



MACKAY SPORT AND RECREATION STRATEGY (2018-2028)

STRATEGIC PLAN

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Prepared by Otium Planning Group Pty Ltd



The Queensland Government provided funding to Mackay Regional Council to develop the Sport and Recreation Plan to enable Queenslanders to participate in sport and recreation activities



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1 INTRODUCTION



1.1 ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The Sport and Recreation Strategy is comprised of two documents. This document is the Strategy and provides an Executive Summary of the investigation and analysis that was undertaken and details the draft recommendations that form the action plan for the strategy.

For more detail on the community engagement and detailed supply and issues analysis, please refer to the supporting information document "Background Report".

1.2 A VISION FOR SPORT AND RECREATION IN MACKAY

Sport and recreation are a central part of the Mackay region's lifestyle. Council will prioritise the planning and provision of sport and recreation opportunities that maximise the health, social and economic benefits for the region.

Council recognises that to achieve this vision, partnerships with the community and other levels of government will need to be developed and supported to meet the challenges involved in maintaining existing infrastructure and providing new or upgraded facilities during the next 10 years.

2 THE MACKAY COMMUNITY



Mackay Regional Council has population of 118,749¹, with almost a 50/50 split between males and females (50.7% and 49.3% respectively). The median age of the region was 37 years of age, which is the same as the median age for Queensland. The region has an indigenous population of 5.1%, slightly above the state average of 4.0%.

2.1 POPULATION GROWTH OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS

The projected population of Mackay is expected to grow to 147,320 by 2036, and over the life of this plan - the next 10 years (i.e. to 2028), the population is expected to grow to around 131,800.

The key implications of current and future demographics are:

- « The majority of growth is anticipated to occur in:
 - Eimeo-Rural View (+3401)
 - Andergrove-Beaconsfield (+1,955)
 - Mount Pleasant-Glenella (+1,530)
 - Ooralea-Bakers Ck (+2,020)
 - Shoal Point-Bucasia (+2,015)
- « The northern suburbs of Mackay comprise the major growth area which will probably accommodate an additional 8,901 residents in the next 10 years.
- « Residents over 65 years of age are expected to increase from 15% to 17% of the population. It will be important for the Sport and Recreation Strategy to consider sport, recreation and physical activity needs for this older demographic.
- « Although the proportion of 65+ year olds will increase, planning will still need to consider other age groups as projections indicate that there will be growth across most age cohorts.
- « While Mackay has a relatively low level of disadvantage, including the second lowest SA4 Level of unemployment in the State at 4.5%, approximately one-third of residents were earning less than \$650, therefore it will be important for the strategy ensure that low and no cost recreation is available to the community.

The Need for Active Recreation and Sport:

Obesity and physical inactivity impact across many areas including health and productivity. The Mackay community will be healthier, happier and more productive if more people are physically active and spend time outdoors in parks and reserves.

Council is at the frontline of preventing physical and mental illness through the planning and provision of public parks, sport and recreation facilities and bikeways and pathways. The priority for Council is to ensure all residents have equitable access to these opportunities.

In 2015 the Qld Government Health Track data indicated that:

- « 34% of residents 18 years and older were Obese (22% higher than national average). **This has reduced to 28% in the latest data (2018) from Qld Health which indicates Council's investment in active living infrastructure is returning benefits.**
- « 65.8% of residents 18+ were overweight or obese (4% higher than national)
- « 71.7% were physically inactive (8% higher than national)

The good news is that youth inactivity was slightly lower than national average and only 25.2% were overweight or obese.

¹ Population Data provided by MRC as at 5/10/18

3 SPORT AND RECREATION TRENDS



Sport and Recreation trends in participation, facility provision and sport delivery provide an indication of emerging shifts in community preferences and new responses to the changing environment in which sport and recreation is delivered.

Key trends include:

PARTICIPATION

- « Participation in organised sport is generally static, but there is a growing demand for social forms of participation in sport.
- « The rise of personal trainers and participation in organised (or led) fitness has meant increased use of public space for organised or led activity.
- « 24-hour economy - participation has shifted from predominantly weekend and early evening to spread across nights, days, work hours and early mornings.
- « Growing popularity of running, riding, MTB and outdoor recreation.
- « Self-directed and informal activity increasing along with increased demand for outdoor and natural settings for activity.
- « Increasing participation in water based recreation such as Stand Up Paddle Boards.

PROVISION

- « Pay, Play and Away social sport provision is increasing.
- « Many sports are developing social sport programs and modified forms to regrow participation.
- « Clubs are struggling to maintain volunteer numbers and involvement in club operations.
- « Community based provision (Volunteer) is under pressure and more and more clubs are looking at paid staff for administration.
- « Greater pressure on councils with: ageing assets, increasing community expectations and clubs struggling with facility management.
- « Declining availability of functional land for sport and recreation is increasing cost of provision.

NEW MODELS

- « Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) sport and activity (E sports, Pokemon Go).
- « New mass participation models e.g. Parkrun, Colour Run, Tough Mudder, fun runs, etc.
- « Emerging women and girls participation accounting for rapid growth in traditional football codes.
- « New sports for older demographic (e.g. Pickleball and walking football).
- « Many small clubs under one large “umbrella” club or organisation.

PLANNING

- « Focus of facility planning is increasingly on flexibility in design and increased multi-use sport and recreation precincts.
- « Importance of creating active urban environments - walking and cycling and access to parks and open space.
- « Increasing community expectations for better quality spaces and facilities.
- « Increased focus on multi-use precincts as opposed to single purpose development.

4 KEY FINDINGS



4.1 COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

A detailed community engagement program was undertaken to help inform the project, it included:

- « Community reference group
- « Project Email address – MackaySR@otiumplanning.com.au
- « Council's website
- « Community Surveys (632 responses)
- « Club Surveys (65 responses)
- « Schools survey
- « Community Forums (North Mackay, Sarina, Mirani)
- « Sport Expo Stall
- « Meetings/ workshops with staff and key stakeholder groups

The following section summarises the key themes emerging from the analysis of community issues. For more detail - please refer to the Background Report.

Table 1: Community Insights

Theme	Message from Community Engagement
Facility maintenance	The club survey identified that the main reason for facility dissatisfaction, was the poor standard of facilities. This was also identified in the community workshops, where facility maintenance, including active transport links and aquatic facilities, were identified as areas that were in poor condition.
Facility sharing	The Sarina community workshop focused on the need for greater collaboration across clubs and users, to improve the quality of the available facilities. Clubs also identified the financial benefits of sharing facilities in the club survey, especially the larger clubs, who identified that increased sharing of facilities had allowed them to grow. This was also echoed by State Government and Council, who would like to see increased sharing, especially in areas like clubhouses, parking and equipment.
Motorsport facilities	The community survey identified the community's desire to see increased investment in a range of motorsport facilities, including a circuit/ drift track and a motocross facility.
Poor quality aquatic facilities	The community forums and surveys identified that the current state of aquatic facilities was below the community's expectation. Specifically, Memorial Pool was identified as a facility that required significant maintenance. Council is currently finalising an Aquatic Facilities Strategy which addresses future facility provision. As part of this, the new regional aquatic centre at Ooralea (Mackay Aquatic and Recreation Centre) will provide contemporary competition standard facilities.
Active transport	Active transport activities, such as walking and cycling, were 2nd in importance, but 8th in Council performance of provision. Improving the available links, especially to the Mackay CBD and areas of interest, such as the harbour, were also raised by all groups consulted. Active transport opportunities will continue to be a priority for the community, with the continued participation in walking, cycling and personal pursuits of fitness.
Indoor court access	There are currently 6 indoor courts, outside of schools, available in the Mackay region, which are located at the Mackay Basketball Stadium (5) and the PCYC (1). Access to indoor courts was identified as an issue, both by clubs and the community.
Lack of opportunities outside the CBD	During the consultation, multiple sources identified that there is an inequity of provision between Mackay city area and the outlying areas. This included facility provision, facility quality and available services. Rural communities understood that Council could not provide the same quantity of facilities across the region, although did identify the need for additional programs and services, as well as improved connection between rural areas and the CBD.
Lack of youth opportunities	Approximately one third of the Mackay population is aged under 25. During the consultation process it was identified that there were limited opportunities for youth, and those that did exist were generally outdated or lacked direction. This was a specific area of concern for the indigenous stakeholders, who also identified that some of the traditional activities and sports are no longer available due to clubs or organisations no longer operating.
Need for improved club development	Club priorities identified in the club survey, were to increase the capacity of committee members to help develop and improve the overall club development. Council staff and Sport and Recreation Services have also identified that there is currently a lack of communication and sharing of information between Council and Clubs, with many clubs only communicating with Council when funding is available, or there are issues at the club. Ensuring that club development plans align with Council's development planning will also become increasingly important, with State Government indicating that grant funding will need to be linked to Council's development plans.

4.2 PLANNING CHALLENGES

4.2.1 MANAGING EXISTING AND PLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE IN AN INCREASINGLY TIGHT FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The historic amalgamations which formed the regional Council created legacy issues associated with sport and recreation infrastructure. This means that in some cases infrastructure is old and in poor condition. In a fiscally constrained environment, where more responsibility is being transferred to local government, maintaining quality facilities will prove challenging. In addition, past models of small community groups undertaking maintenance and management of facilities will prove challenging to continue, with shifting participation, declining volunteerism, transient population and financial pressures impacting clubs.

In this environment it is important to focus on expenditure and investment. Any public facilities should be managed to ensure maximum use. Investment should focus on expanding opportunities for multi-use and future flexibility, in response to changing demands. These investments should only be undertaken after feasibility is confirmed and where possible, suitable umbrella group management should be investigated.

For community-based club managed facilities, new strategies will be required to assist clubs to remain viable. This may include amalgamation of similar clubs to share single facilities, greater shared use between sports, a focus on investment that enables multi-use and increased development of common infrastructure. New facilities should not be proposed where there is existing capacity within the catchment.

4.2.2 CHANGING PARTICIPATION AND DECLINING VOLUNTEERISM IN SPORTS

Across Australia, there are significant shifts in participation preferences that are changing how and where people participate in sport and recreation. More people are choosing sport and active recreation that is provided in a 'pay, play and get away' context, that reduces club involvement and volunteering. Along with this, participation in self-directed exercise and physical activity has increased and parks and pathways have become popular venues for group activities, such as boot camps and parkrun, while traditional sporting spaces are in demand for more social or modified forms of sports.

Additionally, shifting employment and family structures are impacting on volunteering, with many now unable or unwilling to volunteer. In Mackay the impact of the mining industry and the rise of 24 hour services creates

a challenge for ensuring community-based sport remains viable. Responses include encouraging clubsto look at new models of engaging with the community, providing alternative ways for volunteer contributions and exploring different management models and alternative revenue strategies.

The implications for sport and recreation planning include the need to consider a broader range of public spaces as potential "sport", or organised activity venues; acknowledge that the use of bikeways, pathways and public space for self-directed exercise and activity is increasing; consider strategies for greater flexibility of use of existing sporting facilities, and develop education and support strategies for clubs and community groups to help them adapt to more viable models in line with the changing community.

4.2.3 THE RISE OF NON-TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND PROVIDING SUITABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

The change in participation towards individual physical activities such as walking, running, mountain biking, bushwalking and water-based recreation, presents a range of issues for local governments. The most pressing of which is trying to establish consistent support and agreements from other agencies, including the State Government. To provide suitable infrastructure for these activities, specifically those that cross jurisdictions or tenure, requires partnership between Council and relevant government departments, whose priorities can change based on state policy shifts and budget outcomes.

There is also a lack of knowledge within communities across Queensland, around who is the responsible manager of various outdoor recreation lands and infrastructure. This can then create an expectation that infrastructure outside of Council's domain and control, for example cycle lanes and paths on State Controlled roads, is Council's responsibility to provide or maintain.

With the increase in the personal pursuits of fitness and outdoor exercise activities, improving both community knowledge of management and developing strong relationships with elected officials and government departments, will become increasingly important. Without these relationships there will continue to be key gaps within active transport networks and access to regional open space for recreation. This will continue to put financial and community pressure on Council and its staff.

4.3 PLANNING STRENGTHS AND ADVANTAGES

While the Mackay region has a number of planning challenges it also has some significant strengths in regard to sport and recreation. The region has a history of both government and club investment in sporting facilities. In addition it has utilised longer term strategic planning to achieve public space and outdoor recreation outcomes such as the Bluewater Trail.

These strengths have been recognized in the development of the sport and Recreation Strategy and the following points highlight key advantages the region has in regard to the vision for sport and recreation:

- « Mackay is central to the state and is very well serviced with key transport infrastructure such as road, rail and airport making it a viable prospect for building tourism and in particular event based tourism around sporting and outdoor recreation.
- « The industries supported in the region and the range of employment opportunities are diversifying. In particular tourism, eco-tourism and adventure based tourism are growth areas which will support investment in opportunities that service residents as well as visitors.
- « The region has a wealth of conservation and natural area recreation opportunities with beaches, reef, rainforests, mountains and lakes all within short distances from Mackay.
- « There is significant investment in event and sporting infrastructure from public and not for profit sectors with the region now offering a major regional stadium, a new aquatic and athletics facility, a major AFL and cricket precinct, planning well underway for netball, tennis and other sports to be able to host state and national competition. New strategies such as for Mountain Bike trails will allow the region to differentiate itself from other destinations.
- « There is a strong history of sporting participation and achievement.
- « The region has a good climate for encouraging sporting participation and active living.

4.4 THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Sport and Recreation Plan is not a stand alone document. Rather it integrates prior work and directions from current strategies. It is also implemented as part of overall strategic planning for Mackay, with implementation through a number of strategic and operational areas.

Strategic planning is not completely hierarchical and while this strategy notionally sits “below” the planning scheme and corporate strategy and policy, there are recommendations that seek to influence higher order policy and strategy.

In an implementation sense, the strategy also works with other strategies which contribute to the vision. This means that it is critical that implementation is coordinated across all areas of council to ensure consistency of direction and synergies of effort to achieve multiple outcomes.

Key amongst these would be:

- « The Fishing Strategy
- « The Aquatic Facilities Strategy
- « The Regional Mountain Bike Strategy
- « Cycleways and Active Transport Planning

The following illustrates where the plan sits in the overall strategic context (note this is illustrative only and does not include every strategy):



Figure 1 Strategic Context

5 EXISTING SUPPLY



Across the whole local government area there is a reasonable supply of sport and recreation facilities in Mackay. However, the critical issue is that the available land and facilities are not always where they will be needed for future populations. For areas of high growth (such as Northern Beaches) this creates a need for additional land and long-term planning for new facilities.

Figure 2 summarises current supply. Mapping of these facilities is contained in the Background Report.



Figure 2 Summary of Current Supply of Public Sport and Recreation Facilities

In addition to public facilities, there is also a significant supply within education campuses. While the data on facilities was collated during the study, responses from schools was poor and the number that allow community access is currently unconfirmed. The following data is a combination of survey returns and desktop analysis. Comments from clubs and others indicate that these facilities represent a potentially under-used resource.

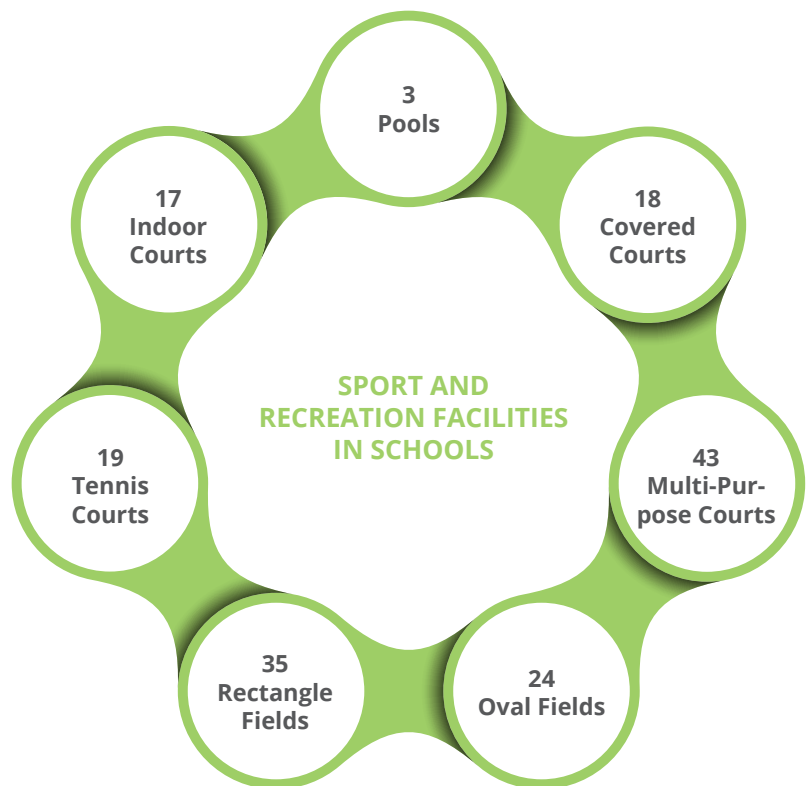


Figure 3 Sport and Recreation Facilities in Schools Facilities

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Improve overall management of sport and recreation, ensuring sustainable management and forward planning of sport and recreation facilities.
2. Ensure that sport and recreation continue to contribute to the health, social and economic wellbeing of the Mackay region.
3. Continue to develop and strengthen Council's partnerships with community groups and other agencies, to deliver a range of sport and recreation opportunities.

6.2 THE SPORT AND RECREATION ACTION PLAN

A draft plan of action for the Mackay Regional Council has been developed and detailed in the following sections. More detail on the rationale and planning issues driving these actions can be found in the Background Report.

The action plan has been built around three key areas:

1. Facility Planning and Provision.
2. Programs and Services.
3. Administration and Management.

Priorities have been expressed as:

- « Short (1-3 years).
- « Medium (3-7 years).
- « Long (More than 7 years).
- « Ongoing (Continue for the life of the plan).

6.3 FACILITY PLANNING AND PROVISION

This plan responds to the need for Council to develop a forward thinking and sustainable planning approach to sport and recreation facilities across the region. This includes regional facility planning, increasing community access to facilities, outdoor recreation planning, active transport needs and addressing the lack of facilities outside the CBD.

6.3.1 STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES:

1. **Provision hierarchy.** Planning and providing sport and recreation facilities is based around the provision of a hierarchy of facilities that generally meet either a Council Wide (or Regional) catchment, and those that meet District or Local needs.
 - a. For sporting facilities, it is recommended that provision be focused on Council-wide and District Level facilities only. This means that the strategic emphasis is on the development or enhancement of larger multi user precincts that service multiple suburbs and key Council planning catchments as identified in the Planning Scheme.
 - b. For recreation opportunities the hierarchy of provision should include Council-wide, District, and Local opportunities. The focus of planning should be to ensure that residents have reasonable access to all levels of provision. This could mean defining maximum travel times or distances that are the desired planning target (such as access to local park opportunities within 400 m or 5 minutes safe walking).

- c. For more specialised facilities or opportunities (such as youth facilities) this means providing both large “destination” developments (such as The Sugarbowl) and district-based opportunities that can be accessed by young people within a planning catchment.
2. **Utilise existing capacity.** Capital and recurrent funds are limited and new investment in sporting fields and facilities should only be considered where existing assets (within a given catchment) are already at capacity.
- a. This means that sometimes the solution to unmet demand is not an additional facility but an alternative approach to managing existing resources that allows unused capacity to meet new demand.
 - b. Enabling access to unused capacity in sporting facilities could mean investing in modifications (such as lighting to enable night use), changing lease or management structures to allow new users to access available hours, or implementing better awareness and booking systems.
3. **Consider operations and ongoing funding before new investment.** There are always big visions and new facility proposals that come from a range of sources including community and political sectors. It is critical for Council to consider how a facility will be managed and where operational funding is to be sourced. For existing facilities there maybe a range of approaches that deliver the best balance between recurrent costs and community benefit and different solutions will be required for different facilities. Undertaking a business case or feasibility study should be a prerequisite to investment.
- c. Community assets should be considered to include facilities in public institutions such as schools. In effect the community pays for these facilities and strategies to “unlock” sporting facilities at schools so they can be used out of school hours recognises their unused capacity.

Table 2: Facility Planning and Provision Actions

Strategy Area	Actions	Priority
Improving Sporting Facility Development, and Maintenance.	Adopt performance criteria for development of new sporting areas that ensures any new development enables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Flexible use: a suitable size and shape to allow reconfiguration over time in response to changing demands « Multiple use: designed to allow sharing of central infrastructure such as amenities, parking and spectator facilities. As well as allowing for sharing of playing areas (fields and courts) across codes. « Contemporary amenities that are fully accessible, environmentally efficient and provide for male and female competitors. « Suitable parking facilities and linkages to public transport. « Active transport connections and end of trip facilities. « Ensuring that all new or upgraded areas also provide for informal active recreation use and where possible general parkland recreation such as play spaces. 	Short
	Prioritise improvements to council operated facilities that address safety issues, non-compliance with contemporary standards, and upgrading to provide accessible facilities and female friendly amenities.	Ongoing
	Encourage clubs who manage facilities to focus on sustainable improvement strategies (including amalgamations, shared use, energy efficiency, and increased partnering).	Ongoing
	Adopt a facility investment policy that ensures the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Council does not invest in major facilities unless a feasibility or business case has been completed and supports investment. « Council does not invest in single purpose facilities, except where the sport or activity has a specific playing surface requirement. « Access to School facilities and increased multi-use of existing facilities are considered as part of existing supply before confirming a need for new investment to meet demand. « Prioritise supporting clubs (with advice, grant assistance or in-kind) where projects increase shared or multiple use. 	Medium

Strategy Area	Actions	Priority
Increase Shared Use and Multiple Use	Council should encourage Regional Sporting Associations to develop an integrated facility plan for their sport. These plans should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Identification of existing facilities that meet contemporary standards. « The sport's overall development plan across 5-year periods. « Strategies to encourage multi-use of existing facilities « Agreed priorities for improving existing facilities to meet contemporary standards. « Strategies to ensure any new developments or investments enable multiple use. 	Ongoing
	Develop a database or "marketplace" for clubs and groups with facilities wanting to share or increase uses. The database should include up to date contact information to allow groups and clubs seeking space to undertake their activity.	Short
	Develop a support program to assist clubs to amalgamate to a single shared facility. Council should also highlight positive examples of facility sharing in the region to encourage clubs to investigate opportunities to increase sharing.	Short
	Develop resources and information tools to make it easier for clubs to establish new shared users on their facilities. This could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> « Templates « Rostering tools « Proforma agreements « Oversight and advisory assistance 	Medium
	<i>Achieving much of the above is best done with implementation of an integrated club support program. This is discussed in the next section.</i>	
Increase community access to school facilities	Review school facility audit and update to ensure all schools are captured. This review should document available facilities, fees and facility conditions.	Short
	Continue to advocate with Sport and Recreation Services (Department of Housing and Public Works) to ensure their involvement in resolving the current policy issues associated with community access to school facilities.	Ongoing
	At a local government level, Council should adopt a strategy with Sport and Recreation Services to work with schools individually, who are not allowing community use, to resolve the barriers and issues preventing use.	Medium
	Develop agreement templates and other resources to make it easier for schools and clubs to share facilities.	Medium
	Where possible, Council should investigate Council-school partnerships with in-kind support (e.g. mowing) from Council to enable community use. Council could also consider a grant program to support school facility modifications or upgrades (e.g. toilets, access systems, lighting) that enable community use (in exchange for guaranteed access).	Ongoing

Strategy Area	Actions	Priority
Long term Planning for Outdoor Recreation	Develop and adopt a long-term strategy for the Pioneer River that increases the available opportunities including: « Water-based recreation « Trails « Riverside destination parklands « Upper reaches of the river should be investigated for a canoe trail	Long
	Consider opportunities for commercial recreation and nature-based tourism opportunities within the river corridor.	Long
	Develop improved amenities and access to the Platypus Beach Recreation area.	Medium
	Continue to investigate opportunities to expand on the Bluewater Trail by adding new networks or links.	Ongoing
	Finalise and implement the Regional MTB strategy.	Short
	Implement the Fishing Strategy.	Ongoing
Planning for New Sporting Facilities and Precincts	Develop a preliminary master plan for the future Northern Beaches Sports Precinct at Geisler's Farm. Consider the opportunity to provide field sport, indoor sport and an aquatic centre.	Short
	Finalise and implement the Aquatic Facilities Strategy.	Short
	Establish a regional working group to investigate the need for, and options to deliver, regional motor sports facilities (include neighbouring councils).	Medium
	Encourage Regional Sports Associations to undertake their own planning on facility priorities and demonstrate feasibility of any new facility proposals.	Ongoing
Implementing Master Planning	Review Brewers Park Master Plan and work with users to increase sharing of facilities and consider relocating the skate park and locating the youth centre in the precinct.	Medium
	Over the longer-term look to consolidate sporting uses and improve the parking and access networks for South Mackay Precinct.	Long
	Work with Mackay Hockey to finalise their future at the South Mackay Sports Precinct. Council needs to support the association in discussions with the Airport to ensure that future investment in the site is protected and that for the life of this plan their current location is confirmed.	Short
	Prioritise master planning actions that address current or near future capacity and or multiple use issues.	Ongoing
Sport and Event Tourism	Continue to build on the potential of South Mackay Sports Precinct to host sporting and other events through encouraging sports to confirm a regional facility and implementing improvements to parking and access for larger events.	Ongoing
	Prioritise investment in upgrading facilities or developing new facilities (such as the MTB trails) that support major competitive events, provide new opportunities for residents and increase tourism product.	Short
	Provide assistance to groups trying to navigate Council and state permits and approvals required for mass participation events such as fun runs. Consider adopting a minimum standard of service for processing of permit applications.	Ongoing

6.4 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Both Council and the community identified the need to improve the available services both outside of the Mackay City and in the growth areas. This plan needs to ensure that Council can provide sport and recreation services and programs across a range of areas and within a changing demand for activities. Flexibility and multi-use will be key challenges to overcome for Council.

For the Mackay region it will be important that this plan provides for indoor court access, suitable provision of facilities outside of Mackay CBD and changes in recreation demand including water-based recreation and mountain biking, providing group specific programs and supporting the development of community clubs and associations.

6.4.1 STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

1. **Develop Community Club Capacity** – Council relies on community based clubs to deliver the wide range of opportunities for sport and recreation. As such it will be vital for Council to continue to develop the capacity of clubs to improve governance and adapt management and operational models in response to changing needs and participation within the community.
2. **Encourage sports to define their future** – Council cannot be the arbiter of differing views within a particular sport regarding their future direction or their preferred regional level facility. Providing advice, support and encouragement to each sporting code/ activity to collaborate at a regional level (and to engage with their state body) to agree on common plan is essential to ensure that the limited investment and capital available is used effectively and that duplication is avoided.
3. **Maximise the health benefit** – Mackay has continued to invest in the health of its residents with infrastructure and programs and this should continue. As a principle this means that investment in and management of sport and recreation facilities should seek to maximise the community health benefits derived from improving access to active recreation, increasing social interaction and building community awareness. Making sure that all residents have access to local outdoor recreation and nature based opportunities such as parks and trails is paramount. In some cases this may require a review of how some facilities are managed to increase access to informal and unstructured use of facilities.
4. **Investing in young people** – It will be crucial for council to continue to support the provision of a range of opportunities that encourage youth participation in sport and active recreation. This means the provision of facilities and support for programs that engage young people. Essential elements of this are:
 - « Involve young people in design of places and spaces that are for them
 - « Provide for informal interaction and multiple activities in safe and accessible locations
 - « Recognise the barriers to formal sport participation include, time, cost and transport

Table 3: Program and Services Actions

Strategy Area	Actions	Priority
Continue to support development of opportunities for Youth Sport and Recreation	In conjunction with the Sports Expo, consider working with sports clubs to promote free tryout days for youth and to adopt recruitment strategies for young people that help address cost and transport barriers.	Short
	Encourage sports to register for the State Governments Get Started Voucher Scheme and promote the scheme with the community.	Ongoing
	Continue developing youth spaces in public parks in conjunction with local youth. These can be at local/district and regional scale and should include activity elements, shade, water and Wi-Fi.	Short
	Ensure that all neighbourhoods have access to active open space such as outdoor courts and public access sport fields.	Long
Encourage individual sports to prepare Regional Plans for facilities	Adopt a policy position that prioritises support for facility improvements that are consistent with adopted plans and reduce duplication.	Medium
	In line with the recommendation on Improving Facility Maintenance and Development , develop templates and other resources to assist sports to undertake region wideplanning.	Medium
	Utilise the regional planning process to encourage clubs to consider better sharing, collaboration. Potential amalgamation and new governance models.	
	Council should engage the State Sporting Organisations to get their involvement in working with key sports to confirm facility priorities.	Medium

Strategy Area	Actions	Priority
Improving the health return from sport and recreation	Ensure that all new parks, sport and recreation facilities have built in “informal access” to enable people to be active. Include facilities such as outdoor gyms, signed running circuits and multi-use courts. Where neighbourhoods lack access to an active space, investigate potential solutions such as use of school fields or courts.	Ongoing
	Consider revising policies around use of public parks to reduce or remove costs for participation level activities such as park run, or subsidised access to facilities for community-based activity programs.	Short
	Continue promoting the growing network of paths and trails, championing the Bluewater trail. Council should seek collaborations with organisations that want to increase physical activity and ensure where possibly that regulations and red-tape is reduced or removed to promote physical activity across the community.	Ongoing
Develop and Implement a Club Sustainability Program	Build on the existing partnerships through Sports Expo and other club engagements to provide a range of additional support and sustainability mechanisms.	Ongoing
	Implement an annual data collection process to update the database for clubs that requires them to complete the audit information to be eligible for any council support or to access on-line resources. This data collection should include: « Membership (Senior and Junior). « Committee members (Position and contact details). « Committee training workshops attended. Council should also consider an option to include the mandatory attendance, linked to Council letters of support. « Financial health checks. « Development plans, to ensure they align with existing regional planning.	Short
	Following the establishment of the club database, Council should use the database to ensure improved communication with clubs and providing information to the wider community.	Long
	Require club “health checks” to be completed every 2 years so forward planning (in conjunction with peak bodies and SRS) for skill development and training workshops can address emerging needs. As well as including the above the program should include: « Support for clubs to develop strategic / development plans with access to training and resource materials. Require clubs to have a 5-year plan as a prerequisite to receiving support. « Build the program around on-line resources and networking with SRS and State Sports Organisations.	Long
	<i>As part of implementing the above, Council could investigate the establishment of a similar program to the Cairns Regional Council ‘Go-Clubs program’.</i>	
Consider the development of a Water Based Recreation Strategy	Investigate options for supporting funding to prepare a water-based recreation strategy that explores: « Natural swimming areas (creeks, rivers, lakes) « Paddle craft (canoe, kayak SUP) and paddle trails « Boat ramps and fishing « River use (powered and non-powered) « Ocean sports and events (incl potential artificial surf pools) « Lake sports (powered and non-powered) This should include linking emerging event and nature-based tourism opportunities into this strategy.	Medium
Indoor Court Sport Strategy	Develop an indoor court sport strategy that looks to address shortages in the northern beaches and other growth areas. Strategy should include increasing access to and use of school facilities for training and the identification of a new multi-court indoor facility to support competitions in the Northern Beaches.	Medium
	Work with Magpies Sports Club to explore potential for provision of a multi-court indoor facility as part of their future facility plans.	Long

6.5 ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

To achieve the goals of the Sport and Recreation Strategy, it is important that administration and governance is strengthened and that adequate resourcing is provided within Council.

The consultation process identified a lack of Council resources to undertake large scale management of facilities, lack of continuity in implementing existing planning policies and documents and a general issue with communication between Council departments, interagency departments and with community organisations.

6.5.1 STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

1. Effective communication and collaboration

– Council can not be expected to be the sole provider of sport and recreation infrastructure, programs and services as this would be financially unsustainable. Provision of facilities and sporting opportunity has traditionally been a partnership across government and community clubs. To make these partnerships work it is essential that there is effective communication between all stakeholders, including state and federal government, sporting organisations and local clubs. Clear points of contact and consistent advice are crucial. This means that both internal communications need to be effective so that programs don't cross purposes or operational areas don't provide conflicting advice.

2. Clearly define policies and processes – To support Council in its decision making on all aspects of sport and recreation provision and to provide

some certainty to the community groups and other partners, there needs to be clear policies, guidelines and processes. Considered policy provides council officers with a consistent framework for decision making and provides the community with confidence that following the correct process delivers objective decision making and equitable provision. Policies and guidelines also ensure that community expectations are realistic.

3. Be realistic in planning management of facilities – Council can not manage all sport and recreation facilities and in some cases may not be the best manager for a particular facility. The history of the club-council partnership in provision has been successful in the past with community level facilities. But it is important to recognise that the operating environment has changed significantly.

- « More legal, administrative and financial responsibility has been transferred to clubs who are also struggling under changed volunteer participation and revenue opportunities.
- « Similarly continued investment in capital by the state without any support for recurrent costs creates financial stress for councils who are also constrained by the state in generating rates revenue.
- « Community expectations in regard to built sport and recreation facilities have increased with regard to both quality and diversity of programs supported. These larger facilities need contemporary venue management skills to be successful and minimise subsidies.

Table 4: Administration and Management Actions

Strategy Area	Actions	Priority
Sport and Recreation Policy Framework	A draft policy framework has been provided in the Appendix . It is recommended that it be reviewed and adopted following council's adoption of the strategy.	Short
Major Facility Management	The management of major facilities is resource intensive and requires specialist skills. Council's current resourcing does not allow it to manage major facilities directly and therefore it is recommended that these facilities operate under professional management provided by experienced well-established major clubs or 3rd party commercial operators. Exploring alternative models with community boards, trusts and company limited by guarantee, should be on a case by case basis and subject to a detailed feasibility study that identifies how the model supports professional management.	Ongoing

Strategy Area	Actions	Priority
Sport and Recreation Tenure Policy Review	Ensure more effective use of sporting facilities via mechanisms that encourage shared and multiple use. The old model of every club having their own piece of land and facility is no longer sustainable as land stocks diminish, prices increase and clubs struggle with funding full operation of facilities.	Ongoing
	Consider adopting a service model management for multi-use facilities where clubs are facility users who pay a fee for their access on booked times (as opposed to long term leasing). Use fees reflect the higher level of service and clubs do not have to struggle with volunteer-based facility maintenance. Assurances would be in place for regular tenants that their sport would continue to be supported, but new "use it or lose it" provisions are recommended so that field or court hours are not booked up but unused when demand from other sports remains unmet.	Long
Sport and Recreation Strategy Implementation and Coordination	Establish an internal cross departmental group to support the implementation of this strategy and coordinate land and facility planning and management ensuring constancy across the organisation and according to this strategy.	Short
	Continue with the community-based Sport And Recreation Advisory Group as a key way of supporting implementation of the strategy, strengthening communication and providing a forum to discuss policy and other mechanisms developed as part of this strategy.	Ongoing
Improved club and council communications	Provide consistent points of contact for clubs to approach council on different issues and promote these contact points through the proposed Club Sustainability Program.	Ongoing
Addressing season crossover and access issues	In conjunction with clubs (via the proposed Club Sustainability Program) develop a yearly calendar for sports seasons and events. Seek early agreement for common season changeover dates and allow at least 2 weeks remediation for multiple use fields.	Long
	As increased access to school facilities assists with additional field space, council can broker agreements on use and relocation of fixtures or training in the event of unforeseen impacts such as extreme weather.	Long
Implement Objective Decision Systems for sport and recreation projects	Develop a program priority matrix/ decision system to apply the strategic and policy priorities outlined in this strategy. A draft decision model is provided in Appendix 2 and should be reviewed and refined to support staff and council in assessing proposals for priority.	Short

7 WARRANTIES AND DISCLAIMERS



The information contained in this report is provided in good faith. While Otium Planning Group has applied their own experience to the task, they have relied upon information supplied to them by other persons and organisations.

We have not conducted an audit of the information provided by others but have accepted it in good faith. Some of the information may have been provided 'commercial in confidence' and as such these venues or sources of information are not specifically identified. Readers should be aware that the preparation of this report may have necessitated projections of the future that are inherently uncertain and that our opinion is based on the underlying representations, assumptions and projections detailed in this report.

There will be differences between projected and actual results, because events and circumstances frequently do not occur as expected and those differences may be material. We do not express an opinion as to whether actual results will approximate projected results, nor can we confirm, underwrite or guarantee the achievability of the projections as it is not possible to substantiate assumptions which are based on future events.

Accordingly, neither Otium Planning Group, nor any member or employee of Otium Planning Group, undertakes responsibility arising in any way whatsoever to any persons other than client in respect of this report, for any errors or omissions herein, arising through negligence or otherwise however caused.

APPENDIX 1 – DRAFT POLICY FRAMEWORK

OVERVIEW – POLICY VISION

Sport and recreation are a central part of the Mackay region's lifestyle. Council will prioritise the planning and provision of sport and recreation opportunities that maximise the health, social and economic benefits for the region.

Council recognises that to achieve this vision, partnerships with the community and other levels of government will need to be developed and supported to meet the challenges involved maintaining existing infrastructure and providing new or upgraded facilities during the next 10 years.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Mackay Regional Council has a core role to plan for the future to ensure there is sufficient land and suitable facilities to meet the recreation and sporting needs of the community. This role is critical to the social, physical and economic health of the Mackay Region.

This means investing in parks, protecting natural areas, developing pathways, play and picnic places, ensuring the development of sport and recreation facilities, and supporting events and programs.

Council recognises the most effective way to use its limited resources is to establish partnerships with other providers from government, community and private sectors and, to ensure that public facilities are well managed and well used.

Council's role is to ensure a diverse range of sport and recreation opportunities are provided by:

- « Forward planning the provision of infrastructure and ensuring sufficient land is available for the development of parks, sport and recreation facilities.
- « Improving overall management of sport and recreation resources to ensure available capacity is well used.
- « Ensuring that sport and recreation contributes to

health, social and economic wellbeing of the Mackay Region

- « Continuing to develop and strengthen Council's partnerships with community groups and other agencies to ensure delivery of a range of sport and recreation opportunities

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

To achieve this vision Council will be guided by the following strategic objectives:

1. Plan and provide sport and recreation facilities based around the provision of a hierarchy of facilities that generally meet either a Council Wide (or Regional) catchment, and those that meet District or Local needs.
2. Ensure that available capacity in underutilised facilities is considered as part of the possible responses to meeting demand.
3. Investment and or support for major new facilities or refurbishments should consider financial and operational sustainability before detailed planning or funding is sought.
4. Investment in social capital through improving club and community capacity in governance and management of their sport/ activity.
5. Individual sports should be required to collaborate and agree on future strategic directions and facility priorities for their sport in the region.
6. All investment in sport and recreation facilities and opportunities, should return a health dividend by enabling both organised and informal active recreation.
7. Developing, maintaining and strengthening partnerships with community groups, community based organisations and other government agencies is an essential part of implementing the policy and as such should be resourced properly.
8. Development of facilities for parks, sport and recreation, should consider all sectors of the community and provide equitable access as well as suitable spaces for different age and cultural needs.
9. Strengthen effective communication and collaboration within council and between council and the community and other agencies.
10. Strengthen objective decision making through developing clear policies and processes.
11. Be realistic in planning management of facilities and adopt management strategies that reflect current resourcing.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Council is responsible for ensuring the provision of sport and recreation opportunities for its communities.

This means:

- « Ensuring development of sporting facilities and recreation facilities occurs in such a way as to provide sustainable long-term access to the community.
- « Ensuring that all areas receive a minimum level of service in regard to access to opportunities although service levels should be defined for different areas and community types.
- « Ensuring that a broad range of activities are available in a variety of locations.
- « Ensuring that parks, sport and recreation facilities are developed in a timely manner to meet growing population or changing neighbourhoods.

Provision of sport and recreation opportunities are essential for the physical, social and economic health of the Mackay Region. This means that council should recognise and 'value' these benefits as a major return to the community for investment in sport and recreation opportunity. The cost to operate or support facilities and activities should be measured in terms of the return in:

- « Health and physical activity opportunity
- « Social cohesion and community integration
- « Economic activity and support of local economies

Investing in sport and recreation opportunities needs to consider the issue of limited resources and should therefore seek to use a range of resourcing opportunities to maximise the Sport and Recreation Opportunity 'return'. This can be done by:

- « Establishing strategic partnerships to maximise return on existing land and facility resources already existing in the community, including those at education facilities.
- « Providing 'people' resources to facilitate the development of new opportunities and activities. This would include the creation of 'place' which facilitates community use of areas or establishes new community precincts. This would also include specific structures to support groups and individuals wanting to create new opportunities.
- « Ensuring that existing land and facility resources are managed so as to return maximum benefits across the three areas (physical activity, social cohesion, and economic benefit).
- « Creating an information rich environment for community groups, residents and visitors that ensures resource sharing and awareness of opportunities and creates long term partnerships.



APPENDIX 2 – DRAFT DECISION FRAMEWORK

The following matrix is a draft approach to establishing priority for proposed action:

PRIORITY MATRIX							
Primary Criteria	Criteria	Needs Measure	Enter Yes or No			Yes	No
Legislative/ Safety	Responds to a known legislative requirement or critical safety issue	ACHIEVES MAXIMUM SCORE – PROVIDE FACILITY				proceed	assess secondary criteria
Minimum Standard	Required to meet minimum standards of provision for existing community (e.g. under Council's Public Open Space Policy or other policy)	ACHIEVES MAXIMUM SCORE – PROVIDE FACILITY				proceed	assess secondary criteria
Business/ feasibility case	If the project is more than \$250,000 is it supported by a business case / feasibility study?	If not supported by a business case/ feasibility report reject development				Score 3 and Assess secondary	Reject
Secondary Criteria						Weighting	SCORE
	Required to meet safety/ upgrades to contemporary standards	The development is required to meet a safety or playing standard				1	0
	Achieves an identified community need	The new development has been identified as an essential community need through suitable consultation				1	0
	Aligns with the Sport and Recreation Plan	The development is identified within the Sport and Recreation Plan as a priority				1	0
	Aligns with other key Council policies/ strategies	The development aligns with or meets recommendations from other Council policies or plan				1	0
	Aligns with the Regional Plan for facilities	The development aligns with an approved regional sport plan, and is endorsed by the relevant sporting bodies				1	0
	Aligns with the club's development plan	The development has been identified within a club's development/business plan				1	0

PRIORITY MATRIX								
	Improves/ Encourages multi-use of asset	The development would improve multi-use at the site by encouraging new users or amalgamation of clubs				1	0	
	The development provides an active recreation opportunity	The development improves the surrounding community's opportunities to participate in active recreation				1	0	
	Provides informal recreation uses	The development provides the community access to a new informal/ unstructured recreation opportunity				1	0	
	Supports the Events / Sport Tourism Strategy	The development would form part of a larger tourism product/ opportunity, and is currently not provided in the region, including neighbouring LGA's				1	0	
	Encourage community use of school facilities	The development is located on education land, increases the community's access to these facilities and is secured by a long term agreement				1	0	
	Duplication and use of School Facilities	The development does not create an over supply when considering available capacity at nearby facilities and school facilities				1	0	
MAX SCORE						15	0	
						TOTAL SCORE		
						< 9	=, > 9	
						ASSESSMENT	NO	YES

