising through this avenue unless fundraising could tap resources from outside the district. Community cropping and fundraising via Field Days hours are good sources for community fundraising

Contribution by Sporting Groups

Contributions would be required from the relevant sporting club/group for their particular upgrade to their facility. E.g. the cricket club would be required to provide some contribution to the installation of a new central wicket.

User Fees

Current fees for facility usage at Dowerin are comparatively low. For most facilities at Dowerin, the user fees provide a small percentage of operational revenue and those facilities and services will continue to require subsidisation. It is important to structure user fees so that they are set low enough to discourage patronage by local residents but high enough so that user fees are realistic.

Sponsorship

There are limited opportunities for sponsorship due to the small population and limited use rates by target markets. The influx of visitors for the Dowerin Field Days does provide an opportunity to market advertising associated with various prominent facilities. There is some potential for new facilities to negotiate discounts on construction materials and equipment on the basis that these will be given prominence at the Field Days.

Dowerin Field Days

The Dowerin Field Days is a significant factor in the consideration of the development and rationalisation of community facilities at Dowerin. The Field Days offer opportunities for facility and cost sharing and also for revenue raising by local organisations. The Dowerin Field Days present a significant opportunity for community fundraising that is not often available to rural communities. However the future of the Field Days and the opportunities for fundraising activities should not be taken for granted. It would be difficult to resource all local community clubs and activities if fundraising was restricted to within the Dowerin community

6. Measuring Success

Projects and actions identified in this Strategy will be assessed against other priorities of Council as an ongoing element of Council's planning process. Commitment to implementing particular actions is given once these actions appear in Council's Strategic Community Plan and related business plans.

The following should be used as a means of assessing how Council is going and be reviewed every four years:

- Level of use of assets, programs and services as monitored through data collection and analysis (i.e. attendance figures and utilisation numbers).
- Regular assessment of the condition of assets
- Regular assessment of community satisfaction, opinion, behaviour and complaints through customer surveys, annual community survey, service reports and review of strategies, plans and correspondence reviews

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6. Conclusion

Recreation is a vital component of our life and wellbeing in Country WA. The Shire of Dowerin plays a pivotal role in recreation provision and this Strategy has provided Council with the opportunity to review its provision and to set a clear strategic direction for the next 10 years.

There are a number of Key Priorities and Spend Priorities for Council to consider over the next ten years. However, the guiding principles and strategic directions developed from the consultation and research undertaken in the development of this Strategy will enable the ongoing improvement and development of recreation provision and facilitation in Dowerin, now and for many years to come.

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