



by hansen partnership

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## 1 introduction

In September 2010 Latrobe City Council appointed Hansen Partnership to prepare a Master Plan for the Traralgon South Recreation Reserve. The aim of the project was to create a comprehensive plan identifying all opportunities for the creation and redevelopment of recreational facilities at the reserve and the provision of amenities to accommodate the local community.

The first stage of the Master Plan development focused on gathering information relating to the existing conditions of the reserve and issues concerning its use, from the following sources:

- Review of background documents including the Southern Towns Outdoor Recreation Plan, Latrobe City Council's Recreation and Leisure Strategy, Sporting Reserves, Pavilion and Grounds Use Policy and other relevant documents.
- Initial site visits and the identification of physical attributes of the park and surrounding area; and
- Community consultation sessions which gathered information about the use and presence of the reserve. A total of six consultation sessions were held with representatives from:
  - Latrobe City Council;
  - Sporting Clubs associated with the reserve, including cricket, badminton, tennis and netball;
  - Traralgon South Kindergarten and Traralgon South Primary School;
  - Community Groups, including the CWA, members of the church, Loy Yang Estate Owners Corporation and the Traralgon South & District Community Association; and
  - General community.

In collaboration with Council, Hansen Partnership prepared a draft Master Plan, which was presented to Council, stakeholders and the general community. Along with the Implementation Framework, the Master Plan will guide the future use and long term development of the Traralgon South Recreation Reserve



# 2 background

#### 2.1 site context

The Traralgon South Recreation Reserve is located in the north western corner of the township, as indicated in the accompanying context diagram (Figure 3). An analysis of the relationship between the reserve and the broader region has identified a number of key influences, which are briefly described as follows.

- The reserve is within a walkable distance for a large part of the existing residential catchment, however we understand that the majority of users drive to the facility.
- Existing connections between the reserve and other township services such as educational
  facilities, the church, and the general store can be greatly strengthened due to their close proximity
  with one another.
- The recently created Loy Yang Walking Track enters the site from the north, however it currently ceases at the reserve. There is an opportunity to continue the path through the reserve and the broader township, thus strengthening pedestrian access.
- The cleared Council owned land to the north of the site is to be retained as a bushfire buffer area.
- With both the Traralgon South Primary School and Kindergarten to the south east of the site, there is the potential to create strong pedestrian connections between all three facilities, which will help deal with the traffic hazards that currently exist for children accessing the reserve.
- The recreation reserve sits at the lowest point of the town and during periods of heavy rain, the area can become boggy and unusable. In the 2007 Traralgon South and District Sustainability Strategy it was suggested that the development of a wetland could be established in the recreation reserve to deal with urban drainage.



Figure 1: Traralgon South Flora & Fauna Reserve



Figure 2: Traralgon South Primary School

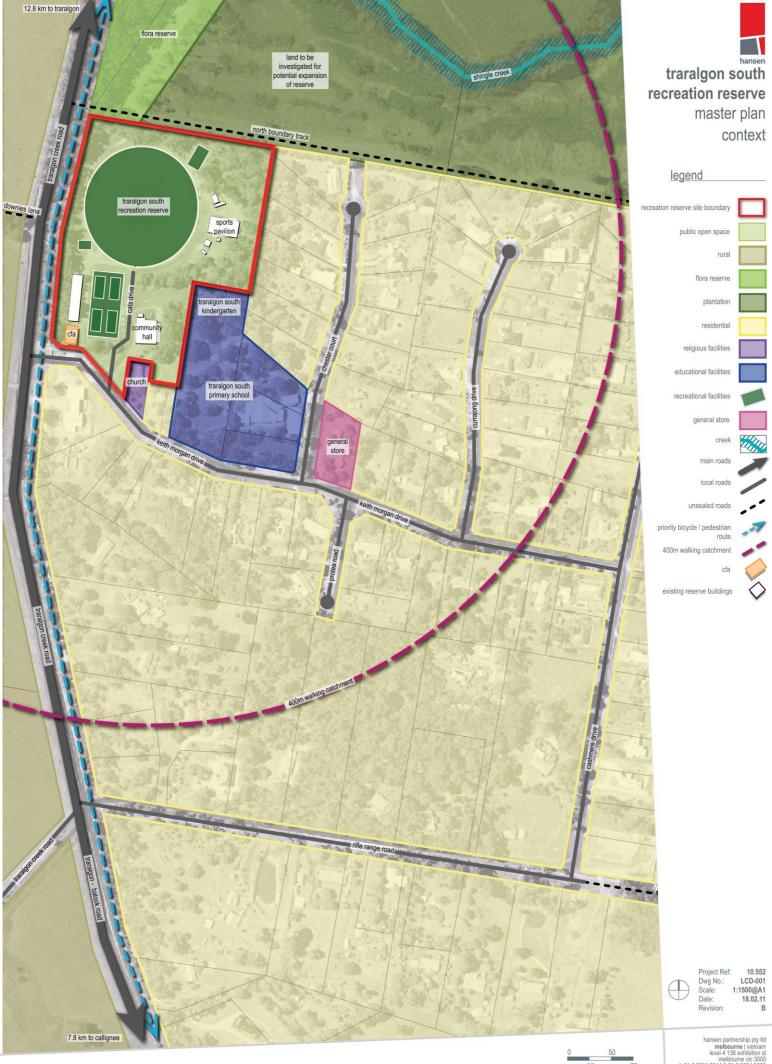


Figure 3: Context



#### 2.2 land use

The Traralgon South Recreation Reserve covers an area of approximately five hectares and incorporates a number of recreational facilities including tennis courts, cricket nets, a cricket oval, indoor badminton courts as well as the community hall and recently constructed men's shed. The lack of connection between these facilities has meant that the reserve has never met its full potential and the Master Plan will work to unite these elements allowing for better utilisation of the area.

The analysis of land use at the Traralgon South Recreation Reserve has identified a number of key areas, described as follows, and identified in the accompanying land use analysis diagram (Figure 10).

## 2.2.1 adjacent land use

- Traralgon South Recreation Reserve has an existing residential interface to the east along Chester Court and access to the reserve utilising this catchment should be promoted.
- The western boundary of the park is currently fronted by Traralgon Creek Road.
- The adjoining educational facilities to the south east of the site currently utilise the reserve during school times, however gaining access to the site is difficult due to the steep gradient, with the main route via Cats Drive.

## 2.2.2 active sporting fields

The Traralgon South Recreation Reserve currently consists of a variety of sporting facilities. A number of members in the local and greater community have indicated that they currently or potentially could make better use of the recreational facilities in the reserve.

#### sporting oval

- The reserve includes a single oval, which is currently only utilised for cricket and is heavily used during the summer months for training as well as for weekend matches. It is also used by the local primary school during the day for sporting meets and physical education; however pedestrian access to the reserve is seen to be an issue due to the lack of proper crossing points and unsafe footpath surfaces.
- The surface of the oval is in good condition, with lush grass growing during both winter and summer months. This is due to water shed from the surrounding town accumulating in the reserve; this however becomes an issue during winter months when lack of site draining renders the oval unusable.



Figure 4: John Black Reserve Oval



#### tennis courts

- The four tennis courts located to the south of the oval are currently the most used facility at the reserve, with a multitude of ages utilising them throughout the year. There are two asphalt courts and two synthetic courts, the surface of which was applied in 2008. This however has already started to deteriorate due to the poor base on which it sits and complaints have been made about the surface becoming slippery when wet.
- The installation of lighting would be of great benefit to enable night competition and practice.
- The club suffers from a lack of storage and change facilities. It currently utilises the community hall
  to the east however during peak traffic time access to these facilities can become dangerous due to
  heavier vehicular movement along the road.
- The tennis courts are used by the local primary school during the day, however pedestrian access
  to them is seen to be an issue due to the lack of proper crossing points and unsafe footpath
  surfaces.
- Shade and shelter for spectators around the courts is lacking, and the introduction of some vegetation around this area would improve the amenity of the area.

#### new cricket nets

- Located on the north eastern corner of the site, the recently installed cricket nets serve as a training facility for the CATS (Callignee and Traralgon South Cricket Club).
- The cricket nets are slightly disconnected from some of the other sporting facilities located around the reserve and better access and lighting to the facility would benefit its users.

## 2.2.3 disused sporting facilities

#### old cricket nets

The cricket nets located to the south west of the oval are in poor condition and with the installation of the new nets have become redundant. Their removal would allow for better utilisation of the area.



Figure 5: New Cricket Nets



Figure 6: Disused Cricket Nets



## 2.2.4 buildings

#### multi-sport pavilion

- The multi-sport pavilion on the eastern side of the oval currently provides facilities for the local badminton club and social rooms for the CATS Cricket Club. During the bushfire recovery the multi-sport pavilion was used as a central hub for the town and greater region to manage emergency efforts and provide help for the community.
- The multi-sport pavilion has recently had upgrades to both the social rooms with a new bar and kitchen installed but the community has expressed that there are a number of ongoing issues with it. The building currently does not have change facilities, with the male and female toilets currently servicing all clubs that use the multi-sport pavilion.
- The rear of the building currently houses badminton courts. In recent times the courts were resurfaced as a bushfire recovery project. This resurfacing was also to include lines for netball, however it received only volleyball lines.
- The multi-sport pavilion was initially constructed as a half stadium, with the opportunity for expansion to include basketball and/or netball facilities.

#### community hall and public toilets

Located to the south of the site, the community hall acts as the central hub and meeting place for the town. The building itself includes a large hall and kitchen facilities which is utilised by a large selection of the community for social functions, fitness activities and general use.



Figure 7: Multi-Sport Pavilion



Figure 8: Community Hall



Figure 9: CFA Shed

The adjoining primary school currently uses the hall for indoor sporting activities during school hours as the recently constructed multipurpose room at the school does not meeting their needs. Upgrades to the facilities were intended as part of the bushfire recovery scheme, however these have been put on hold until the completion of this Master Plan. These upgrades included overall improvements to the hall, with new public toilets, upgraded playground and BBQ amenities.



#### men's shed

- The men's shed located near the south western corner of the reserve was part of the bushfire recovery scheme, with the local community funding the project.
- The current location of the shed has caused some issues with regards to parking, with the area previously being utilised as an overflow for tennis and cricket parking.

## temporary community services and storage sheds

The temporary facilities located around the reserve were established to service the community during the bushfire recovery period. These are no longer required and are to be removed.

#### **CFA**

- The CFA facility is positioned on the far south west corner of the site. The CFA have raised their concerns about the safety of the access road that runs parallel to their shed.
- Sufficient space to the north of the building must be retained for service requirements and water tanks.

## 2.2.5 potential future uses

With a need for upgrades to the majority of the current facilities within the recreation reserve, the Traralgon South community have also voiced the need for additional facilities as follows:

#### netball

- There is a need for netball courts, with the town's netball team currently having no facilities on which to play and practice since the previous courts at the primary school were removed to allow for the construction of a multipurpose building.
- The incorporation of netball facilities within the reserve would better utilise the area and potentially facilitate the sharing of facilities.

#### skate park

- The existing bushfire recovery plan indicates the proposed location for a new skate park adjacent to the northern boundary of the reserve. It has been determined that this is too isolated from the rest of the facilities within the reserve, and with the aim of the master plan to create better connection between existing facilities it would be recommended that an alternate location be established.
- The area where the disused cricket nets sit would be a prime location for a youth facility such as a skate park. The close proximity to the men's shed would provide an added level of surveillance of the facility.
- The incorporation of other youth activities within the skate park should also be considered, potentially including a bmx track, half basketball court or a rock climbing wall.

#### winter sports

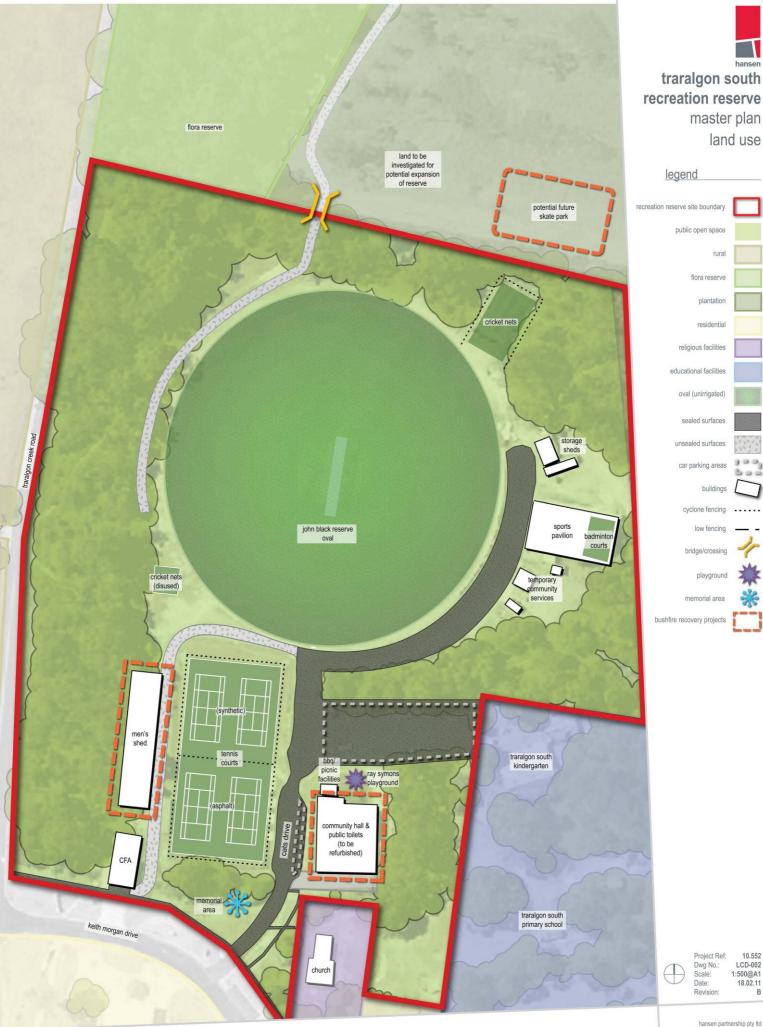
 Due to poor drainage issues within the reserve, winter sports such as football, soccer and baseball currently cannot occur. If the drainage was improved, the oval could be utilised for such sporting events.



## 2.2.6 public facilities

The incorporation and expansion of a number of public facilities is important in facilitating the transformation of the recreation reserve into a high amenity precinct that provides a comfortable and pleasant environment for spectators and the general community.

- The existing public toilets are currently being upgraded as part of the redevelopment of the community hall.
- There is the opportunity to create a passive recreational area for spectators and families that incorporates picnic facilities and barbeques within a parkland setting. This would include shelter and seating, which the community have indicated would be well-used.
- The existing playground facility is currently being upgraded as part of the redevelopment of the community hall.
- During community consultation it was voiced that more bins and drinking fountains were required around the reserve, with current amenities either vandalised or not meeting a usable standard.
- Members of the public that use the reserve have indicated that infrastructure such as exercise stations would be beneficial around the oval to encourage people of different ages, including the elderly, to walk and use the reserve beyond organised team sports and spectating. Following this, it is important to the community to ensure that there are affordable options for participation in unstructured recreational activities for people, particularly youths, such as basketball half-courts, tennis rebound walls and extended bike paths, as indicated in the Latrobe City Recreation and Leisure Strategy (2006).
- The provision of shade is an important consideration within the Master Plan, in the form of vegetation and picnic shelters.



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#### 2.3 access and movement

The analysis of access and movement within and around the Traralgon South Recreation Reserve has identified a number of key areas, described as follows, and identified in the accompanying access and movement analysis diagram (Figure 14).

## 2.3.1 access points

- The main entry to the Traralgon South Recreation Reserve is currently located on the southern edge of the reserve along Keith Morgan Drive. It has been noted that the configuration here requires upgrading to enhance traffic flow at busy times and to improve public safety through potentially separating pedestrian movement from traffic, and boosting lighting.
- There is a secondary entry located next to the CFA shed also on the southern edge of the site which was formerly used as access to the overflow parking area which is now occupied by the men's shed. The CFA have asked that this access point be closed off to the public for safety reasons.
- There are also a number of informal pedestrian access points located around the reserve.

## 2.3.2 vehicular access and car parking

- The main area of sealed asphalt surface for vehicular access is through the main entrance point off Keith Morgan Drive and around the eastern side of the football oval. The community has voiced the need for more car parking, as in times of peak use there can be up to two cricket teams and eight tennis teams all using the area.
- The current vehicular access to the car park cuts between the tennis courts and community hall which is seen as a potentially hazardous crossing for pedestrian, in particular children.
- The asphalt parking is also used as a pick up and drop-off point for local and regional bus services (including school buses). During these times there are also an added number of cars picking up school children from the buses, furthering the congestion.



Figure 11: Township Entrance



Figure 12: Car Park



## 2.3.3 pedestrian access

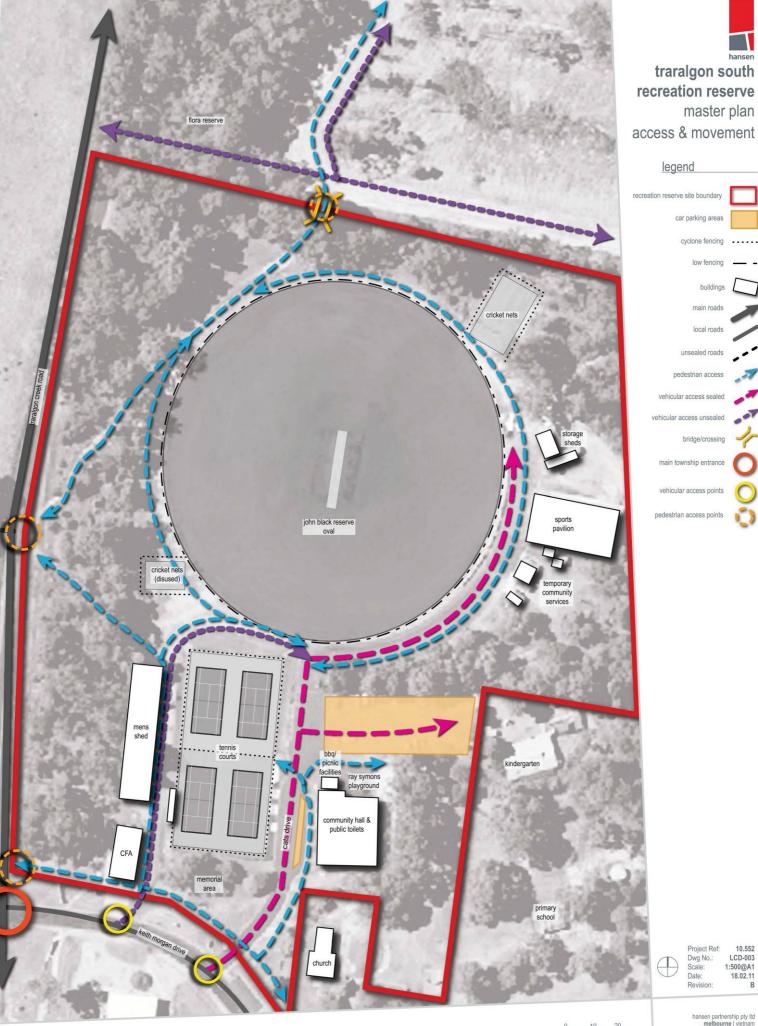
- The main pedestrian entrance to the reserve is located along the southern edge of the reserve along Keith Morgan Drive, with secondary points along Traralgon Creek Road, and from both the primary school and kindergarten.
- There is currently a limited designated pedestrian network within the reserve, which means that circulation for pedestrians and cyclists, particular children, can be quite hazardous. The Master Plan will look to separate pedestrian circulation and create a clear path network that connects the different zones within the reserve and enhances linkages to open space areas beyond the park.
- We understand that many members of the community use the park for passive recreational use, particularly dog walking. A trail network with better drainage, surfacing and directional signage would therefore create a higher amenity environment for a variety of users.
- Future designated pedestrian linkages should pick up on major spectator points across the reserve to enhance views across the ovals and other sporting facilities.
- Part of the Loy Yang Walking Track has been constructed through the bushland area to the north of the site, and there is the opportunity to extend it through the reserve and out to the wider region.



Figure 13: Loy Yang Walking Track

#### 2.3.4 safety

- The upgrade of the Traralgon South Recreation Reserve calls for the implementation of security measures along new paths and buildings, including the consideration of improved and additional lighting and traffic management measures.
- It has been indicated from users of the reserve that the unsealed surfaces within it are difficult to negotiate, particularly for users with disabilities and the elderly. The detailed design of the precinct should consider the provision of DDA (Disability Discrimination Act 1992) compliant paths, signage, ramped building access, disabled toilets and car parking.





# 2.4 landscape and environment

The analysis of landscape and environment at the Traralgon South Recreation Reserve has identified a number of key areas, described as follows, and identified in the accompanying landscape and environment analysis diagram (Figure 16).

## 2.4.1 open space

- The adjacent areas of open space, including the land cleared and purchased by Latrobe City Council to the north of the site, provides an opportunity for expansion of the reserve.
- An existing flora reserve lies to the north west of the reserve, which is a protected site. There is the opportunity for its characteristics to be expanded and utilised within the reserve itself as a precedent for the planting varieties.

## 2.4.2 vegetation

- Existing flora on the site is primarily in the form of native canopy vegetation around the edge of the
  reserve, particularly to the west where it should be retained to preserve the landscape character of
  the reserve.
- Native canopy trees should be considered across the park to provide shade for spectators; however it needs to be ensured that views to the sporting fields are not interrupted.
- The existing vegetation between the car park and oval could potentially be removed, opening up view lines towards the oval.
- New planting species selection should look at spreading native forms around open areas within the reserve to provide shade, with the introduction of tall avenue trees along roads and paths.
- The remnant native vegetation on the western side of the reserve creates a bushland interface to the reserve as well as a wildlife corridor that runs along the roadway. The impact of any development on the habitats of local wildlife is an important consideration within the Master Plan.
- New turf and the potential replacement of old grasses on both the sporting fields and surrounding open lawn areas should use drought resistant and hard wearing species that allow for reduced water use and high impact use.

#### 2.4.3 views

- Areas for spectating around the reserve should be enhanced to create safe and high amenity spaces that facilitate clear view lines to the sporting fields and surveillance of the area.
- Major access points to the Traralgon South Recreation Reserve should also be addressed to take full advantage of important views and present the reserve to the community and visitors in a clear and aesthetically appealing manner.



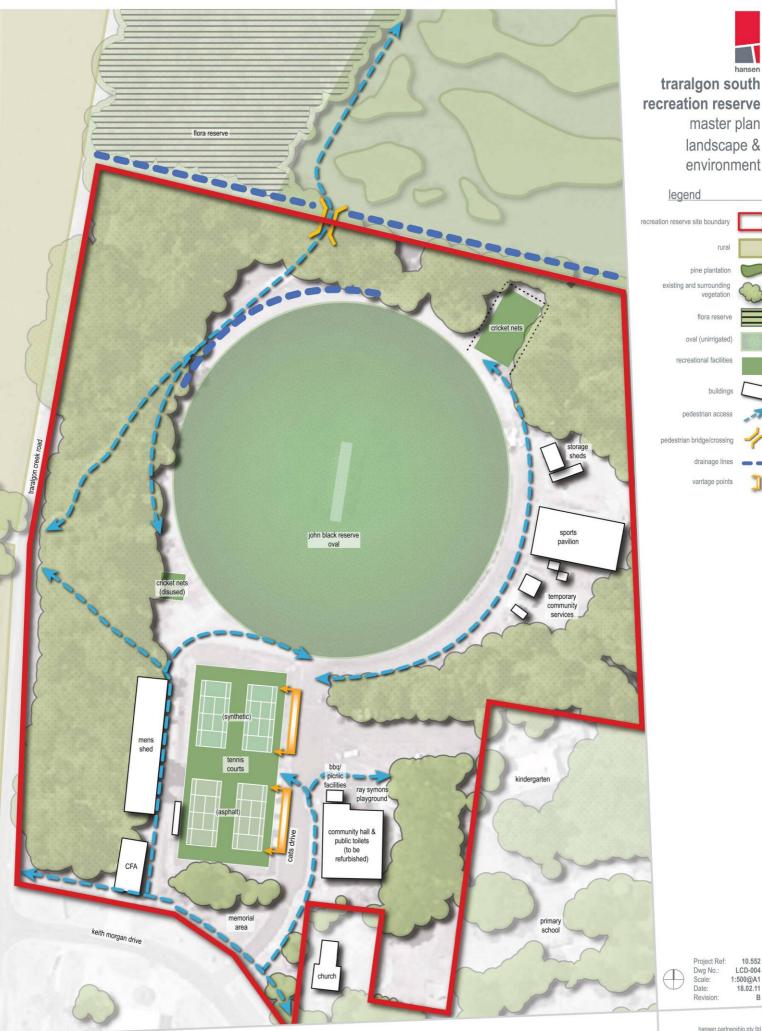
## 2.4.4 drainage

- There are a number of areas within the reserve that currently have flooding issues after wet weather, particularly along the drainage line along the northern and western edge of the reserve, as well as around the cricket oval and tennis courts.
- The reactive clay soils across the site have previously caused structural issues in the area as well as flooding in certain zones. The ground quality is an important consideration for any proposed structures and landscaping treatments.



Figure 15: Drain beneath North Boundary Track

There is the opportunity within the Master Plan for the implementation of water sensitive urban design (WSUD) practices, which could include minor modification of existing overland flow paths that take advantage of the natural drainage lines and low points and stormwater harvesting to provide a source of recycled water by capturing runoff from the roofs of buildings, new sealed roads and car parking.





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master plan landscape & environment

pine plantation

oval (unirrigated) recreational facilities

buildings

vantage points



# 3 master plan recommendations

Through the analysis of the existing features of the reserve, a number of opportunities and constraints for its development were identified. These principles formed the basis for the creation of the master plan, and the recommendations for each component are described below.

# 3.1 john black reserve oval

The playing conditions of the John Black Oval and the adjacent pavilion are to be improved through:

- Installation of new drainage measures to ensure that the oval surface quality is maintained through summer, whilst also being adequately drained in the winter for usage by the community and the adjacent primary school.
- Upgrades to the existing cricket pavilion on the eastern side of the oval to incorporate additional change rooms and new toilet facilities.

# 3.2 community hall / shared zone

Access and usage of the community hall is to be improved through upgrades to the building as per the proposed plans by Ludic Design as well as the incorporation of a new shared zone to provide better access to the facilities and a safe, comfortable meeting space. This area will be enhanced through:

- Improved access to the upgraded hall, this will further enhance its role as the central hub and meeting place for the town, utilised by the community for social functions, sports and general use.
- Provision of an outdoor shared zone space which provides a gathering area and safer pedestrian thoroughfare from the reserve entrance through to the sporting facilities. The shared zone will enhance the new building and provide for spectating through the introduction of seating, shade trees and lighting to create a comfortable and vibrant hub.



Figure 18: Plan for the upgraded hall (Ludic Design)



# 3.3 skate park

One of the priorities of the bushfire recovery efforts is the construction of a skate park or youth oriented facility to create an area in which young people can socialise and interact without having to be involved in an organised sport. The master plan proposes that the skate park should be integrated through:

- A central location to the north of the Men's Shed that provides for clear pedestrian access and surveillance from the surrounding facilities.
- Provision of a variety of different spaces within the skate park including areas for a range of abilities as well as gathering and spectating areas.

#### 3.4 northern area

The Council owned land to the north and north east of the existing recreation reserve will be utilised for additional recreational purposes, while considering nearby conservation areas and its role as a bushfire buffer area. This will be achieved through:

- The establishment of multi-use courts, a secondary oval/multi-use pitch and a centralised pavilion catering to both facilities, with a system of pedestrian pathways connecting all the proposed areas.
- Careful management and protection of the interface with the Flora Reserve to the west.

#### 3.5 multi-use courts

New multi-use courts will be established in the northern reserve area, and will provide:

- Two netball courts and four tennis courts each identified by different coloured line marking.
- A court surface and subgrade which suit site conditions and not replicate the drainage issues currently encountered at the existing tennis courts.
- Provision of lighting to the four courts to allow for after school / night training and competition.
- An embankment to the east of the courts for use as a vantage point for spectators.
- A tennis practice area with a rebound wall is also to be provided east of the proposed multi-use courts.



Figure 17: Multi-use courts constructed at Boolarra



# 3.6 secondary oval / multi-use pitch

A large portion of the cleared northern area is to be used for a secondary oval / multi-use pitch, which will:

- Consist of a high quality playing field suitable for a variety of recreational activities.
- Provide an alternative playing pitch to the John Black Oval, allowing for more activity at the reserve.
- Provide parking for spectators along the southern side of the secondary oval/multi-use pitch, consisting of 26 sealed parking spaces, including one disabled space.

#### 3.7 vehicular access

A key driver for the development of the master plan was the resolution of vehicular and pedestrian access and egress to address existing areas of conflict within the reserve. Vehicular access has been improved through:

- Modification of the reserve entrance and realignment of Cats Drive to direct traffic flow into a new centralised, pedestrian priority shared zone. The new shared zone on Cats Drive should be designated to limit vehicle speeds to 10km/h, and delineate pedestrian priority through signage and surface materials. Design options to limit vehicle speeds could include: chicanes, speed humps, rough/raised paving and rumble strips. The design of this area will need to maintain suitable emergency access.
- Relieving congestion caused by buses currently using the reserve as a drop off point. This will be rectified by ensuring they use the designated bus bay in Keith Morgan Drive or the reserved area further along outside the primary school.

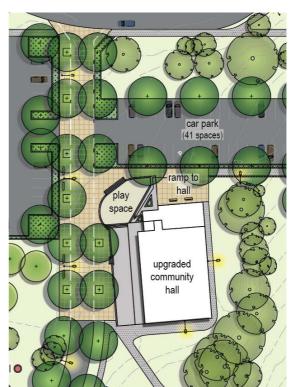


Figure 19: Extract from the master plan demonstrating the pedestrian priority shared zone

- Provision of two sealed car parking areas, near the community hall which are entered from the shared zone. The first is in the location of the existing tennis courts and provides 70 new spaces. The second is a reconfiguration of the current car park, providing 41 spaces. In total there are 111 spaces proposed near the community hall, compared to the 38 spaces currently accommodated.
- Provision of a further 53 parking spaces in the northern area to cater for the new facilities, connected to the rest of the reserve via a new two way, north-south road bordering the John Black reserve.
- Introduction of a vehicle access road for the proposed pavilion in the northern area of the reserve.



- Resolution of vehicular access around the oval to enhance traffic flow at busy times whilst improving public safety through the prioritisation of pedestrian movement.
- Introduction of sealed parking around the eastern side of the oval for spectating and direct access to the pavilion and cricket nets. Although the reserve is within walking distance for many residents, we understand that the provision of parking is a high priority as the majority of users drive to the facility from the surrounding area or broader region.
- Ensuring access is maintained to the Community Bus, which is currently housed in the northern most bay in the Men's Shed.
- Maintaining the existing entry point directly east of the CFA shed as an emergency vehicle only entry. The proposed car park, where the tennis courts currently are, will be used as an emergency service staging area if required.

# 3.8 pedestrian access

The safety and legibility of the pedestrian network around the reserve has been enhanced through:

- Creation of a sealed path network around the reserve for pedestrians and cyclists that is clearly separated from vehicular movement and connects the different zones within the park, linking through to the open space areas and trails beyond. This network of paths will include a pedestrian connection from the multi-use pavilion to the cricket nets. Connections to the Traralgon South Kindergarten and Primary School to the south east of the site should particularly be enhanced to ensure that children can safely access the reserve during and after school times.
- Implementation of the Traralgon South Shared Pathway, running from the northern area of the reserve, along the western edge and out to Keith Morgan Drive.
- In the consideration of the Small Town Structure Plan, these access points should be further strengthened to provide access to other township services, including the general store.
- Integration of the Loy Yang Walking Track which currently runs along the flora reserve to the north before entering the recreation reserve and abruptly ending. This path is to be enhanced and aligned to connect with the pedestrian circulation around the oval and extended out to the wider region.
- Implementation of pedestrian lighting along paths to provide increased safety and activation of the precinct at night.



# 3.9 landscape

The landscape character of the reserve is to be protected and enhanced through:

- The protection of existing vegetation along the western side of the reserve which connects through to the flora reserve, providing an important wildlife corridor of high value to the area.
- Retention of native canopy vegetation and bushland around the edge of the reserve to preserve the landscape character of the site and retain the existing shade provided by significant trees.
- Establishment of tall avenue trees along roads, car parking and the oval to define the key access routes and frame key areas for spectating.
- Introduction of new areas of canopy vegetation around the reserve to provide further shade and amenity for spectators. New planting selection should look at spreading native forms around open spaces and introduce tall canopy trees to frame views, whilst still allowing spectating to continue. Proposed species are to reflect the existing landscape character of the reserve, and ensure that any proposed vegetation carefully considers bushfire management regimes.
- Provision of tree and ground cover planting within car parking areas to break up sealed surfaces and provide additional shade.

# 3.10 general

In consideration of the drainage issues identified within the reserve, a drainage study for the entire Traralgon South Recreation Reserve should be undertaken. The findings of this study should then be implemented appropriately.



## 4 conclusion

The key recommendations that have been outlined within this report provide a framework for the redevelopment of the Traralgon South Recreation Reserve, as illustrated within the master plan. Considering the issues of land use, circulation, landscape and amenity values, the master plan creates a functional and attractive precinct that provides recreational and community facilities for the region as well as a local parkland for the neighbourhood.

The enhanced layout of the different spaces within the reserve will allow for safer pedestrian and vehicular access, integrating adjacent facilities and open spaces. Connections from the reserve to the broader Traralgon South residential area will be further addressed in the Small Town Structure Plan, which is to follow on from the Master Plan phase of the project.

This document incorporates both short term and long term strategies for the reserve's development, providing a framework for the implementation of the recommendations over time as funding becomes available. These opportunities will enhance Traralgon South Recreation Reserve so that it continues to provide for various recreational and community pursuits for a wider range of the population, creating an integrated and accessible destination within the township and broader Latrobe region.



Figure 20: Existing landscape character to be preserved

