



Recreation and Leisure Strategy Adopted 1 May 2006



**“... promote a better quality of life for
current and future generations.”** Latrobe 2021

Introduction

The Latrobe City Recreation and Leisure Strategy has been formulated from the issues raised and research conducted by Stratcorp Consulting, utilising the following planning elements:

Vision

Principles

Strategic Objectives

Strategic Actions

Vision

The Recreation and Leisure Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the broader strategic planning framework and aspirations outlined in Latrobe 2021: The Vision for the Latrobe Valley. Latrobe 2021 is a visionary document that positions Latrobe City Council and the community for 2021, by outlining a series of key sustainability, liveability, governance and community capacity building objectives and initiatives.

The Vision for the City of Latrobe is:

- A vibrant region.
- A caring and enterprising community.
- A harmonious community.
- A sustainable, safe, secure region.

The Latrobe 2021 Vision will be achieved by the Council and the community being focused on the actions emanating from four strategic objectives:

1. Sustainability.
2. Liveability.
3. Community Capacity Building.
4. Governance.

The recreational objectives and aspirations of the Council and the community are largely encapsulated within the second objective, “Liveability”.

Liveability has a strategic objective: “To promote and support social, recreational, cultural and community life by providing both essential and innovative amenities, services and within the municipality.”

The key community outcome, in terms of Recreation Liveability, is defined in 2021 as:

“By enriching the vibrancy and diversity of community life through promoting and supporting recreational services and facilities in the municipality.”

Principles

The following proposed principles have underpinned the development of the Latrobe City Recreation and Leisure Strategy:

1. Council's role and responsibility in the development and provision of recreation and leisure opportunities shall be clearly defined.
2. There shall be a diverse range of accessible recreation facilities and services, and open space areas available across the City.
3. Priority shall be given to supporting the provision of recreation facilities and services that cater for both municipal and local level needs.
4. The provision and allocation of recreation facilities and services shall be equitable according to age, gender, cultural background and ability.
5. Generally, there shall be a focus on the consolidation of existing sporting facilities within the Region, and an emphasis on the provision of new (unstructured) recreational pursuits and open space use.
6. There shall be a genuine attempt by Council to encourage the community into recreational activities for the health, well-being and social benefits they provide.
7. Recreation and leisure facilities and settings shall provide safe and supportive environments for participants.
8. The provision of recreation and leisure facilities shall maximise shared usage and flexibility to meet changing community needs and aspirations.
9. A collaborative and partnership approach with community groups, government agencies and the private sector will drive the provision of recreation and sporting facilities and services, and the provision of open space.

Strategic Objectives

The following six Strategic Objectives have been recommended to form the basis for the provision of recreation and leisure resources in Latrobe City for the next ten years:

1. Provide a diversity of financially sustainable recreation and leisure facilities and opportunities.
2. Provide and promote well used and relevant recreation facilities and settings.
3. Consolidate recreation and sports facility provision and use.
4. Encourage and support community involvement in sustainable facility management and development.
5. Maximise opportunities for economic development through recreation and leisure.
6. Provide effective management, support and resources.

Strategic Actions

Strategic Objective # 1

“Provide a Diversity of Financially Sustainable Recreation and Leisure Facilities and Opportunities”

1. Increase the availability of recreation facilities in those areas of the City under provided:
 - Initiate discussions with individual communities regarding the desire for the development of useable recreational space, highlighting the need for residents to clearly justify need and demonstrate the ability to be actively involved in the management and sustainable maintenance of any proposed new space.
 - Improve facilities available for informal recreational activities within current areas of public open space.
2. Provide for emerging sports and activities:
 - Facilitate a *Soccer Development and Facility Strategy* in conjunction with local soccer associations.
 - Financially support the proposed *Regional Synthetic Hockey Facility Feasibility Study*.
 - Consider projects on their respective merits for proposed new/improved motor sport facilities.
3. Undertake a feasibility study into the long-term strategic provision of aquatic facilities across Latrobe City, which should have a focus on:
 - Future provision of leisure water/family pool space.
 - Continued provision of well-located and accessible aquatic facilities.
 - Minimising duplication of like facilities/services within catchment areas.
 - Financially sustainable facility development options.
4. Ensure a well-connected, well defined and safe bicycle network is available within and between the main townships, by:
 - Reviewing and updating the 1998 *Latrobe Bicycle Strategy Plan* and including specific references to and details of rail trails.
 - Maximising opportunities to create circuits, rather than wholly “one-way” routes to specific destinations.
 - Installing functional and directional signage.

5. Facilitate increased passive recreational use of selected major sports reserves by providing informal recreation facilities (e.g. paths, seats, plantings, BBQ/picnic areas, playgrounds).
6. Prepare *Township Sports Facility Plans*.
(Traralgon commenced 2005, Moe/Newborough application to SRV to complete 2006 /07)
7. Prepare a *Playground Strategy*, which will consider the provision of a hierarchy of play spaces, increased diversity of play equipment, and equitable distribution across the City.

Strategic Actions

Strategic Objective # 2

“Provide and Promote Well Used and Relevant Recreation Facilities and Settings”

8. Undertake a Tennis Development Strategy
(Investigate, with Tennis Victoria, tennis participation development programs and initiatives, as well as investigate the current provision and distribution of tennis facilities, including options to consolidate and upgrade existing facilities).
9. Establish accessible, safe and appealing recreation and leisure facilities and spaces for people with a disability by:
 - Conducting an audit of existing sporting facilities and major parks, this might include an assessment of barriers such as accessible paths, parking areas, internal circulation capacities and toilets.
 - Allocating resources towards an annual improvement and upgrade program to improve the accessibility of existing facilities and key parks.
10. Investigate the feasibility of utilising an existing indoor stadium(s) as a supervised venue for young people to “drop-in” to engage in informal sporting activities for a specified period after school or on weekends.
11. Ensure there is adequate provision of quality open space in all townships across Latrobe City by:
 - Reviewing the 1999 *Public Open Space Policy*.
 - Considering the introduction of a hierarchy of open space
 - Developing urban public open space and bushland reserves in highly populated areas.
12. Ensure affordable options for participating in recreation activities are available. For example, provision of free (unstructured) recreation facilities in selected parks and open space areas, such as basketball half-courts, tennis rebound walls, linear bike paths, and golf practice cages.
13. Advocate the benefits to older adults of engaging in active lifestyles by:
 - Supporting any a promotional or awareness campaign informing older adults of the benefits of participating in an active lifestyle.

- Educating medical practitioners as to the availability of health and fitness facilities and other “active” programs which might be suitable as options for treating/preventing some medical conditions in patients.
14. Facilitate increased opportunities for older adults to access sport and recreation facilities and programs by:
 - Assisting existing locally based walking programs to expand, and by establishing neighbourhood walking programs in townships where they do not currently exist.
 - Establish new, low impact health and well-being recreational activities (such as Tai Chi) in townships where they do not currently exist.
 - Ensuring key recreation facilities are safe and secure for older adults (security lighting, car park provision, access into and around facilities).
 - Assessing the capacity of existing indoor centres and halls to accommodate older adult groups for informal recreation activities at affordable costs.
 - Identifying opportunities where selected unsealed paths and trails could be sealed, as a means to increase their use by older adults or people with poor mobility.
 - Encouraging sporting clubs/associations to start-up “seniors” or “veterans” teams and competitions.
 - Encouraging sporting clubs/associations to market spectator opportunities to elderly residents surrounding their home venue, as a means to include them in the community and to provide a social outlet (e.g. free admittance, free first cup of coffee/tea etc.).
 15. Investigate the viability of Council coordinating the introduction of a student sports discount card as a means of linking young people with local leisure venues.
 16. Support/facilitate a reciprocal rights membership scheme between Latrobe City golf clubs as a strategy to increase usage of and interest in local golf facilities.

Strategic Actions

Strategic Objective # 3

“Consolidate Recreation and Sports Facility Provision and Use”

17. Re-use or remove unused sporting facilities, for example:
 - Kingsford Street Reserve tennis courts (Moe).
 - Remove concrete edging denoting former athletics track on Keegan Street Reserve.
18. Encourage clubs utilising separate clubrooms on the same reserve to consolidate into one building.
19. Work with existing basketball associations to encourage the establishment of a City-wide basketball competition.
20. Identify opportunities at indoor sports centres to accommodate “free-time” to encourage young people into sport, and to socialise.
21. Investigate the feasibility of establishing new sportsfields to create multiple playing fields for the same sport code (should be considered during the planning process associated with the *Township Sports Facility Plans*).
22. The *Traralgon Township Sports Facility Plan* shall consider all issues regarding the long term provision of sports facilities within the town.
23. Develop closer relationships with schools/Monash University to integrate management and use of school and public facilities by:
 - Advocating the use of school facilities by sports clubs at those schools which do not currently permit external use.
 - Investigating opportunities to increase the use of school facilities by sports clubs, which may involve providing incentives to schools to upgrade their playing surfaces and other associated facilities which are required by clubs when using school facilities, e.g. change/toilet areas, car parking, shade/shelter and access to water.
24. Conduct a detailed assessment of the works required for the ongoing management and maintenance of the Hazelwood Pondage Caravan Park and associated recreation areas.
25. Continue to upgrade and expand the provision of recreation facilities at Lake Narracan (including the Caravan Park) in accordance with the *Lake Narracan Strategic Development Plan*.

Strategic Actions

Strategic Objective # 4

“Encourage and Support Community Involvement in Sustainable Facility Management and Development”

26. Consolidate the viability of existing sports clubs and associations by:
 - Encouraging all clubs to prepare strategic business plans (or review existing ones).
 - Providing and facilitating club training and education opportunities in ‘best practice’ club administration.
 - Conducting a Sports Development Forum in conjunction with Council’s Youth Services staff, and involving representatives from clubs and sports associations to develop initiatives to improve the transition of members from junior to senior ranks.
 - Establishing a target of at least one “junior” representative (U/18 years) to be an active member on the general committee of those clubs whose membership typically includes young people.
 - Preparing a new policy to encourage and support the amalgamation of sports clubs into single organisations, where more than two clubs from different sports share the same facility. (Policy may include incentives based on facility upgrades, discounts on fees and charges and/or equipment purchases).
27. Increase the number of sports development programs and initiatives across the City, for example:
 - Develop a “Schools-Clubs Link Program” whereby sports club personnel are available to local schools to conduct coaching clinics in schools.
 - Identify leading (successful) club administrators in the City, and enlist their support to participate in a “Club Administrator Mentoring Program”.
 - Conduct / Facilitate coaching and umpire accreditation courses.
28. Establish community-based “Friends of” or “Adopt-A-Park” groups at all key parks and skating facilities (and/or enlist the support of existing service groups or other community organisations) to assist in their management, planning and development.
29. Increase voluntary involvement in the administration and management of sports clubs and Crown Land reserves by:

- Promoting volunteerism in sports management through a one-off promotional campaign.
- Initiating a regular (say once monthly) information article in the local media introducing a club volunteer and describing his/her contribution and how the involvement has been mutually beneficial to both volunteer and club/group.
- Providing funding assistance for the upskilling and/or accreditation for key officials.
- Assisting clubs to have in place appropriate management structures to ensure all of the work is not left to a small few and to ensure appropriate succession planning considerations are in place (should be incorporated into a Club Business Plan).
- Establishing an annual recognition program for club volunteers and administrators.

Strategic Actions

Strategic Objective # 5

“Maximise Opportunities for Economic Development Through Recreation and Leisure”

30. Identify existing sporting facilities across Latrobe City, which have the capacity to host Regional, State and National championships (such as Joe Carmody Athletic Field, Moe Equestrian Centre, Traralgon Tennis Complex, and Traralgon Indoor Sports Stadium), and also those facilities which have the capacity to be upgraded to meet necessary standards.
31. Identify which sports associations or clubs are sufficiently “geared up” to host Regional, State and National events.
32. Conduct a forum for all sports associations and relevant stakeholders in Latrobe City to develop a Regional approach to bidding for sports tourism events.
33. Support sports clubs and associations in their conduct of major sporting events by:
 - Conducting training courses and seminars on events-related topics, such as event management, sponsorship and promotion.
 - Providing logistics support, such as promotion, media campaigns, litter collection services, and traffic management support.
 - Preparing and distributing information packages to visitors and tourists associated with events.
34. Continue to upgrade the visitor facilities and amenities at Lake Narracan, in accordance with the *Lake Narracan Strategic Development Plan*.

Strategic Actions

Strategic Objective # 6

“Provide Effective Management, Support and Resources”

35. Every 5 years monitor the effectiveness of the current service provision against changing leisure needs and participation.
36. Collect an Annual Statement from all user groups utilising Council-owned/managed facilities, and rural reserves which provides as a minimum, the membership profile of the group, the key activities and events of the group, and a list of any facility and operational issues which require consideration.
37. Introduce an annual Sports Information Forum at which sporting groups and Council staff can exchange information and receive feedback on relevant matters.
38. Ensure Council has recreation and leisure staff who are at the leading edge of industry development and service delivery, by:
 - Allocating necessary resources to allow recreation staff to subscribe to relevant industry journals, and to attend professional training and development seminars/conferences/courses.
 - Allocating time every month for staff to informally network with colleagues in other local government authorities and industry service providers to facilitate discussion and information sharing on recreational issues.
39. Review the effectiveness of current promotional information available for residents and visitors in relation to recreation and leisure opportunities available in the City.
40. Prepare promotional literature for all parks and reserves, which should include details of accessibility.
41. Establish an interactive database (possibly linked to Council's website) of all recreation groups available across Latrobe City (public and private) and the activities and facilities they provide.
42. Review the role, objectives and criteria of the Community Grants Program, including consideration of the inclusion of a new category, “Program and Service Innovation”, whereby seed funding for new recreation and leisure services is available.

43. Review existing recreation and leisure policies and procedures.
44. Prepare new recreation and leisure policies.
45. Reaffirm commitment to the Capital Works Policy and the related Capital Works Procedures, when assessing submissions for capital improvement projects.
46. Maximise external funding opportunities by:
 - Identifying all external funding bodies and collecting information on their respective programs.
 - Maintaining a database of these funding programs, and in a timely manner distributing information about upcoming grants to clubs, associations, centre managers and community groups.
 - Assisting clubs and community groups to prepare funding submissions to external agencies.
47. Implement sustainable turf management and maintenance practices by:
 - Researching options for sub-surface irrigation systems and the re-use of storm water for irrigation, and investigate the feasibility of introducing such options on Council-owned/managed reserves.
 - Introducing water-resistant turf species to selected sports fields and high-use public open space areas to improve their long-term sustainability and use, and to reduce Council's total water costs.