



June 2008

Soccer Facilities Plan

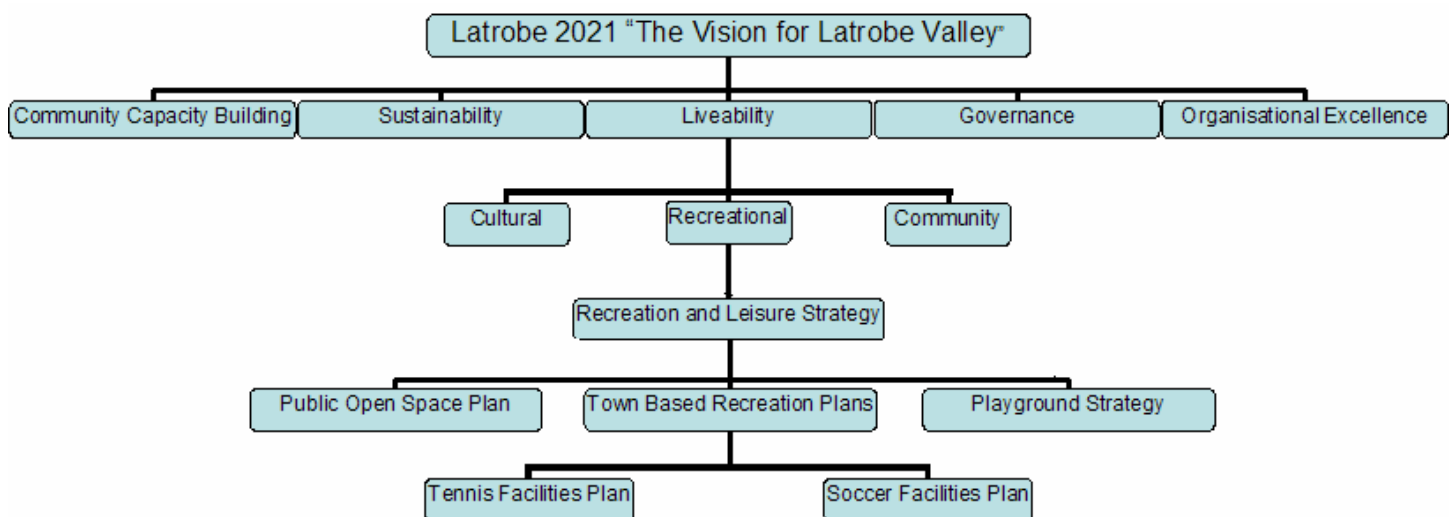
1.	Background	
1.1	Methodology	3
1.2	Document Review	4
1.3	Demographic Analysis	4
2.	Participation	
2.1	National Participation	5
2.2	State Participation - Football Federation Victoria	5
2.3	Regional Participation - Gippsland Soccer League	6
3.	Soccer in Latrobe City	
3.1	Current Situation	
3.2	Participation	7
3.3	Competition Opportunities	8
3.4	Club Operation	8
3.5	Facility Provision and Distribution	9
3.6	Facility Use and Demand	10
3.7	Condition of Facilities	10
3.8	Facility Hierarchy	11
3.9	Facility Management and Maintenance	12
4.	Future Opportunities	
4.1	Facility Improvements	14
4.2	Facility Provision and Use	15
4.3	Club Development and Competition Opportunities	15
5.	Soccer Facilities	
5.1	Churchill – Hazelwood South Reserve	17
5.2	Moe – Olympic Reserve	18
5.3	Newborough – Monash and WH Corrigan Reserves	19
5.4	Newborough – Burrage Reserve	21
5.5	Morwell – Crinigan Road South Reserve	22
5.6	Morwell – Ronald Reserve	23
5.7	Traralgon – Harold Preston Reserve	25
5.8	Tyers – Tyers Recreation Reserve	26
6.	Conclusion	27
7.	Implementation	28

1. Background

The Soccer Facilities Plan has been developed to provide a strategic approach to addressing the current and future needs of soccer, and to cater for the growth and development of the sport in Latrobe City. The plan is consistent with the Liveability Strategic actions identified in “Latrobe 2021 The Vision For Latrobe Valley”

- Assess and evaluate future recreational opportunities to address community aspirations.
- Promote and maximise the utilisation of recreation, aquatic and leisure facilities and services and discourage the duplication of facilities and services and ensure they meet the needs of residents.
- Encourage greater participation in all recreation pursuits.
- Increase the accessibility of Latrobe City’s recreation and sporting facilities.
- Develop and maintain high quality recreation facilities in partnership with the community.
- Promote active living and participation in community life.

The plan has been developed in the context of existing and proposed town based recreation plans. The majority of opportunities for soccer facility improvements will therefore be addressed through the development and implementation of these town based plans. The figure below shows how this plan fits into the overall strategic direction of Latrobe City.



1.1 METHODOLOGY

The Soccer Facilities Plan has been undertaken in three stages.

1. **Project Establishment and Analysis**, including a review of relevant strategies and reports, analysis of participation and industry trends, demographic analysis and audit / assessment of public soccer facilities.
2. **Stakeholder Consultation** with local clubs, league, state association, private facility operators and Councillors / Council officers, involving surveys, submissions, interviews, workshops and a public meeting.
3. **Report preparation.** Preparation of draft report following an analysis of information gathered.

The plan primarily focuses on public soccer facilities in Latrobe City however consideration is also given to private facilities in Morwell and Churchill. School facilities and indoor recreation facilities are not included in the project, however it is acknowledged that many school grounds are available for community use and could therefore provide opportunities for soccer training and/or competition. Indoor recreation centres also play a role in providing opportunities for soccer participation through Futsal / indoor soccer.



1.2 DOCUMENT REVIEW

The Soccer Facilities Plan has been developed in the context of the “2006 Recreation and Leisure Strategy” and the recommended principles and strategic objectives. The Strategy noted that soccer was ranked the 5th most popular sport in Latrobe City and that whilst participation rates were below the Victorian average (in 2004) demand was likely to increase in the future. Furthermore, the strategy indicated that there was likely to be a shortage of soccer fields across the City.

The Soccer Facilities Plan has been informed by a number of other strategic documents which are detailed in Volume 2. Such documents include the Outdoor Recreation Plans for Traralgon and Moe Newborough (and the Draft Morwell Outdoor Recreation Plan) due to their findings and recommendations relating to soccer facilities in these areas. Other documents that were reviewed include (but are not limited to) the Latrobe City Council Plan 2007 – 2011, Latrobe 2021 - The vision for Latrobe Valley, Review of Management and Maintenance Practices in Relation to Grass Based Sporting Grounds (1998) and the Gippsland Soccer League Strategic Plan (2008).

1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Latrobe City is a regional city encompassing an area of 1,422 square kilometres and an estimated population of 72,075 residents (as at 30 June 2006). Based on 2006 Census data the population has experienced a growth of 1.7% (1,172 persons) since 2001.

The City has four major centres, the largest being Traralgon / Traralgon East with 23,211 residents (based on 2006 Census data). Moe / Moe South / Newborough is the second largest area with a total of 16,106 residents, followed by Morwell (13,607 residents) and Churchill (4,750 residents). The City also has a number of smaller outlying areas with a combined total population of 11,490 residents.

The demographic profile of Latrobe City has a number of implications for soccer participation and provision which are detailed below.

- The distribution of the population and a lower proportion of car ownership (compared to the Victorian average) highlights the importance of soccer facilities being appropriately distributed throughout the municipality to ensure they are accessible to the community.
- Latrobe City has a larger proportion of children and young people (aged between 0 to 17 years) compared to regional Victoria, which are the most active sector of the population for participation in sport and physical recreation.
- The proportion of people in the older age groups (aged 50 and over) is expected to increase significantly in the future (from 32.1% of the population in 2006 to 49.7% in 2031). This sector of the population generally has a lower level of participation in sport and physical recreation, however there is a potential market for ‘masters’ or ‘social’ teams.
- A slightly higher proportion of female residents in Latrobe City, compared to the Australian average, indicates potential future growth in female soccer participation.



2. Participation

2.1 NATIONAL PARTICIPATION

Research undertaken by the Australian Sports Commission as part of the 2006 Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey, identified soccer as the 9th most popular activity in Australia with 4.2% of the population participating (for persons aged 15 years and over). Furthermore:

- Males have a higher level of participation in soccer (6.4%) than females (2.1%).
- Soccer is ranked the 5th most popular 'organised' activity (behind aerobics / fitness, golf, netball and tennis) with a participation rate of 2.7%.
- Participation in outdoor soccer has increased by 26.5% from 2001 to 2006 (by number of participants). As a percentage of the population, participation in outdoor soccer has increased from 3.7% in 2001 to 4.2% in 2006.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics; "Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, Australia" (2006) found that "outdoor soccer" was the 2nd most popular sport for children aged 5 to 14 years with a participation rate of 13%. Furthermore:

- Outdoor soccer was the most popular sport for boys with a participation rate of 20%.
- For girls, outdoor soccer was the 4th most popular sport (behind swimming, netball and tennis), with a participation rate of 6.4%.
- Participation in outdoor soccer has increased from 11.4% in 2000 to 13.2% in 2006. Boys participation has remained stable (20%), however girls participation has grown from 2.9% in 2000 to 6.4% in 2006.


2.2 STATE PARTICIPATION - FOOTBALL FEDERATION VICTORIA (FFV)

The 2006 Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (Australian Sports Commission) estimated that 134,800 people or 3.3% of the Victorian population participate in outdoor soccer (for persons aged 15 and over), which has increased from 3.1% in 2001.

Football Federation Victoria (FFV) is the peak body for soccer in Victoria and has experienced a 22% growth in membership since 2003. More specifically, the number of registered players has increased from 25,957 in 2003 to 31,579 in 2007. (*NB: Numbers exclude members from other metropolitan and regional soccer leagues*). The most significant growth has occurred in the junior membership categories (+35%). Female participation increased at a greater rate than male participation, however there are significantly more males playing soccer than females (26,371 males compared to 5,208 females).

FFV anticipates continued growth in soccer participation in Victoria over the next five years. Factors / trends that are likely to effect current and future participation include:

- The introduction of "Small Sided Games" for children aged 5 to 12 years (to replace the current "Goalkick" program). This program is expected to have a wider market appeal due to its ability to cater for children of all playing abilities and will enable a standard soccer pitch to cater for more participants.
- The proposed introduction of a new summer-based elite competition in Victoria (V-League), involving both metropolitan and regional areas.
- Increasing popularity of synthetic grass surfaces due to their drought tolerance, all-weather durability, reduced maintenance requirements and ability to tolerate high intensity use.
- Increased focus on Indoor Soccer / Futsal which has a strong social competition focus and is played mainly on weekday evenings at indoor recreation centres.

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- Increased provision of social teams by clubs to cater for past players. Participation in “Thirds’ (social) competition has experienced a larger growth than participation in ‘Masters’ competition.
 - The ability to achieve maximum use of soccer pitches without compromising the standard of the playing surface. Whilst there are no recognised standards for provision, FFV suggests that a standard pitch could accommodate up to 150 players with careful management and maintenance practices. Feedback from some local government authorities suggests that a ratio of 120 players per pitch may be a more realistic maximum.

2.3 REGIONAL PARTICIPATION – GIPPSLAND SOCCER LEAGUE

The Gippsland Soccer League (GSL) coordinates senior and junior soccer competition in the Gippsland region and has 18 affiliated clubs, 10 of which are from Latrobe City.

The GSL has experienced a 40% growth in membership over the past five years. More specifically, the number of affiliated members has increased from 1,381 in 2002 to 1,940 in 2007. The most significant growth has occurred in the junior membership categories, with a total increase of 35% (+508 players). Female participation has also increased significantly with 234 female players registered in 2007.

The GSL anticipates continued growth over the next five years, through ongoing increases in existing membership categories and the planned introduction of senior women’s competition and junior girls’ competition in 2008. Five clubs and over 300 members from South Gippsland are also expected to join the GSL competition within the next two years.

NB: Membership numbers exclude ‘sub juniors’ (i.e. Goalkick participants).

3. Soccer in Latrobe City

3.1 CURRENT SITUATION

The following table summarises the provision and distribution of soccer in Latrobe City, which includes 10 soccer clubs, 11 venues and 24 soccer pitches.

Township / Locality	Soccer Venue	No. Pitches	Soccer Club	Playing Members (2007)
Churchill	Hazelwood South Reserve	2	Churchill United SC	235
	Monash University (Private) *	1	-	-
Moe	Olympic Reserve	2	Moe United SC	136
Newborough	Monash Reserve	**1.5	Monash SC	140
	Corrigan Reserve	**1.5	Newborough Yallourn United	170
	Burrage Reserve	2		
Morwell	Latrobe City Sports Stadium (Private)	4	Falcons 2000 SC	184
	Crinigan Road South Reserve	2	Fortuna SC	165
	Ronald Reserve,	1	Morwell Pegasus SC	67
Traralgon	Harold Preston Reserve	3	Traralgon City SC	191
		3	Traralgon Olympians SC	149
Tyers	Tyers Recreation Reserve	1	Tyers SC	100
Total		24		1,537

* Monash University is unlikely to be available for soccer in the future, due to a proposal to develop it into a dedicated regional hockey facility (as per Draft Regional Hockey Study).

** 0.5 refers to the sharing of a single pitch between two clubs.

3.2 LATROBE CITY PARTICIPATION

In 2007 there were 1,537 registered soccer players in Latrobe City including 481 senior players, 910 junior players and 131 sub junior players (i.e. Goalkick, Rooball). The total number of registered players has increased by 15% (+ 205 people) over the past five years. Sub juniors experienced the most significant growth over this period (+102 participants), followed by seniors (+50 players) and juniors (+38 players). Female participation is reported to have increased significantly, with 206 registered female members in 2007.

Eight out of ten soccer clubs experienced growth over past five years which clubs attribute to increased female participation and a wider recognition of the sport through increased media exposure (i.e. Socceroos World Cup campaign and A League competition). All clubs anticipate future growth in participation, with the majority anticipating a continued increase in female numbers and the formation of female teams.

The introduction of 'Small Sided Games', together with the proposed GSL women's and girl's competition are expected to result in continued interest and growth in soccer in Latrobe City and ongoing increases in the number of registered players in the region.

There are also opportunities to increase the involvement of disadvantaged population groups, such as people with disabilities and people from non-English speaking backgrounds (including the local Sudanese community) through continued and improved inclusive practices of clubs.

A potential market for masters / veterans competitions may also exist in the future. Older players currently play alongside younger players in GSL Second Division, which is generally considered to be more 'social'. This competition is very popular (15 teams) and could be developed further by providing an additional competition specifically targeting the masters / veterans age groups.



3.3 COMPETITION OPPORTUNITIES

The Gippsland Soccer League (GSL) coordinates senior and junior competition in the region. Competition for open men and juniors (U9 to U16) is based on a 22 week Home and Away series and a Cup knock out competition. Girls currently compete in the junior competition as part of mixed teams or all girls teams (playing against boys and mixed teams). A girl's only competition will be introduced in 2008. For senior women, the GSL enters a women's team in the FFV Premier League and is planning to introduce a senior women's competition in 2008.

For junior player development, GSL encourages participation in a total of 12 representative teams to compete in the Country, State and National Championships, which take place in addition to club competition. The GSL in conjunction with the Gippsland Sports Academy will also offer a new Academy program in 2008 which is designed to develop elite players during the off season (for U11-U15 boys and U11-U17 girls).

For senior men, all soccer clubs currently enter teams into the GSL competition with the exception of the Morwell Pegasus Soccer Club whose seniors compete in FFV State League (Level 3). In the past Newborough Yallourn and Morwell Falcons Soccer Clubs have also played in FFV competition, however Warragul United Soccer Club (Baw Baw Shire) is currently the only other team in the region participating in FFV competition (South East Provisional Level 1). FFV State League is generally considered to be a higher standard of competition (compared to GSL), therefore Morwell Pegasus currently provide the only development pathway for senior men in the region. It is therefore important for this pathway to be recognised and supported by GSL and other local clubs. Furthermore, any clubs considering entering FFV competition in future, should do so in consultation with Council and the GSL to address the implications of such a decision (i.e. suitability and capacity of club facilities).

The potential introduction of a new summer based competition by FFV will present an additional opportunity for senior men from the Gippsland region to compete in higher level competition. This proposed competition will therefore provide an additional development pathway for senior men and the entry of a team from the Gippsland region should involve consultation between the GSL, Council and all local clubs.

3.4 CLUB OPERATION

Soccer clubs in Latrobe City share a number of common issues and challenges relating to the operation of their club and the delivery of soccer opportunities for the community.

- Volunteer recruitment and retention is an issue for the majority of clubs.
 - Most clubs have a small dedicated Committee responsible for the operation of the club, but have trouble recruiting new volunteers.
 - Clubs have a varied success in obtaining accredited coaches. Several clubs pay for coaches to obtain their accreditation, whilst other clubs reported that the cost of accreditation was prohibitive.
 - The majority of clubs have difficulty obtaining officials and referees.
- Clubs have a limited ability / capacity to develop business and strategic plans.
- Most clubs have some involvement with local schools (promotion, support with school programs, school use of club facilities), however acknowledge that this relationship could be strengthened.
- The majority of clubs could be more proactive in marketing themselves within the community.
- The financial position of clubs is varied, with half of the clubs being able to meet costs and save for priority projects, whilst the other half has difficulty saving and fundraising.

- Membership fees range from \$135 to \$230 for seniors, \$65 to \$95 for juniors and \$50 to \$70 for sub juniors. Some clubs offer discounted fees for students and if more than one child is playing from the same family. GSL affiliation fees are \$122 for seniors, \$59 for juniors and \$50 for sub juniors.

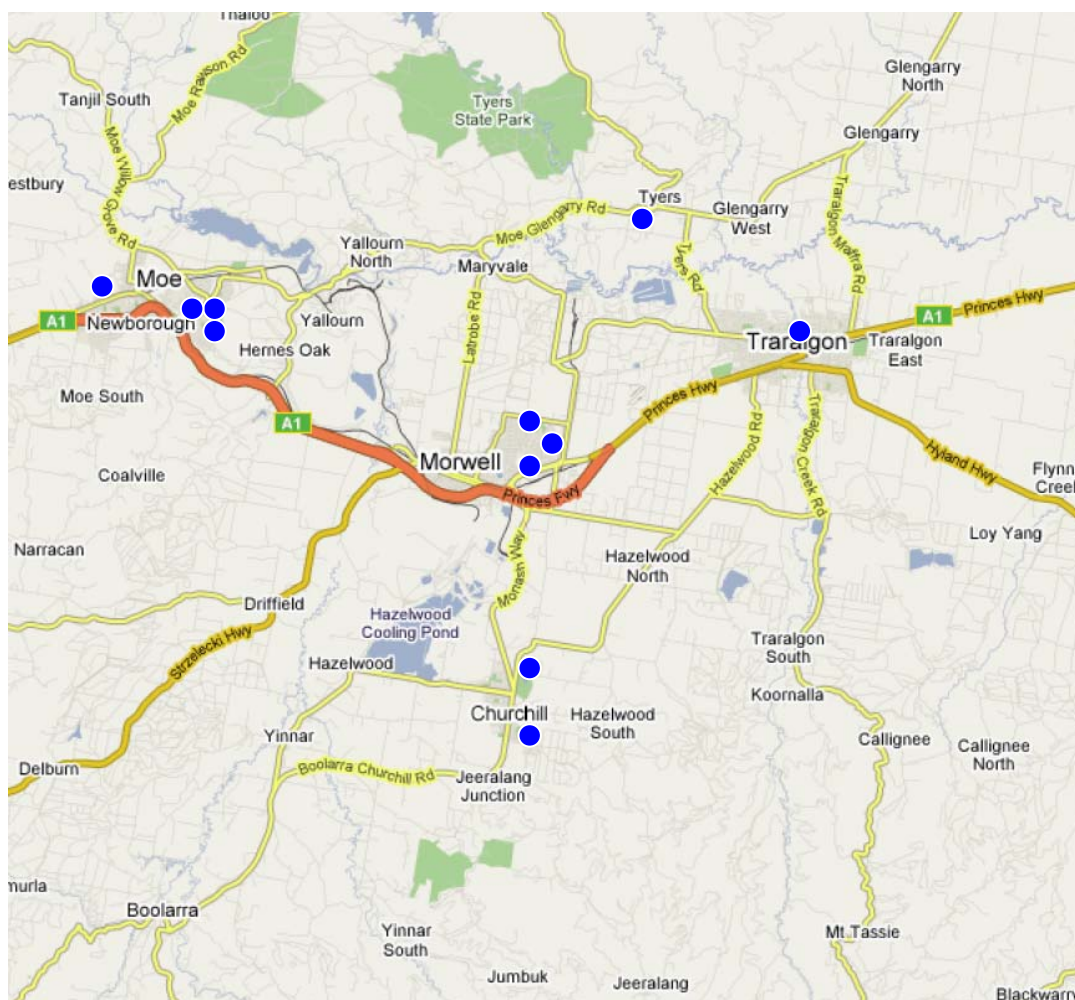
There is an opportunity for clubs to work with Council, GSL and other key stakeholders (i.e. Gippsport) to address the identified issues and improve the viability of local soccer clubs. This could be achieved through various club development programs and initiatives (i.e. strategic business planning, promotional campaigns, mentoring programs and succession planning) and the ongoing provision of grant programs.


The GSL and FFV are responsible for providing training / accreditation for coaches and referees and will need to continue to work with clubs to overcome challenges of attracting new coaches and referees and ensuring courses are affordable, convenient and easily accessible.

3.5 FACILITY PROVISION AND DISTRIBUTION

The majority of soccer facilities in Latrobe City are concentrated in the four main townships of Traralgon, Moe / Newborough, Morwell and Churchill. The locations of these facilities are central to the majority of residents, with approximately 83% of the population (57,674 persons) residing in these four main areas. The soccer venue in Tyers caters for residents in the northern rural townships and localities.

The balance of the population in smaller outlying areas are required to travel further to access soccer facilities, with the outmost localities required to travel up to 30 minutes to access their nearest facility. Based on the rural nature of these areas, this distance is considered to be reasonable.





When comparing the population catchment for each main centre against the number of available soccer pitches, facilities in Traralgon and Churchill appear to be under the most pressure based on the size of the population they are required to support (including neighbouring rural areas). However in order to determine the current and future demand on facilities, club participation numbers and utilisation of facilities need to also be considered.

3.6 FACILITY USE AND DEMAND

Facilities in Latrobe City are currently used on Saturdays for junior competition and Sundays for GSL senior competition. (Senior teams from Morwell Pegasus Soccer Club compete on Saturdays). Club training generally takes place on all available grounds on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons / evenings.

The usage of soccer pitches varies in intensity between each facility. Based on a ratios of players per pitch (club registration numbers divided by the number of available pitches), usage levels vary from 1:47 players to 1:118 players. These ratios however do not take into consideration school or squad use, which place additional demands on soccer pitches.

The majority of clubs have requested that additional pitch/es or training areas be provided due to the inability of existing pitches to cater for demand and the anticipated growth in soccer. For the majority of clubs, the demand on facilities is mostly associated with large numbers of players that train and compete on the playing surface resulting in issues of overuse. The other demand relates to the scheduling of competition. A maximum of five teams can be accommodated on a single pitch in one day, which is increasingly becoming an issue for clubs with high numbers of teams and for clubs who share a pitch.

As previously discussed soccer participation is expected to continue to grow which will place further demands on existing facilities. In order to cater for this growth, the usability of existing pitches / areas will need to be improved, and in some instances additional soccer pitches and / or training areas will need to be provided. The individual needs of each soccer venue are detailed in Section 4.

Consideration should also be given to providing access to additional multi-use sports ground/s for use as a soccer training venue (i.e. Maryvale Reserve in Morwell). It is proposed that such a venue be available to all clubs (on application to Council) who are having difficulty managing their pitches due to high player numbers, or poor pitch conditions. GSL has expressed a need for such a facility to also take pressure off the Latrobe City Sports Stadium, which accommodates 12 representative teams, the Falcons 2000 Soccer Club and high level competition in the region. The year round use of the Stadium currently impacts on the timing of major maintenance works and access to an alternative venue would assist with the scheduling of various programs over the summer period.

3.7 CONDITION OF FACILITIES

The results of facility inspections and stakeholder consultation identified a number of key issues pertaining to the standard of soccer facilities in Latrobe City. More detailed information is provided for each soccer venue in Section 5, however the following information provides a summary of the key findings.

- Clubrooms generally lack facilities for female players and referees and disability access is limited. Some clubrooms are old and need renovating.
- The provision and quality of floodlighting varies between soccer venues. Some key issues include:
 - The location and/or quality of lighting at some facilities confines training to specific areas on the grounds creating problems of wear and overuse.

- Most secondary grounds (i.e. junior and training grounds) lack lighting which prevents them from being used after dark and places increased pressure on the main pitch.
- Lighting does not comply with standards for night competition. The main pitch at Latrobe City Sports Stadium is currently the only facility in the municipality with lighting suitable for night games.
- The quality of the playing surface fluctuates between grounds and venues. Some common issues include:
 - Overuse of some grounds, or sections of a ground due to high levels of use.
 - The dimensions of some pitches are below the recognised standards for senior competition and in some instances, junior competition.
 - Many grounds lack irrigation systems and some grounds have drainage problems.
 - Drought conditions and associated water restrictions impacts on the quality of the playing surface.
 - Some pitches have an east-west orientation, which is not the ideal alignment for a sporting ground.
- The condition of fixed and portable goals varies between facilities. Some goals do not meet the recognised standards.
- The ability of soccer venues to cater for spectators varies between clubs. The majority of facilities however lack shelter and sufficient seating.

3.8 FACILITY HIERARCHY

There is a need for a recognised hierarchy of soccer facilities in Latrobe City to determine the role of individual facilities and the standard of infrastructure required.

Council currently has a classification system for the maintenance of Council owned sports grounds which includes:

- Category A: High level of maintenance, catering for high to very high competition level. (Includes Burrage Reserve No. 1 Ground.)
- Category B: Medium level of maintenance, catering for high to medium competition level. (Includes most senior grounds.)
- Category C: Basic level of maintenance. Ground not used regularly at senior level. (Includes junior and training grounds.)

FFV has a four level hierarchy known as “Grounds and Facilities Criteria” which sets minimum standards for soccer facilities based on different levels of competition. In summary this includes:

- Class A: Men’s Premier League.
- Class B: Men’s State League Division 1.
- Class C: Men’s State League Division 2 and 3, Men’s Provisional League Division 1 and Women’s Premier League.
- Class D: Men’s Provisional League Division 2 and 3, Men’s Metropolitan League, Women’s State League, Women’s Metropolitan League, Thirds and Masters Leagues and Junior Leagues.

The GSL together with FFV currently require clubs in Latrobe City to comply with “Class C” requirements for senior competition, which stipulate standards for playing arenas, player and match official amenities and spectator amenities (refer to Volume 2, Appendix 1 for Criteria). This classification however could change if a club was to advance to a higher level of competition (i.e. State League Level 1 or Premier League), highlighting the need to determine which facilities should be available for such levels of competition in the future.

Latrobe City Sports Stadium is the major soccer venue in Latrobe City and is currently undergoing minor modifications to meet Class A requirements. Located in Morwell, this privately owned facility is central to the municipality and consists of 4 pitches and a 3000 seat stadium. The facility is advertised as the “Home of Gippsland Soccer” and hosts a number of major events in the region. The GSL has a long term lease with the Stadium and a long term option to purchase. The Falcons 2000 Soccer Club sub-lease the venue from GSL and operate it as a joint arrangement.

Latrobe City Sports Stadium provides for club based soccer, elite participation opportunities and enables the scheduling of major events in the region. This facility should therefore be designated as the venue for all high level competition in Latrobe City (requiring Class A or B facilities) and it is recommended that Council continue to support the operation of the Stadium due to the range of benefits it provides for soccer in the region.

Due to the ability of Latrobe City Sports Stadium to cater for competition requiring Class A or B standard of facilities, it is recommended that the remaining soccer venues in Latrobe City be provided to “Class C” standard (for senior pitches).

Finally, the maintenance classification for Council owned soccer pitches should be reviewed to better reflect the current standard of facilities and competition levels. More specifically, the soccer pitch at Ronald Reserve Morwell should be upgraded to a Category A ground as it is used for FFV State League competition. Consideration should also be given to nominating some Category A ground/s for GSL senior competition that receive high levels of use.

The following table provides a comparative summary of the FFV and Council hierarchy for soccer facilities in Latrobe City.

FFV Criteria	Latrobe City Council Classification	Facilities
A	N/a	Latrobe City Sports Stadium - private facility.
B	N/a	N/a (no Class B facilities in Latrobe City).
C	A	FFV senior competition and high use GSL senior competition grounds.
	B	GSL senior competition grounds.
D	C	GSL junior competition grounds.

3.9 FACILITY MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE

The majority of soccer clubs in Latrobe City have a lease or seasonal tenancy agreement with Council. Under this agreement Council is responsible for the maintenance of these soccer pitches and reserve surrounds, whilst clubs are generally responsible for the maintenance of their clubroom facilities. Two clubs have different management arrangements, including:

- The Tyers Soccer Club, who form part of a Committee of Management and are responsible for maintaining their grounds and facilities, with some funding from Council.
- The Falcons 2000 Soccer Club, who sub-lease the privately owned Latrobe City Sports Stadium (with some funding from Council) and operate the facility as a joint arrangement with the GSL.

Clubs are generally satisfied with facility management arrangements, with the exception of the Tyers Soccer Club due to the cost and labour required to manage and maintain their facility under the Committee of Management structure.

As previously discussed, Council maintained facilities are classified into three different categories (A, B and C) depending on the level of competition they support. Clubs have varied levels of satisfaction with facility maintenance practices and standards. Some concerns relate to the drought conditions and the need for water, whilst others relate to the problems associated with sharing the ground with another club / sport (i.e. issues of overuse and grounds not being ready in time for the soccer season). Those facilities that received shared use include:

- Corrigan Reserve: The middle junior pitch is shared between Newborough Yallourn United Soccer Club and Monash Soccer Club.
- Monash Reserve: The oval / soccer pitch is used for cricket in the summer.
- Latrobe City Sports Stadium: Soccer squads use the soccer pitches when they are not being used by the Falcons 2000 Soccer Club.

The shared use of grounds needs to be carefully managed and stronger relationships developed between co-tenants and Council to assist with addressing facility management issues (i.e. maintenance requirements and the timing of works).

Existing maintenance arrangements and practices at Tyers Recreation Reserve should also be reviewed based on the current condition of the pitch and the need for high levels of maintenance in the future. The Committee of Management structure is inconsistent with other soccer venues in Latrobe City and may therefore require an increased level of Council involvement and support (i.e. increased resources, provision of specialist advice, tighter controls on maintenance practices etc.).

Risk Management

FFV has developed a Risk Management Manual that is designed to assist clubs to address a broad range of risk management issues. The Manual is broken into implementation stages which include establishing policies and procedures, planning inspections and checklists, incident response guides, safety defect cards, risk management training and management review. This Manual provides a valuable resource for clubs and it is recommended that Council and the GSL work with all local clubs to ensure they have adequate risk management policies and procedures in place to minimise the number of hazards in and around the club.

The use of portable soccer goals is common practice for most clubs as they enable flexible use of existing soccer pitches and grassed areas not nominated for soccer. The use of these goals however poses a safety risk of tipping over and all clubs must therefore be aware of, and adhere to the "Consumer Affairs Victoria Product Safety Factsheet, Moveable Soccer Goals" (Volume 2, Appendix 2). This document stipulates that soccer goals supplied before 2 December 2005 must undergo strict safety checks to ensure they are safe, stable and secure before they are used for training or competition. Furthermore, soccer goals must always be removed after use and stored in a secure area so that children cannot climb, play or swing on them.



4. Future Opportunities

4.1 FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS:

There is an opportunity to maximise the use of existing facilities in Latrobe City to better cater for current and future participation levels. In order to achieve this, priority should be given to addressing the following key issues.

Change Rooms

The provision of dedicated change facilities for female players and referees is required to cater for current female participation levels and the introduction of a junior girls and senior women's competition (proposed for 2008). All soccer clubs in Latrobe City have female members but most soccer venues (8) do not have adequate change facilities, which limits their ability to cater for female players and teams, and raises issues of inequity.

Ground Conditions

The condition of playing surfaces impacts on the ability of some soccer pitches to cater for high usage levels. In order to maximise use of existing facilities, soccer pitches should have high quality playing surfaces that include adequate drainage, irrigation and maintenance practices. Priority should be given to the main pitch at each soccer venue, followed by secondary or junior grounds / areas to enable use to be spread evenly across facilities and reduce incidence of wear and overuse.

The current condition of playing surfaces fluctuates between soccer facilities and opportunities for improvement exists at each soccer venue within Latrobe City.


Floodlighting

The provision and quality of floodlighting varies between soccer facilities. At some venues lighting is inadequate for the entire pitch, which restricts the availability of training areas and leads to problems of wear and overuse. The majority of secondary grounds (i.e. junior and training grounds) lack lighting which prevents them from being used after dark and places increased pressure on the main pitch.

Priority should be given to addressing issues associated with training lights on main soccer pitches, including those located at Tyers Recreation Reserve, Hazelwood South Reserve and Burrage Reserve. The provision of training lights (or improved lighting) on secondary / junior pitches should then be addressed to cater for high participation numbers and enable use to be spread evening across all facilities (including Hazelwood South Reserve, Burrage Reserve, Crinigan Road South Reserve, Harold Preston Reserve, Corrigan Reserve and Olympic Reserve). Where relevant, the installation / upgrade of training lights should consider longer term priorities to ensure they are capable of being added to in a cost saving manner in the future (i.e. light towers with the capacity to cater for more than one pitch or competition standard lighting).

Lighting for Night Competition

The need to upgrade existing training lights to comply with standards for night competition is an issue that has been raised by most soccer clubs. The scheduling of night games is becoming increasingly popular due to their ability to draw large crowds, raise additional revenue and ease scheduling issues. That said, it would be difficult for Council to support competition lighting at all soccer venues due to the high cost implications, the limited number of night games that can be scheduled within a season and the impact on the surrounding residential areas of some venues.



As previously stated Latrobe City Sports Stadium is the only venue in the municipality to have competition standard lighting. Additionally, the Traralgon Olympians Soccer Club is currently in the process of upgrading their training lights to competition standards.

The installation of training lights at Burrage Reserve (as proposed by the Moe Newborough Recreation Plan), presents an opportunity for an additional night competition venue, by ensuring that the lighting is developed with the capacity to be added to in future. Similarly, the Hazelwood South Reserve will also require a major lighting upgrade in the future and should also be developed in a way that can be added to, in an efficient and cost saving manner in the future. The potential long term provision of competition standard lighting in these locations would provide clubs with access to night games in each of the four main townships and help to raise the profile of the sport in each of these areas.

4.2 FACILITY PROVISION AND USE:

As previously discussed, the Latrobe City Sports Stadium is the major soccer venue in Latrobe City catering for high level competition (i.e. requiring Class A facilities). The presence of this facility provides an opportunity for other soccer facilities in Latrobe City to focus on grass roots participation, which in some instances need to be expanded / upgraded to comply with the relevant FFV criteria (for Class C and D facilities). An opportunity also exists for Council to review their maintenance classifications to better reflect the standards of competition and levels of use at Council owned soccer facilities.


In addition to maximizing the use of existing soccer facilities, there is an opportunity for Council to provide access to additional reserves / facilities to cater for growing soccer participation levels and alleviate pressure on existing facilities. Access to a centrally located training venue would provide an additional option for clubs and the GSL when required to accommodate high player numbers and/or poor pitch conditions at existing facilities.

The potential use and / or development of additional grounds for some soccer clubs has also been identified due to high player numbers and current site restrictions. Such opportunities include two additional soccer pitches at Burrage Reserve, the potential future use of Gaskin Park and/or Warren Terrace Reserve by the Churchill United Soccer Club, access to the Morwell Park sports ground by the Morwell Pegasus Soccer Club, and the ongoing use of the oval and potential long term development of an additional pitch at Crinigan Road South Reserve. The potential use and development of these facilities will need to be assessed / implemented as part of the town based recreation plans.

4.3 CLUB DEVELOPMENT AND COMPETITION OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities exist for the improved operation of soccer clubs in Latrobe City, including the need for key stakeholders (i.e. Council, Gippsport, GSL, FFV) to work together to undertake the following:

- Provide club development programs to improve the operation and viability of local clubs, including strategic business planning, marketing, mentoring programs and succession planning.
- Ensure clubs have adequate risk management policies and procedures in place.
- Raise awareness of the needs of disadvantaged population groups and continue to improve the inclusive practices of clubs.
- Work with clubs to address the challenges of attracting new coaches and referees and ensure that courses are affordable, convenient and easily accessible.



There is also a need for stakeholders to work together to support player development pathways and to ensure a consistent approach across the region. Additionally, the introduction of new competitions and/or entry into existing higher standards of competition should be done in consultation between all stakeholders to ensure the implications of such competition/s and associated facility requirements are understood.



5. Soccer Facilities - Churchill

5.1 CHURCHILL – HAZELWOOD SOUTH RESERVE (Tramway Road Churchill)

Club: Churchill United Soccer Club

No. Members: 235 playing members (63 senior + 147 junior + 25 sub junior)

Facilities: Two senior soccer pitches (1 with lighting) and a recently renovated clubroom facility with change facilities for females and an undercover spectator viewing area. The soccer club is the sole user of the reserve.

Key Issues:

- Difficulty managing the high number of players on two pitches. The club would like access to an additional pitch.
- Potential future loss of access to the Monash University soccer pitch will place increased pressure on existing pitches.
- Ground lighting is poor and cannot be increased without an electrical upgrade. More lighting is needed to cater for the high number of players at training.
- The access road and area surrounding the clubrooms has drainage problems and disability access between the car park and clubrooms is limited.
- Both pitches lack irrigation.
- The fence around pitch 1 has some gaps enabling vehicular access and the western goal is in need of repair.

Discussion:

Churchill United Soccer Club has the highest number of players and the highest pitch player ratio (1:118) compared to other clubs in Latrobe City. The two soccer pitches are also required to service a large population catchment (including Churchill and surrounding rural areas). The potential loss of access to the soccer pitch at Monash University will place increased pressure on the existing soccer pitches and the lack of space around the reserve presents limited training alternatives.

The existing soccer pitches should be upgraded to include lighting on both pitches to enable training to be spread evening across the grounds. The pitches should also be maintained to a high standard to minimise the wear on the grounds, including the installation of an irrigation system.

The club's desire for Council to acquire and develop the neighbouring parcel of private land is unlikely due to the large amount of open space that already exists in the Churchill area. There is an opportunity however to utilise some of this existing open space for soccer training and/or competition. Gaskin Park has disused rugby and hockey fields that could be made available to soccer. A potential long term solution could also include the development of Warren Terrace Reserve in conjunction with other sports or utilizing space at Glendonald Park. It is therefore recommended that both these options be investigated further as part of the proposed "Southern Towns Outdoor Recreation Plan".

Opportunities: The majority of opportunities for soccer facility improvements will be addressed through the development and implementation of the town based plans.

- Improve power supply to reserve and upgrade training lights on pitch 1 (with the capacity to be upgraded to competition standard in the future). Provide training lights on pitch 2.
- Install automatic irrigation system to enable both pitches to be maintained to a high standard (in accordance with water restrictions). Investigate options for water re-use.
- Improve surface of the access road and car parking, including drainage and disability access.
- Improve landscaping around pitches including tree planting to reduce effects of the wind.
- Undertake minor repairs to fencing on pitch 1 and western goal on pitch 2.
- Investigate the potential future use of Gaskin Park, Glendonald Park and/or Warren Terrace reserve as an additional training venue and secondary competition ground/s.



5. Soccer Facilities - Moe

5.2 MOE – OLYMPIC RESERVE (Vale Street Moe)

Club: Moe United Soccer Club

No. Members: 136 playing members (40 senior + 90 junior + 6 sub junior)

Facilities: Two soccer pitches with lighting, clubrooms and public toilets, located adjacent to the Moe Olympic Swimming Pool and associated swimming clubroom facility.

Key Issues:

- Soccer clubrooms are in poor condition and have inadequate canteen and change facilities (for referee, females and people with disabilities). Soccer club currently uses Swimming Clubrooms for social activities.
- Both grounds lack of irrigation.
- Ground lighting does not meet standards for night competition and training lighting on pitch 2 is limited.
- Distance between goals on pitch 1 (116m) exceeds recognised standard (105m).
- Pitch 2 is too short for senior games, however complies with standards for junior competition.
- Vandalism problems and syringes found on ground. Security lighting is needed.
- Houses on west side of reserve appear too close, however there are no reported issues.
- Risk management issues: signage on the fence line needs to be secured and there is an open drain in the south west corner of the reserve.

Discussion:

The Moe Newborough Outdoor Recreation Plan (October 2007) identified and addressed the majority of key issues at Olympic Reserve, as outlined in the recommendations below.

An additional issue relates the size of pitch 2. There is insufficient space within the reserve to extend this pitch to comply with standards for senior competition without impacting on neighbouring facilities. This pitch however is suitable for training and junior competition. The large size of the main pitch (No.1) can be easily resolved by moving the soccer goals inwards, which will achieve compliance with the recognised standards for senior competition.

Opportunities: The majority of opportunities for soccer facility improvements will be addressed through the development and implementation of the town based plans.

- Implement the recommendations of the Moe Newborough Outdoor Recreation Plan including:
 - Redevelop existing Swimming Clubrooms into a multi-use facility cater for all reserve users (including soccer). Demolish existing soccer clubroom facility.
 - Provide improved spectator facilities, through the provision of seating and shelter.
 - Improve surface of soccer grounds and explore options for alternative or improved irrigation (including potential for re-use of treated pool water).
 - Upgrade ground lighting to comply with training standards.
 - Install security lighting and pipe existing drainage swale.
 - Screen properties along the western boundaries of the reserve.
- Relocate soccer goals on pitch 1 to within the recognised standard for senior competition.
- Address identified risk management issues associated with signage on the fence line.



5. Soccer Facilities - Newborough

5.3 NEWBOROUGH – MONASH RESERVE & WH CORRIGAN RESERVE (Torres Street Newborough)

Clubs:	Monash Soccer Club	Newborough Yallourn United Soccer Club
No. Members:	140 playing members. (45 senior + 85 junior + 10 sub junior)	155 playing members. (40 senior + 100 junior + 15 sub junior)

Facilities: Three soccer pitches are provided across these two reserves, which are separated by a fence and accessed via separate roadways. Monash Reserve consists of a multi-use soccer pitch / cricket oval (with lighting), clubrooms, public toilets, open space and the Newborough Tennis Club. Corrigan Reserve comprises two soccer pitches and a clubroom facility. The senior soccer pitch has lighting and the junior / training pitch is shared between the two clubs.


Key Issues:

- There is insufficient space for two clubs, particularly with their high number of teams and players. The shared use of the middle ground encounters some problems, particularly when both clubs have home games.
- Corrigan Reserve:
 - Clubrooms lack of change facilities for female players and referees.
 - Ground lighting does not comply with FFV regulations for night games, and the position of light towers may create an uneven spread of light across the ground.
 - Irrigation is limited to a manual system on pitch 1 only (outlets in perimeter fence).
 - Length of pitch 1 is 2m below recognised standards for senior competition.
 - Size of pitch 2 is below recognised standards for senior and junior competition, however there is space available to expand the size of the ground with some excavation. The pitch is also exposed to the wind and elements.
 - Car parking needs to be better defined to improve pedestrian safety and there is limited disability access to and around the site.
 - Risk management issue associated with the inappropriate storing of portable goals.
- Monash Reserve:
 - Clubrooms have inadequate facilities for females (players and referees) and people with a disability. Canteen facilities require an upgrade, storage is inadequate and spectator facilities are limited to a small verandah.
 - The shared use of the ground with cricket is problematic due to the high number of players.
 - The turf covering the cricket pitch has insufficient time to settle prior to the soccer season, which restricts use and has potential risk management issues.
 - Lighting is restricted to the western side of the ground due to the pitch being located on an oval.
 - The open space area (south east of access road) has a significant slope and is too small for senior and junior competition. Goals are in poor condition.
 - Manual tank watering of ground.

Discussion:

The Moe Newborough Outdoor Recreation Plan (October 2007) identified and addressed the majority of key issues at Monash and Corrigan Reserves. Both clubs support these recommendations.

Opportunities: The majority of opportunities for soccer facility improvements will be addressed through the development and implementation of the town based plans.

- 
- Implement the following recommendations of the Moe Newborough Outdoor Recreation Plan:
 - Upgrade the Monash Soccer Club change rooms to meet current and future needs.
 - Upgrade surface of soccer pitches and explore options for alternative or improved irrigation.
 - Improve spectator facilities.
 - Corrigan Reserve:
 - Renovate change rooms to include facilities for females and people with disabilities.
 - Extend pitch 1 to comply with standards for senior competition.
 - Extend pitch 2 to comply with standards for junior competition and improve landscaping around pitch 2 with tree planting. Install training lighting on pitch 2.
 - Define car parking area at Corrigan Reserve.



5. Soccer Facilities - Newborough

5.4 NEWBOROUGH – BURRAGE RESERVE (John Field Drive Newborough)

Club: Newborough Yallourn United Soccer Club

No. Members: 155 playing members (40 senior + 100 junior + 15 sub junior)

Facilities: Two senior soccer pitches and a clubroom facility located within a larger reserve consisting of a multi-purpose oval and baseball fields, pavilion, public toilets and large area of public open space.

Key Issues:

- Grounds have no lighting (or wiring) and facilities cannot be used for training.
- Irrigation system on pitch 1 requires maintenance and pitch 2 lacks irrigation.
- Soccer clubrooms require improvements, including change facilities for female and people with disabilities.
- Distance between goals on pitch 1 (116m) exceeds recognised standard (105m).
- Junior goals on pitch 2 are not standard and are in poor condition.
- Residential area on north of Pitch 2 appears too close, however there are no reported issues.
- Lack of spectator seating around grounds.

Discussion:

The Moe Newborough Outdoor Recreation Plan (October 2007) identified and addressed the majority of key issues at Burrage Reserve. Both clubs support these recommendations.

Opportunities: The majority of opportunities for soccer facility improvements will be addressed through the development and implementation of the town based plans.

- Implement the following recommendations of the Moe Newborough Outdoor Recreation Plan:
 - Upgrade soccer clubrooms, to include facilities for females and people with disabilities. (Install training lights for pitches 1 and 2 (with the capacity for lighting on pitch 1 to be upgraded to competition standard in the future).
 - Address irrigation maintenance issues (main ground) and investigate potential for water re-use. (Medium priority.)
- Install irrigation to pitch 2.
- Relocate soccer goals on pitch 1 to within the recognised standard for senior competition.
- Address identified risk management issues associated with junior soccer goals.
- Provide spectator seating around the grounds.



5. Soccer Facilities - Morwell

5.5 CRINIGAN ROAD SOUTH RESERVE (Crinigan Road Morwell)

Club: Fortuna Soccer Club

No. Members: 165 playing members (55 senior + 95 junior + 15 sub junior)

Facilities: One senior soccer pitch (with lighting), one sub junior / training pitch and clubroom facility, located within a larger reserve which includes a cricket oval, pavilions, public toilets and playground.

Key Issues:

- Clubrooms need to be upgraded to include change facilities for females and access for people with disabilities. Consider a partnership proposal with the cricket club to create multi-use change facilities and increased storage. (Project underway to improve shelter in front of main clubrooms.)
- Lighting on main pitch does not meet standards for night competition and there are no training lights on the sub junior / training pitch.
- The large number of players requires the main pitch, training pitch and oval to be used for training.
- The sub junior / training pitch (pitch 2) is too small for junior competition, and 1m too short to accommodate U11s and U12s sub junior competition (based on the Small Sided Games format).
- Risk management and maintenance issues associated with portable goals, exposed drainage pipes (south east corner of pitch 1), galvanized pipe fencing around sub junior pitch (sections missing) and northern coaches box (roof missing).

Discussion:

The development of an additional soccer pitch was proposed by the club on the north east portion of the oval (east west orientation), which appears to be the only viable location at the reserve. Whilst the orientation is not ideal, there is insufficient space for two pitches running north south on the oval without impacting on neighbouring facilities and properties. Situating a pitch in the centre of the oval is also not recommended, due to the implications to the turf wicket.

The need for this additional pitch however is not deemed to be required at this point in time, due to the club's ability to access the cricket oval for training. This oval could also be used for sub junior competition by marking temporary spaces on the oval. Providing lighting on the sub junior pitch will also help to maximise use of existing areas within the reserve. The need for any additional soccer pitches should therefore be monitored and reassessed in the future.

Opportunities: The majority of opportunities for soccer facility improvements will be addressed through the development and implementation of the town based plans.

- Extend and refurbish change rooms as a multi-use facility for both soccer and cricket, and including female change facilities. Incorporate public toilets into facility and demolish existing toilet block.
- Install training lights on the sub junior pitch to maximise use.
- Provide soccer club with access to cricket ground for training and sub junior competition (excluding the turf wicket). Monitor the need for an additional pitch, with the only viable location being in the north east portion of the oval, with an east-west orientation.
- Install removable bollards near change room facility to prevent through vehicular access and allow for the potential future expansion of the sub junior pitch.
- Address identified risk management issues.



5. Soccer Facilities - Morwell

5.6 RONALD RESERVE (Vary Street Morwell)

Club: Morwell Pegasus Soccer Club
No. Members: 67 playing members (50 senior + 17 junior)

Facilities: One senior soccer pitch (with lighting) located in the centre of a disused cycling track, and associated clubroom facility. The soccer facilities are located within a larger reserve which includes a football / cricket oval, tennis and netball courts, pavilions, public toilets, playgrounds and a walking track along the eastern boundary, adjacent to Waterhole Creek.

Key Issues:

- Drainage and irrigation are confined to the main pitch, which has implications to the clubs ability to train on the surrounding area. Need to consider the potential for additional playing / training areas.
- Ground lighting does not comply with standards for night competition and is suitable for training on the main pitch only. Some erosion is evident on the south west light tower.
- Ground is hard and there is patchy grass cover in the goal squares.
- Clubrooms require change facilities for referees and female players and an improved hot water system.
- Lack of shelter for spectators and limited disability access.
- Traffic management issues associated with access into the reserve and parking within the reserve.
- Drainage problem associated with run-off from embankment.


Discussion:

The need for additional space is primarily associated with training and the need to take pressure off the senior pitch. Several options for additional pitches have been proposed including a complete redevelopment of the site to accommodate two senior pitches, or the development of a small sub junior pitch (east west orientation) between the bitumen track and the reserve boundary. A more cost effective solution however would involve upgrading the area surrounding the main pitch with drainage and irrigation, to enable the whole area to be used (i.e. with the use of portable goals). This option would maximise the use of the existing facility and provide an efficient use of space and resources. In addition, the Morwell Park sporting ground is located immediately north of Ronald Reserve which could be used for future training and competition if/when required by demand.

Morwell Pegasus Soccer Club currently compete in the highest level of competition for open men in Latrobe City (FFV State League Level 3) and it is therefore recommended that the maintenance classification of the pitch be upgraded to Category A.

Opportunities: The majority of opportunities for soccer facility improvements will be addressed through the development and implementation of the town based plans.

- Upgrade clubrooms to include change facilities for referees and female players and improved disability access.
- Install removable bollards in front of soccer building to prevent vehicular access between building and pitch and improve pedestrian safety.
- Upgrade the area surrounding the soccer pitch to maximise use, including drainage and irrigation.
- Investigate the potential to capture and re-use water run off from the bitumen track, which is currently leading to drainage issues.

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- Investigate and address corrosion on south west light tower.
 - Provide shelter for spectators.
 - Provide future access to Morwell Park sports ground for training and junior competition (as required). Install signage to improve safety of the Hourigan Road pedestrian crossing.
 - Upgrade the maintenance classification to Category A to correspond with the high level of competition played at the reserve.



5. Soccer Facilities - Traralgon

5.7 HAROLD PRESTON RESERVE (Franklin Street Traralgon)

Clubs:	Traralgon City Soccer Club	Traralgon Olympians Soccer Club
No. Members:	191 playing members (45 senior + 121 junior + 25 sub junior)	149 playing members (39 senior + 90 junior + 20 sub junior)

Facilities: This large multi-purpose reserve comprises six soccer pitches (two with lighting) and two separate soccer clubrooms. Other facilities include a grass athletics track and indoor table tennis facility.

Key Issues:

- Soccer clubs operate as two separate clubs and there is an opportunity for them to work together more closely.
- Soccer clubrooms need to be upgraded, particularly change room facilities. Disability access is limited and storage is inadequate.
- Ground lighting does not comply with standards for night competition. (NB: Olympians SC is in the process of upgrading their lighting to competition standard.)
- Lack of shelter for spectators on the eastern side of reserve.
- Pitches 2, 3, 4 and 6 lack irrigation.
- Pitch 3 and 4 are too narrow for senior competition and are suitable for junior competition only.
- Drainage issue between athletics track and fence line of pitch 5.
- Residential properties located in close proximity to the eastern and southern boundaries of pitch 6.
- Maintenance and risk management issues associated with perimeter and pitch fencing (pitch 1), advertising signage and drainage pit (pitch 1) and drainage on northern sideline of pitch 4. Car park ticket box needs to be replaced.

Discussion:

The Traralgon Outdoor Recreation Plan (October 2006) identified and addressed the majority of key issues at the Harold Preston Reserve, as outlined in the recommendations below.

The future provision of training lights on an additional pitch at the reserve would be beneficial in taking pressure off the two main pitches. This lighting could be provided on pitch 3, which is central to both facilities and could be easily shared between the two clubs.

Opportunities: The majority of opportunities for soccer facility improvements will be addressed through the development and implementation of the town based plans.

- Implement the recommendations of the Traralgon Outdoor Recreation Plan including:
 - Lighting upgrade for main soccer fields (Lighting upgrade to Olympians main pitch is currently underway.)
 - Upgrade pavilion to cater for all ages and genders (Extension of Traralgon City Clubroom about to commence)
 - Extension of table tennis facility to the north for clubrooms and storage facilities for little athletics and soccer.
 - Improve definition of playing fields with planting of landscape to increase the amenity of the reserve.
 - Provide roof water collection tank to provide for field irrigation.
- Address identified risk management issues.
- Provide training lighting on an additional soccer pitch (No. 3) to take pressure of the two main pitches.



5. Soccer Facilities - Tyers

5.8 TYERS RECREATION RESERVE (Moe – Glengarry Road Tyers)

Clubs: Tyers Soccer Club

No. Members: 100 playing members (40 senior + 60 junior)

Facilities: Senior soccer pitch with lighting and clubroom facility, located as part of a larger reserve which includes a football oval, tennis / netball courts and supporting infrastructure.

Key Issues:

- Ground lighting is poor and forces club to continually train on the same part of the pitch (due to limited visibility in remaining areas).
- Clubrooms have inadequate change facilities for females and referees. Canteen facilities require an upgrade, storage is inadequate and disability access is limited.
- Ground is in poor condition.
- The club has difficulty managing the high number of players on a single pitch and would like a second pitch for training and junior games.
- Soccer pitch lacks fencing and there is no separation between players and spectators.
- Northern coaches' box is in need of repair and a light tower lying on the ground may pose a risk management issue.
- Club / Committee of Management is responsible for the maintenance of grounds and facilities (with funding from Council), which reportedly impacts on the clubs ability to fund priority projects.

Discussion:

Tyers Soccer Club has high number of players being catered for on a single soccer pitch that is in poor condition. The ground lighting is also poor which results in the overuse of certain areas on the pitch and is likely to contribute to the deterioration of the ground surface. The existing soccer pitch and ground lighting should therefore be upgraded to better cope with the high levels of use and to enable training to be spread evening across the ground.

Existing maintenance arrangements and practices should also be reviewed based on the current condition of the pitch and the need for high level of maintenance in the future. The Committee of Management structure is inconsistent with other soccer venues in Latrobe City and may therefore require an increased level of Council involvement and support (i.e. increased resources, provision of specialist advice, tighter controls on maintenance practices etc.)

Future partnership opportunities with the local primary school should also be investigated for their potential to provide alternative training options for the soccer club, if required to manage player numbers and to take pressure off the soccer pitch.

Opportunities: The majority of opportunities for soccer facility improvements will be addressed through the development and implementation of the town based plans.

- Upgrade lighting to enable entire pitch to be used for training.
- Upgrade surface of soccer pitch including improved drainage and irrigation.
- Provide perimeter fencing around the soccer pitch.
- Upgrade clubrooms to include change facilities for female players and referees, and improved canteen facilities, storage and disability access.
- Address risk management issues, including coaches' box and disused lighting tower.
- Investigate future partnership opportunities with the football club and/or local primary school for their potential to accommodate soccer training (as required).
- Monitor the need for an overflow training area (on the disused netball court and surrounds).



6. Conclusion

Soccer in Latrobe City has experienced significant growth over recent years and participation levels are expected to continue to increase through the introduction of new initiatives and competition opportunities.

The Soccer Facilities Plan has been developed to identify the current and future needs of soccer and opportunities for the growth and development of the sport in Latrobe City. The plan has included a review of participation levels and trends, competition opportunities, club operational issues and facility management and maintenance practices. The provision and distribution of soccer facilities was also analysed, in addition to facility usage levels and demand, and the condition of soccer pitches and associated infrastructure.

A detailed facility audit and consultation process identified a range of issues and opportunities specific to individual soccer venues. This information is designed to assist Council and local clubs with the long term planning of their facilities. The implementation of these opportunities however needs to be undertaken in accordance with town based recreation plans (i.e. Traralgon Outdoor Recreation Plan, Moe Newborough Outdoor Recreation Plan). The Soccer Facilities Plan has been developed in the context of these plans, which will provide an avenue for facility improvements to be undertaken and ensure an equitable allocation of resources across the all sports in Latrobe City.



7. Implementation

The implementation of the Soccer Facilities Plan will be a long term priority for Council and the community. The majority of “opportunities” will be implemented in accordance with relevant town based recreation plans, in which priority projects from all reserves are evaluated against one another.

Only the highest priority opportunities will be considered for immediate implementation subject to 2008/09 capital budget allocations. These opportunities include:

- Hazelwood South Reserve:
Improve power supply to reserve and upgrade training lights on pitch 1 (with the capacity to be upgraded to competition standard in the future). Provide training lights on pitch 2.
- Tyers Recreation Reserve:
Upgrade lighting to enable entire pitch to be used for training.

Opportunities contained within the town based recreation plans are classified into high, medium and long term priorities according to a range of criteria including risk management issues and facility usage levels. Availability of funding is also a key factor that will affect the timing of projects and external funding opportunities and partnership proposals will ensure the successful and timely completion of identified opportunities.