

# WARRNAMBOOL CITY COUNCIL

**DRAFT**

## Active Warrnambool Strategy 2025–2035



*inside* **EDGE**  
sport and leisure planning



## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Warrnambool City Council acknowledges the Peek Whurrong and Kirrae Whurrung Peoples of the Maar Nation, their land, waterways and skies within the Warrnambool municipality. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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**The Active Warrnambool Strategy (AWS) 2025 to 2035 provides Warrnambool City Council with an evidence-based framework to guide the planning, provision, and management of sport and active recreation opportunities over the next decade.**

It responds to demographic change, participation trends, pockets of population growth and community aspirations to ensure facilities and programs are inclusive, accessible and sustainable.

## **Context and Strategic Drivers**

Warrnambool is the primary regional service hub for more than 100,000 people. The municipality's current population of 35,406 is projected to grow to 38,356 by 2035, including a 28% increase in residents aged 65 years and over.

Warrnambool has a strong culture of organised sport alongside significant demand for informal recreation such as walking, fitness, swimming, and cycling.

The AWS 2025 to 2035 builds on the achievements of the 2019 to 2030 strategy, which delivered 61 of 71 planned actions and over \$17m in sport and recreation projects, supported by \$10m in external funding.

An updated strategy is needed to understand current and future demand for sport and active recreation and to determine future priorities to 2035.

The State of Play Report which precedes this document has directly informed the AWS 2025–2035. It provides a clear, data-driven foundation for project prioritisation, investment attraction, and the delivery of a vibrant, healthy, and inclusive sport and recreation environment for Warrnambool's future.

The following key issues and opportunities for sport and active recreation in Warrnambool have been identified through club and community consultation and information from Council.

## **Key Issues and Opportunities**

- **Access and Inclusion:** Need for more inclusive facilities, gender inclusive amenities, and programs for under-represented groups.
- **Club Sustainability:** Volunteer fatigue, rising costs and operational pressures impact capacity.
- **Facility Condition and Capacity:** Ageing infrastructure, inconsistent maintenance, and facility gaps at high-use reserves; playing surfaces struggling with overuse.
- **Participation Trends:** Growth in junior sport, female participation, and flexible/social formats. Slight decline in senior male participation in some traditional sports.
- **Connectivity and Activation:** Demand for improved path/trail linkages, better signage, and activation of open spaces in line with Council's Open Space Strategy.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Facilities should reflect state and national policy directions and standards, universal design principles, and Council's Fair Access and Use Policy.

## **Current Provision and Assets**

Warrnambool has 13 key recreation reserves and a diverse asset base including;

- 9 AFL ovals
- 15 cricket ovals
- 4 soccer pitches
- 23 outdoor netball courts
- 43 tennis courts
- 1 indoor stadium (5 courts)
- 1 synthetic hockey pitch
- 9 lawn bowls greens
- 1 aquatic centre

Major facilities such as Reid Oval, Brierly Recreation Reserve, AquaZone, and Warrnambool Stadium serve as regional hubs but require further upgrades to meet demand and modern standards.



## Consultation Insights

Through workshops with 48 sporting groups, surveys from 55 clubs and 334 community members, and input from Council staff, the following priorities were identified.

- All gender change rooms and improved reserve lighting to increase capacity.
- Multi-sport hubs and shared-use precincts.
- Modern amenities and spectator facilities.
- School partnerships and reducing Council's responsibilities with co-located facilities.
- Investment in all-weather and flexible community spaces.
- Additional storage and shelter provision.

**The following focus areas have been identified for the updated Active Warrnambool Strategy.**

- **Upgrade core sporting infrastructure based on facility gaps identified**
  - prioritizing safety, gender inclusive design, accessibility and condition.

- **Inclusive Access**
  - ensuring equitable facility access and opportunities for everyone.
- **Support Club Sustainability**
  - through governance assistance, funding guidance and volunteer support.
- **Enable Diverse Participation Opportunities**
  - catering for traditional, social, unstructured and emerging activities.
- **Plan for Growth Areas**
  - Continue to facilitate planning for sport and recreation facilities and open spaces.
- **Enhance Connectivity**
  - integrating sport, recreation and open spaces with active transport and trail networks.
- **Maximise Regional Event Capability**
  - developing regional-standard venues to attract sports tourism and major competitions.



## Get Moving – Any Way You Can

Council's vision for the Active Warrnambool Strategy 2025-2035 is *Get Moving - Any Way You Can*.

For sport and recreation to empower everyone to move freely, feel safe and belong.

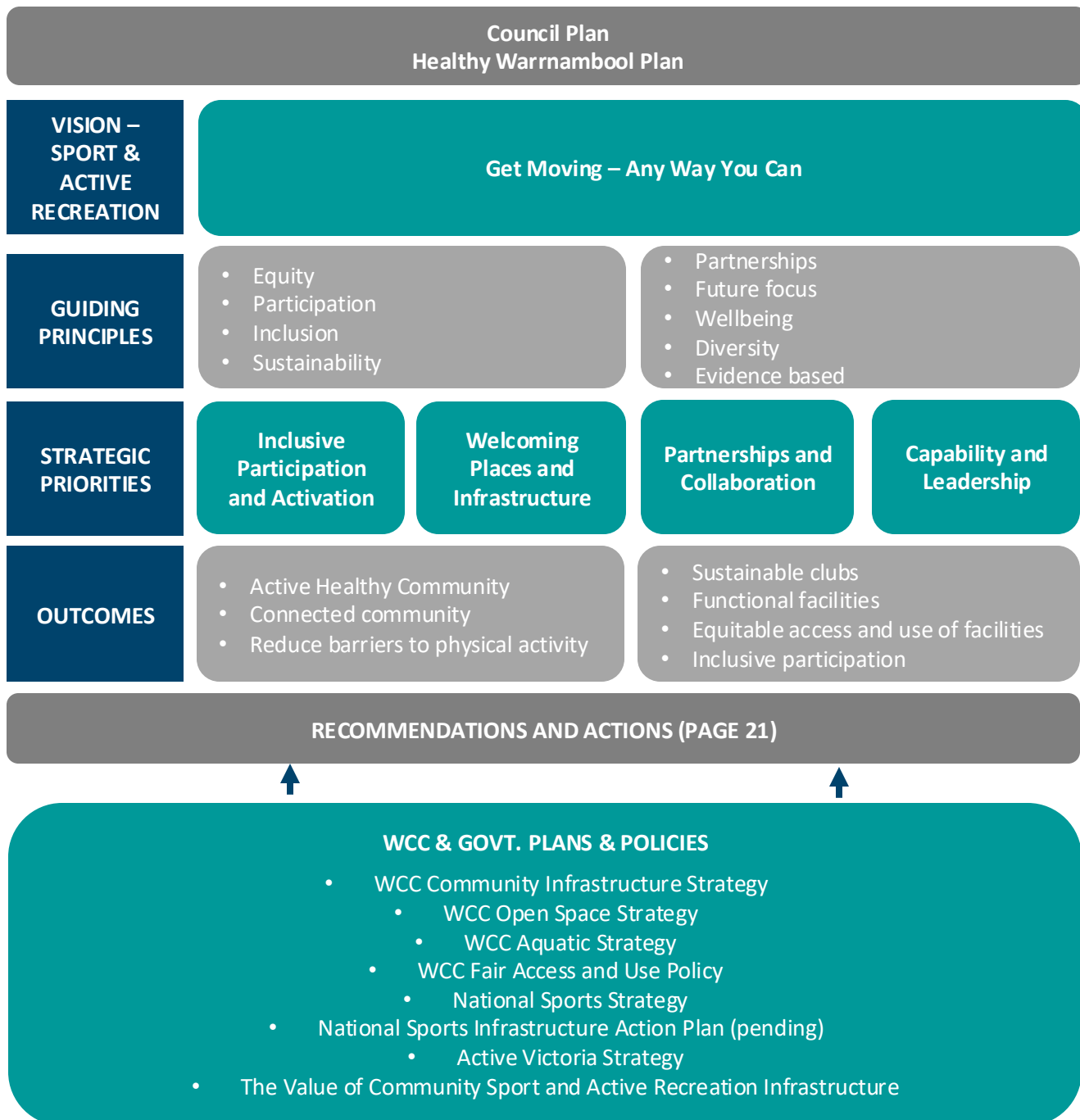
The following guiding principles will support the implementation of the strategy over the next 10 years.

### AWS 2025 to 2035 Guiding Principles

- Provide facilities and programs in convenient, accessible locations to support community health and wellbeing.
- Offer a variety of activities that reflect the community's diverse needs, preferences, locations, and financial capacities.
- Design facilities to be inclusive, safe, and accessible for all, with a focus on supporting women and girls.
- Treat all sports equally, though not necessarily with equal funding.
- Invest to promote wellbeing and social inclusion across all age groups.
- Plan for the use of facilities by everyone.
- Build capacity and support clubs to be sustainable.
- Facility development decisions and potential asset consolidation will be based on data, trends, population ratios, and sporting standards.
- Consider state government sport and social policies when planning and investing.



The following Strategic Framework has been developed to address the key gaps and challenges for sport and active recreation in Warrnambool over the next 10 years. The Framework will be used to guide Council's decision making around future policy development and investment in sport and active recreation.



To deliver on the vision and goals set out in the Active Warrnambool Strategy, Warrnambool City Council will drive action through a targeted, coordinated, and collaborative approach. Council's role will focus on strategic leadership, partnerships, advocacy, and capacity building, ensuring that sport and active recreation facilities and programs meet the needs of our growing and diverse community.

## Key Delivery Principles:



**Strategic and Data-Driven Planning:** Align facility development with participation trends, population growth, and organisational priorities, using robust data and forecasting tools.



**Partnership and Collaboration:** Collaborate with all levels of government, state sporting organisations, developers, and community partners to leverage funding and maximise delivery outcomes.



**Targeted Infrastructure Expansion:** Expand the reach and diversity of facilities to address key infrastructure gaps to meet current and future demand.



**Capacity Building:** Support communities, clubs, and volunteers to strengthen governance, skills, and sustainability.



**Advocacy and Funding:** Advocate for and apply to State and Federal Government and other external bodies for grants supporting facilities, programs, and service delivery.



**Project Management:** Manage and deliver sport and recreation capital works projects that align with AWS priorities, ensuring quality, timely and cost-effective outcomes.



Warrnambool City Council has identified the following priority projects which align with the vision and strategic framework of the AWS. Council will advocate strongly to secure funding for these projects across the duration of the AWS due to their broad community benefits.



## Brierly Community Hub - Stage 2

The Brierly Community Wellbeing Hub and Sports Pavilion will meet the future sport and recreation needs of Warrnambool's growing northeast. Following recent major upgrades to the Eastern Oval for cricket and soccer, the next phase will deliver a community hub to expand the reserve's capacity for diverse activities. Development of a regional football hub is a high priority project identified by Football Australia and Football Victoria.



## Reserve Upgrades

The site-specific projects are prioritised according to the State of Play infrastructure planning priority list, which is developed according to facility gaps and the infrastructure rating scorecard based on safety, female friendly, universal access, condition and local level provision standards.

The delivery of projects requires a partnership approach that includes Council, government funding, and local club contributions.



## AquaZone

Council will seek investment to deliver this much needed social infrastructure for our city and region following the completion of the Aquatic Strategy in 2024 which identified that a staged approach was the preference to providing a fit for purpose aquatic centre for the city. Stage 1 - Upgrade the outdoor pool essential infrastructure, Stage 2 - Upgrade the indoor pool and fitness centre.



## Warrnambool Stadium

Warrnambool Stadium is Council's premier indoor sports facility that serves as a central hub for various indoor sports and community events.

Council will undertake a feasibility study for the Warrnambool Stadium that includes assessment of opportunities for racquet sports such as table tennis, pickleball and squash, along with the feedback received from key stadium user groups.

# BACKGROUND and CONTEXT

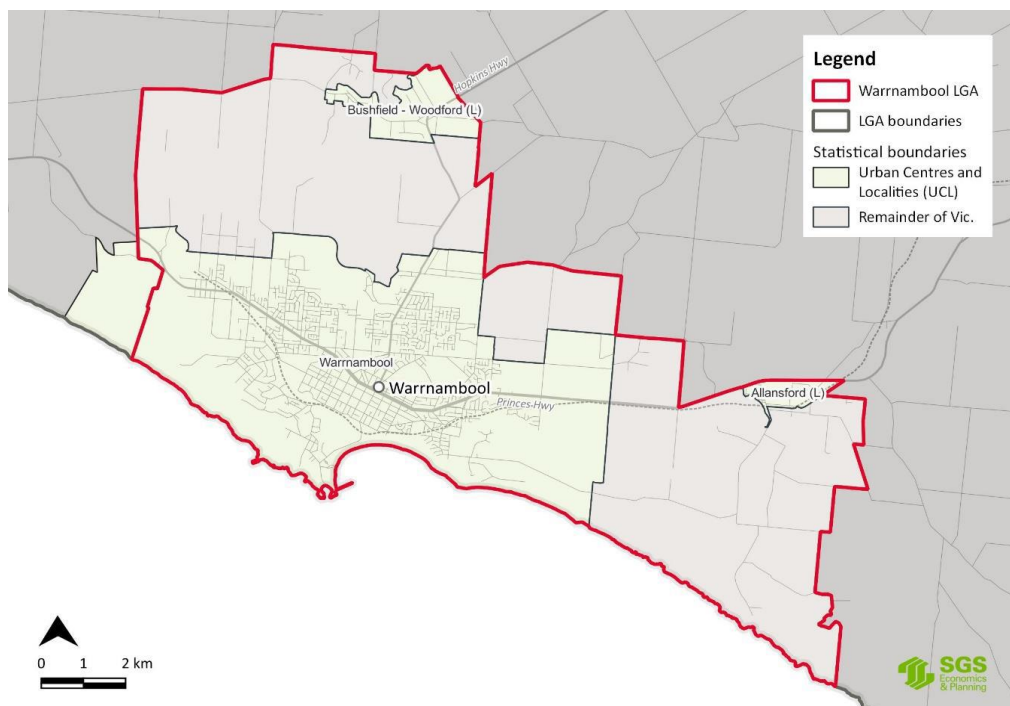
**Warrnambool is situated on the traditional lands of the Eastern Maar people. Located approximately 260km west of Melbourne, it is Victoria's largest coastal regional city beyond Port Phillip Bay with a population of over 35,406. It is the key regional centre for the Great South Coast region<sup>2</sup>.**

The municipality includes the township of Warrnambool itself, as well as the smaller towns of Allansford to the east, and Woodford and Bushfield to the north.

Key natural features include the two rivers running alongside (and partially through) the township – the Merri River to the west and the Hopkins River to the east.

The coast is a defining feature, with attractive beaches and rugged coastline located in the coastal reserve that runs along much of the southern boundary of the City. The surrounding land (within and beyond the council boundaries) includes highly productive agricultural land.

On its land boundaries the City is surrounded by Moyne Shire. While the hinterlands of the local government area are relatively small, covering 120 square kilometres. Warrnambool City acts as the main service centre for the surrounding region.



Map: Statistical boundaries around Warrnambool LGA  
Source: SGS Economics and Planning – State of Warrnambool Report

The information presented below provides a snapshot of the health, wellbeing and physical activity of Warrnambool residents.

Health Indicator	Warrnambool 2015	Warrnambool 2023	Barwon South-West 2015	Barwon South-West 2023	Victorian Average 2015	Victorian Average 2023
<b>Sedentary</b> % of adults doing no exercise p/week	2.4%	17.7%	2.7%	17.5%	3.6%	16.8%
<b>Insufficient physical activity</b> % of adults doing less than 150 mins of exercise p/week	45.4%	44.9%	48.6%	43.2%	47.5%	47.1%
<b>Sufficient physical activity</b> % of adults doing more than 150mins of exercise p/week	47.4%	37.2%	47.3%	38.4%	47.0%	35.1%

Table: Comparison of Health Stats between Warrnambool, Barwon South West and Victorian State Average from 2015 to 2023

## Positives

- ✓ 40.6% of Warrnambool residents engage in physical activity on four or more days per week, which is comparable to the Victorian state average of 41.3%.
- ✓ Warrnambool has significantly higher rates of participation in organised sports and club-based activities compared to other regions. This reflects a strong local culture of involvement in traditional sports such as AFL, cricket, netball, basketball and tennis.
- ✓ Approximately 16.4% of Warrnambool residents reported engaging in no physical activity during the week, slightly better than the Victorian average of 18.9%.

## Areas for improvement

- ❖ The percentage of adults in Warrnambool doing no weekly exercise is greater than Barwon South-West and the Victorian average.
- ❖ Participation in non-organised physical activities, such as walking and cycling, is lower in Warrnambool compared to other regions.
- ❖ Warrnambool is ranked 65 out of the 79 Councils in Victoria for percentage of adult population who are overweight.
- ❖ Rates of participation in sport and recreation in Warrnambool are slightly below the state average for women and girls.

Source: Victorian Population Health Survey, VicHealth Indicators Survey. Active Warrnambool Strategy 2019



**Club-based sports participation in Warrnambool is a vital component of the city's social fabric.**

**Sporting clubs offer a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to stay active and connected.**

Local clubs play a crucial role in delivering structured sporting opportunities, with participation spread across senior men's and women's competitions, junior programs and entry-level initiatives.

Research identified high participation rates in traditional sports like AFL, netball, cricket, soccer, basketball and swimming.

Analysis of club surveys identified that approximately 15% of Warrnambool residents are participating in a club-based activity.

Survey responses also identified that the number of male club participants (senior and junior) were on average 10% higher than female club participants (senior and junior).

## Active Recreation

- The five most popular active recreation activities in Warrnambool according to the community survey are walking, fitness / gym, running, swimming and cycling.
- Other well supported activities include yoga / pilates, surfing, fishing, dance and skating.
- Popular walking locations in Warrnambool include Russell's Creek Trail, Promenade / Foreshore Area, Lake Pertobe, Hopkins River, Albert Park and Brierly Reserve.
- Barriers to active recreation include not enough time, lack of facilities, affordability, looking after children and being involved in children's activities.
- Warrnambool offers regular active recreation event opportunities such as the Warrnambool Parkrun. This activity is open to all ages and fitness levels and attracts good numbers. There have been 393 Parkrun events with 6,800 individual participants and 41,636 finishes (total number of runs completed).



**1,832**

*Netball players*



**1,712**

*Football players*



**943**

*Cricket players*



**643**

*Soccer players*

*Source: Participation numbers for football, netball and soccer are registered player numbers supplied by the peak body.*

A range of factors are shaping the direction, recommendations and delivery of the Active Warrnambool Strategy 2025 to 2035. These include participation trends, demographic shifts, population growth, and the known barriers that influence community access and engagement.

## Key Sport and Recreation Trends

Warrnambool has a strong culture of traditional sports such as AFL, netball, cricket and basketball. The growth in soccer participation recently has been significant (+105% since 2020).

Junior sports participation is growing across netball, basketball, football, gymnastics; however there are retention challenges for teens and adult males in several sports.

There is interest in social, flexible, and non-traditional formats (e.g. pickleball, twilight sport, casual play) and active recreation (walking, gym/fitness, running, swimming, cycling) remains highly popular. There is demand for activities that cater to older adults and culturally diverse communities.

## Demographic Influences

- Population growth - (6.1% by 2035) concentrated in new residential areas (North East Warrnambool, Coastal Hopkins, North of Merri, Dennington, East of Aberline).
- Ageing population - (+28% growth in 65+ by 2035) driving demand for accessible, low-impact facilities and activities.
- 2% of the local population identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander which matches the broader regional Victorian average. Victoria has a lower proportion, at just 1.0%.
- Socio-economic diversity requires affordable and inclusive activity options.

## Barriers to Participation

- Lack of time, affordability, limited facilities nearby, volunteer shortages, and poor facility condition.
- Weather and seasonal challenges impact year-round access.

## State of Warrnambool report

Warrnambool City Council  
07 | 03 | 2025



insideEDGE  
sport architecture planning



ACTIVE WARRNAMBOOL STRATEGY  
2025-2035

State of Play Report  
July 2025

## Findings from the State of Warrnambool Report

- Most community facilities are provided in sufficient numbers for the Warrnambool community both currently and for the forecast population in 2046.
- Facilities that appear to be over supplied based on population benchmarks include medium sized community meeting spaces, sports pavilions and outdoor netball courts.
- Notable supply shortfalls include multi-purpose community centres, Neighbourhood House services (which can also be run out of multi-purpose community centres) and youth friendly spaces/centres.

**Warrnambool offers a range of formal and informal sporting and active recreation opportunities for its residents. It has a generous provision of active and passive open spaces that encourage residents to engage in active sport and recreation activities to improve their health and wellbeing.**

Warrnambool Council is responsible for the management of sites being used by the community for sport and active recreation participation.

Council invests significant funds each year to maintain and renew community assets and commits capital funds to major projects which have a broader community benefit.

It should be noted that Council is a regional provider for many sports including hockey and soccer.

## Key sport and active recreation sites:

- AquaZone
- Warrnambool Stadium
- Warrnambool Foreshore
- Hopkins River / Merri River (paddling, rowing, skiing and fishing)
- Lake Pertobe
- Warrnambool Golf Course
- Warrnambool Gymnastics Centre
- Warrnambool Athletic Centre
- Albert Park Reserve
- Thunder Point Reserve

In addition to Council-owned venues, Warrnambool benefits from a diverse range of other facilities and services that play a significant role in supporting sport and active recreation.

**36**



**KEY SITES**

**138**



**INDIVIDUAL ASSETS**

**40+**



**SPORTS / ACTIVITIES**

Sport / activity	Existing Provision
AFL	9 ovals
Cricket	15 ovals
Lawn Bowls	9 greens
Soccer	4 pitches
Tennis	43 courts
Outdoor netball	23 courts
Basketball	5 courts
Hockey	1 synthetic pitch
Aquatics	1 centre
BMX	1 track
Skate boarding	1 skate park
Playgrounds	80 playgrounds
Walking, jogging, cycling	Extensive shared trail network

**Analysis of the adequacy of the existing provision of facilities for the 7 most popular organised sports was undertaken. The analysis addressed the adequacy of facilities to meet needs of the strategy timeline (to 2036) and future needs (to 2046).**

Facility provision benchmarks are one planning tool that can be used to assess the adequacy of the number of sporting facilities within a defined area, or to predict the number of sports facilities that might be required following population growth.

## Facility Provision Findings to 2046

Sport	WCC Preferred Field of Play to Population Ratio	Existing Provision	Forecast population 2036	Surplus (+) / deficit (-) in 2036	Forecast population 2046	Surplus (+) / deficit (-) in 2046
AFL	1:4,500	9 ovals	38,584	0	40,970	0
Cricket	1:4,000	15 ovals	38,584	+5	40,970	+5
Lawn Bowls	1:10,000	9 greens	38,584	+5	40,970	+5
Soccer	1:5,500	4 pitches	38,584	-3	40,970	-4
Tennis	1:2,000	43 courts	38,584	+24	40,970	+23
Netball	1:2,500	23 courts	38,584	+8	40,970	+7
Basketball	1:7,500	5 courts	38,584	0	40,970	-1

- Existing facility provision numbers do not include education or privately owned facilities used for community sport.
- Council's preferred provision ratios are the same used in the 2019 AWS.
- State of Warrnambool Report (2025) forecast population figures have been used in the above table.

## The sports facility analysis found:

- There is a shortfall of 3 soccer pitches to meet current demand, and this will increase to a shortfall of 4 pitches to meet projected demand by 2046. Important to note that 4 soccer pitches have been included in the East of Aberline PCP design considerations.
- There is adequate provision of AFL ovals to meet future demand. It is expected that participation increases in female and junior football will occur, however the current provision will cater to projected demand.
- There is a surplus of 5 cricket ovals to meet current and projected demand. Like AFL, it is expected that female and junior participation will increase, however the current provision caters to expected demand.
- Lawn Bowls has a surplus of 5 bowling greens to meet projected demand by 2046.
- There is currently a surplus of 24 tennis courts, however it is noted that 26 grass courts are only available for use on a seasonal basis. Tennis: Given the structured nature of tennis in Warrnambool, delivered through a mix of club and commercial programs, a dedicated needs assessment for tennis is recommended.



**It is important for Council to have a good understanding of the current and likely future use of sporting facilities for organised sport, to assist in future decision making, planning and management of its sports and recreation assets.**

An adequate level of facility provision is important to allow participation in sport and activities by the local community, and best use of existing facilities and sites.

Review of existing facility provision and sports participation levels reveals the following needs;

1. Demand for up to four additional soccer pitches by 2046,
2. Demand for flexible open spaces that provide for non-traditional sport and activities.
3. Planning is needed to ensure the indoor stadium can cater to future growth.

The facility provision and sports participation needs identified will help to inform the active open space facility provision in future Growth Area structure plans.

## **Growth Area Planning – Court Sports**

Growth area planning should ensure provision of multipurpose hard court facilities, including basketball courts suitable for year-round use, as well as spaces for unstructured active recreation in public open spaces. This will help address the current shortfall in facilities that support growing demand for informal and social participation.

**Netball:** There is currently a surplus of 8 courts to meet forecast demand to 2036, reducing slightly to 7 by 2046. However, this surplus is somewhat overstated, as league requirements (Hampden and Warrnambool & District Football Leagues) mandate netball courts at each AFL venue to host concurrent matches. With Warrnambool Stadium already providing 8 outdoor courts, additional courts at sports grounds are not required.

**Basketball:** There is a shortfall of courts to meet projected demand. While schools provide 10 courts, these have not been included in provision ratios due to restricted community access. Many are single-court venues unsuitable for competition needs. A needs assessment for basketball is therefore recommended.



**The community survey attracted a broad cross-section of participants. Almost half (42%) were aged between 40 and 59 years, while a further 32% were aged 20 to 39 years. 58% of respondents identified as female and 12% of live outside the City of Warrnambool.**

This profile provides valuable context for understanding the following perspectives and priorities reflected in the survey results.

## Infrastructure and Facilities

- Modernisation of ageing amenities across reserves, pavilions, and indoor facilities.
- Lighting upgrades to extend training and game capacity.
- Gender inclusive and universally accessible changerooms, toilets, and spectator areas.
- Surface improvements (drainage, turf quality, all-weather options, synthetic fields).
- More storage, shelter, and operational infrastructure.

## Access and Availability

- Greater indoor court capacity and equitable booking systems.
- Year-round, weather-resilient facilities for winter and emerging sports.
- Better connectivity between sport and recreation spaces via trails and transport.

**Note – further detail on survey findings are provided in the appendices section of this report.**

## Program and Participation Support

- Expand school-club pathways and junior entry-level programs.
- Support for diverse participation – women/girls, older adults, CALD communities, people with disabilities.
- Support growth in social and recreational formats alongside competitive sport.

## Sustainability and Collaboration

- Develop multi-sport hubs with shared resources and co-located services.
- Strengthen partnerships with community groups, and neighbouring councils.
- Build volunteer capacity and improve club governance and funding access.

The community survey conducted identified the following as the most popular activities of the 334 responses received.

1.	Walking	81% of responses
2.	Fitness/Gym	40% of responses
3.	Running	33% of responses
4.	Swimming	28% of responses
5.	Cycling	27% of responses
6.	Yoga/Pilates	17% of responses
7.	Surfing	11% of responses



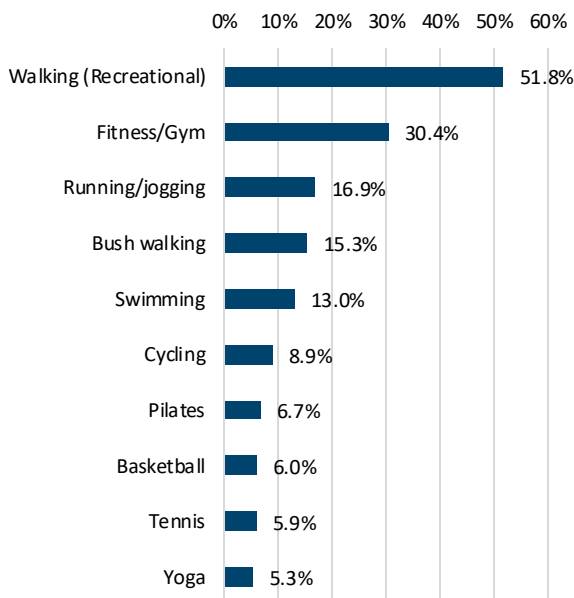
**Demand for activities is shaped by multiple factors, including program availability, facility quality and access, travel distance, cost, and broader demographic trends such as age, gender, and population growth. Historical patterns and future projections also inform demand.**

The Australian Government's AusPlay survey provides valuable data on national sport and physical activity participation, offering insights into these trends.

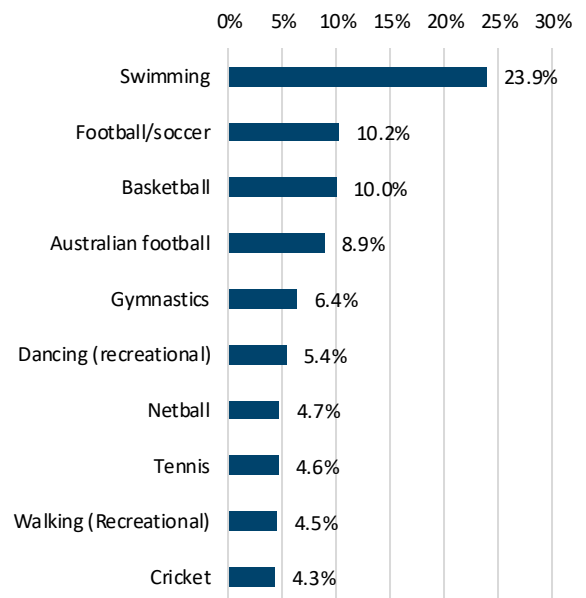
AusPlay 2024 data for Victoria aligns closely with Warrnambool community survey findings.

Among adults (aged 15+), walking (52%) and fitness/gym (38%) were the most popular activities, followed by running, bushwalking and swimming. For children (0–14 years), swimming led participation (24%), with football/soccer (10%), basketball (10%) and AFL (9%) also strong.

**AUSPLAY- TOP 10 ACTIVITIES 2024  
BY PARTICIPATION RATE (VICTORIA)  
ADULTS 15+**



**AUSPLAY TOP 10 ACTIVITIES 2024  
BY PARTICIPATION RATE (VICTORIA)  
0-14 YEARS**



## TRENDS SINCE 2022 - ADULTS

- Walking participation has increased
- Gym and jogging have decreased
- Pilates has jumped into the Top 10

## TRENDS SINCE 2022 - CHILDREN

- Soccer jumped from 5<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Karate has dropped out of the Top 10
- Walking is into the Top 10

**The Active Warrnambool Strategy 2025-2035 aims to remove barriers to participation by addressing provision gaps, enhancing facility capacity, strengthening clubs and activating the shared trail and open space network.**

Challenges and opportunities have been identified through research, data analysis, and community engagement. The themes outlined below will ensure alignment with Council's broader planning, policies and investment priorities.



- Securing funding for capital projects is challenging, with most projects unable to proceed without significant government investment.
- Strong and coordinated advocacy with the community, clubs, regional partners, and State Government is essential to securing the funding support required for priority projects.



- Need for better access to facilities, with a focus on people with disabilities, older adults and culturally diverse groups.
- A desire for more inclusive programs that support women, juniors and non-traditional participant groups.



- Concerns around ageing infrastructure, outdated amenities, and a mismatch between existing facility provision and user needs.
- Requests for modern, fit-for-purpose facility upgrades to meet sport-specific requirements and improve participant experience.



- Desire for sustainable facility design and operations (energy efficiency, shared use).
- Significant challenges around volunteer fatigue and club capacity to maintain or operate facilities effectively.



- Sporting clubs want clear strategic direction and guidance from Council on facility management, development and volunteer support.
- Strong calls for more structured support, especially around funding, planning and navigating processes.



- Improving pedestrian and transport connections between venues is considered important.
- Desire for more activation spaces and events to boost participation and community engagement.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES and ACTIONS

The following pages outline the objectives, actions, and target projects under each strategic priority. Together, these will guide Council's aspirations and decision making on future policy development and investment in sport and active recreation, addressing key gaps and challenges for Warrnambool over the next 10 years.

## VISION

## GET MOVING – ANY WAY YOU CAN

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION & ACTIVATION

Increase and activate participation opportunities, with a focus on reducing barriers to support people to move their way.

### WELCOMING PLACES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Develop and maintain inclusive, sustainable, and future ready facilities and open spaces that are safe, female-friendly, and accessible.

### PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Build strong and sustainable partnerships to maximise resources, support clubs and deliver shared community benefits.

### CAPABILITY & LEADERSHIP

Foster inclusive leadership, strong governance and community driven sport and recreation outcomes.

## INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION & ACTIVATION

**Goal: Increase and activate participation opportunities, with a focus on reducing barriers to support people to move their way.**

NO.	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	YEAR 1-3	YEAR 4-6	YEAR 7-10
1.1	Explore new and flexible ways to deliver physical activity opportunities to maximise participation.	Promote sport and active recreation by increasing community awareness and understanding of local opportunities.	●		
1.2	Reduce barriers to participation in physical activity by young people, women and girls, people with disabilities, gender diverse and older adults.	Develop campaigns and initiatives to provide opportunities for priority groups to be active.	●	●	●
1.3	Encourage culturally safe and female friendly participation across all ages and stages of life.	Guide the provision of informal and emerging recreation opportunities to meet evolving community needs.	●	●	
1.4	Explore ways to activate sporting and open spaces for informal and social recreation.	Build awareness of informal, unstructured physical activity opportunities at sporting and open spaces.		●	

## WELCOMING PLACES & INFRASTRUCTURE

**Goal: Develop and maintain inclusive, sustainable, and future ready facilities and open spaces that are safe, female-friendly, and accessible.**

NO.	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	YEAR 1-3	YEAR 4-6	YEAR 7-10
2.1	Renew and upgrade sport and recreation infrastructure to be safe, compliant, accessible, functional and fit for purpose.	Ensure sport and recreation facilities are inclusive, accessible and female friendly.	●	●	●
2.2	Provide diverse physical activity opportunities and infrastructure that support the needs of the community.	Ensure a variety of infrastructure is provided in open space to meet the needs of the community to be active.		●	
2.3	Maximise the use of existing facilities and prioritise flexible use to create new opportunities to participate.	Establish opportunities for additional recreation use of existing facilities.	●	●	●
2.4	Support the delivery and connection of recreation trail network and active transport opportunities	Continue to develop the off-road trail network and connection of active transport routes.	●	●	●



## PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

**Goal: Build strong and sustainable partnerships to maximise resources, support clubs and deliver shared community benefits.**

NO.	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	YEAR 1-3	YEAR 4-6	YEAR 7-10
3.1	Strengthen partnerships across Council, health providers, peak bodies and government to strengthen and grow physical activity opportunities.	Increase awareness and understanding of the importance of being physically active including unstructured recreation.		●	
3.2	Strengthen partnerships with culturally diverse communities who can champion sport and physical activity and inform groups about clubs, programs and facilities.	Build partnerships to grow participation for the community to be active.	●		
3.3	Support clubs and associations to become more sustainable, inclusive and volunteer-friendly to provide accessible participation opportunities for the community.	Continue to support South West Sport and club development opportunities.		●	
3.4	Leverage outcomes through regional partnership frameworks to deliver shared goals on reducing barriers to participation.	Continue to work with and support South West Sport initiatives and programs.	●	●	●

## CAPABILITY & LEADERSHIP

**Goal: Foster inclusive leadership, strong governance and community driven sport and recreation outcomes.**

NO.	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	YEAR 1-3	YEAR 4-6	YEAR 7-10
4.1	Continue to integrate sport and recreation needs and developments into Council's planning processes.	Develop and implement policies, processes and tools to ensure sustainable development, management, operation of sport and recreation participation initiatives, services and infrastructure.	●		
4.2	Build a community that values the importance of physical activity.	Drive change and lead community action with initiatives, services and programs in line with Healthy Warrnambool.	●		
4.3	Build club and association capacity in gender equitable access and use practises	Support clubs and groups to develop, endorse and implement diversity, gender equity and inclusion policies and strategies.	●	●	●
4.4	Strengthen equity and sustainability in sport and recreation through inclusive funding and facility partnerships.	Support the alignment of equity and sustainability of clubs through Council's grant funding programs.	●		

# APPENDICES

## Sports Road Map

**Council will prioritise funding of facilities that maximise participation, enhances the suitability for women and girls and provides opportunities for residents to be more active ensuring long term sustainability.** This also includes maximising the flexibility of use through inclusive design which promotes equity in access and use by the whole community, including people of varying ages, interests, abilities and culture.

The Sports Road Map provides the direction and guidance for priority projects to deliver sporting and participation outcomes across the city to optimise the use and increase the capacity of existing facilities. **The road map is intentional and deliberate and will inform Council's advocacy and advice to government on priority projects that are eligible under existing funding grants and streams.**

Council is committed to providing equitable access and use of community level sporting infrastructure under State and Federal Government legislation. The Fair Access Policy Roadmap has guided the development of Council's Fair Access and Use Policy and Action Plan.

The sports road map is to be reviewed annually, alongside Council's budget process. This review process will consider the outcomes of planning and funding processes and ensure that any emerging community and industry trends/demands, as well as external funding opportunities and Council funding and resourcing capacity, are assessed and priority projects remain relevant throughout the timeline.

## Facility Standards

Council will refer to the guidelines outlined by each State or National Sporting Association Facility Guidelines as required, with an aim to achieve the minimum facility provision. However, it is acknowledged that size, budget, use and other considerations may impact the ability to achieve minimum standard.

## Financial Contributions

The delivery of projects requires a partnership approach that includes Council, government funding, and local club contributions. All projects are expensive and cannot be delivered without government and club support. Council's role is to advocate to government to ensure projects are eligible under existing funding grants and streams. Council is currently developing a Capital Contributions Policy which will inform the club financial contribution required.

## Other Council Strategies

Council acknowledges that the Community Infrastructure Strategy, Open Space Strategy and Asset Management Plan pick up other priority projects and improvement works additional to the Active Warrnambool Strategy which focuses on site-specific facility gaps at sporting reserves.



## Sports Road Map Priority List

The road map identifies site-specific projects to help inform Council's long-term financial planning, as well providing a guide to sporting clubs on the priority order.

The projects are prioritised according to the State of Play infrastructure planning priority list, developed according to key facility gaps and infrastructure rating scorecard based on safety, female friendly, accessibility, condition and provision to facility hierarchy level sporting standards.

The sports road map will sequence projects through planning and concept development in one year, detailed design development and construction in the following year. This process provides a methodical and planned approach to project delivery. **Projects are subject to available government funding programs, Council's annual budget process and club contributions.**

PRIORITY ORDER	Sports Lighting Upgrades	Change Room Upgrades	Sports Oval Upgrades
1	Davidson Oval [power upgrade, oval & court competition LED]	Dennington Recreation Reserve [netball change rooms]	Friendly Societies Park [oval works & velodrome removal]
2	Walter Oval [oval & court competition LED]	Bushfield Recreation Reserve [player/umpire change rooms]	Allansford Recreation Reserve [irrigation, drainage]
3	Allansford Recreation Reserve [oval competition LED]	Merrivale Recreation Reserve [player/umpire change rooms]	
4	Dennington Recreation Reserve [oval competition LED]	Davidson Oval [player/umpire change rooms]	
5	Mack Oval [oval & netball competition LED]	Walter Oval [player/umpire change rooms]	
6		Mack Oval [player change rooms]	
7		Allansford Recreation Reserve [player/umpire change rooms]	

Table notes.

1. Davidson and Walter Oval change room upgrades are rated as very poor and poor (refer sports ground scorecard). The non-compliant sports lighting for AFL and netball is deemed a higher priority.

2. Mack Oval change room upgrade is rated as poor (refer sports ground scorecard). The non-compliant sports lighting for AFL is deemed a higher priority. There is also complexities with the site and building footprint constraints to be considered.

3. It is recommended at Harris Street Reserve that a site investigation and surface assessment is undertaken as a priority to determine options and long-term viability.



# Sports Road Map

## Sports Ground Rating Scorecard

SPORTS GROUND RATING SCORECARD 2025

Reserve	Tenants	Female Participation	Oval Change Rooms & Amenities	Umpire Change Facilities	Playing Surface Condition	Sports Field Lighting Rating	Netball Change Rooms Rating	Netball Lighting Rating	Cricket Training Nets Condition	TOTAL SCORE	HIERARCHY %	Sports Field Lighting (avg lux)	Netball Court Lighting (avg lux)	Bar/Seat Wicket	Turf Wicket Condition	Automatic Irrigation	Reserve Fencing	Oval Boundary Fence
Harris Street Reserve	Warrnambool Wolves Football Club, Mervise Cricket Club, Warrnambool Dog Training School	Snr & Jnr Soccer & Cricket	3	3	2	5				13	37%	130 & 135		Hard				3
Brerly Recreation Reserve (turf & hard)	Warrnambool Rangers Football Club, Warrnambool Cricket Club	Snr & Jnr Soccer & Cricket			5	5			5	15	43%	265		Turf & Hard	2	5		5
Walter Oval	South Rovers Football Netball Club	Snr & Jnr Netball	2	2	4	1	3	1	2	15	43%	13	45	Turf	3	5		3
Jones Oval			4	4	4				4	16	46%			Turf				4
Jetty Flat Reserve	Warrnambool BMX Club, Russell's Creek Cricket Club	Snr & Jnr Cricket	5	5	4				4	18	51%			Turf	4			5
Mack Oval	Russell's Creek Football Netball Club, Russell's Creek Cricket Club	Snr & Jnr Netball	2	2	4	4	3	4		19	54%	73	166	Hard		5		3
Davidson Oval	Old Collegians Football Netball Club, West Warrnambool Cricket Club	Snr & Jnr Netball	1	1	4	1	4	4	5	20	57%	10	170	Turf	3	5	4	3
Friendlies Societies Park	South Warrnambool Football Netball Club	Snr & Jnr Netball & AFL, All Abilities AFL	5	4	1	5	4	5		24	69%	133	261 & 216				4	1
Bushfield Recreation Reserve	North Warrnambool Football Netball Club, North Warrnambool Cricket Club	Snr & Jnr Netball, AFL & Cricket	4	3	4	4	4	5	1	25	71%	75	220 & 220	Hard			4	4
Dennington Recreation Reserve (turf & hard)	Dennington Football Netball Club, Dennington Cricket Club	Snr & Jnr Netball	5	5	4	1		5	5	25	71%	19	218	Turf & Hard	1		2	3
Alansford Recreation Reserve (turf & hard)	Alansford Football Netball Club, Alansford Pannure Cricket Club	Snr & Jnr Netball	3	3	4	1	5	5	5	26	74%	10	200 & 200	Turf & Hard	5		4	5
Mervise Recreation Reserve	Mervise Football Netball Club, Mervise Cricket Club	Snr & Jnr Netball	2	2	3	5	5	5	4	26	74%	125	246	Turf	4	3	4	3
Reid Oval	Warrnambool Football Netball Club, Nestles Cricket Club, Warrnambool District Football Umpires	Snr & Jnr Netball & AFL	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	35	100%	300	285 & 285	Turf	5	5	4	5

### Oval Change & Umpire Rooms Rating

Very Poor	Davidson Oval
Poor	Mack Oval
Poor	Walter Oval
Poor	Mervise Recreation Reserve
Fair	Harris Street Reserve
Fair	Alansford Recreation Reserve
Good	Bushfield Recreation Reserve

### Netball Facilities Rating

No Facility	Dennington Recreation Reserve
Fair	Mack Oval
Fair	Walter Oval

### Sports Field Lighting Rating

Very Poor	Davidson Oval
Very Poor	Walter Oval
Very Poor	Alansford Recreation Reserve AFL oval
Very Poor	Dennington Recreation Reserve AFL oval
Good	Mack Oval

### Netball Lighting Rating

Very Poor	Walter Oval
Good	Mack Oval
Good	Davidson Oval

### Condition Rating Scale

Very Poor	1	Urgent renewal or replacement is needed
Poor	2	Renewal or replacement required
Fair	3	Significant maintenance may be needed
Good	4	Minor maintenance may be required
Very Good	5	No work required, or only routine maintenance is needed
Total Possible Score		25

In May 2025, Council released a community survey to better understand residents' active lifestyle preferences and identify ways Council can support greater participation in sport and active recreation. A total of 334 responses were received, providing valuable insights for the Active Warrnambool Strategy 2025 to 2035. A breakdown of the responses is outlined below.

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## Physical activity frequency

- 23% engage in 30+ minutes of activity 7 days/week
- Only 1.6% reported no activity
- 37% do 3–5 hours per week
- 30% do 6–8 hours per week

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## Motivations for physical activity

- Physical health/fitness (82%)
- Fun/enjoyment (59%)
- Mental health (54%)
- Social reasons (42%)
- Being outdoors (40%)

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## Barriers to physical activity

- Not enough time (50%)
- Lack of facilities/clubs nearby (28%)
- Childcare responsibilities (20%)
- Affordability (20%)
- Poor health/injury (16%)

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## Active recreation participation preferences (non-organised)

- Walking (81%)
- Gym/Fitness (41%)
- Running, Swimming, Cycling also popular

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## Sport participation preferences (organised)

### Top sports

- Swimming, Cycling, Netball, AFL
- 26% of respondents reported no sport or activity preferences

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## Clubs and roles

- 67% are members of a sports club
- Participant (55%), Volunteer (51%), Committee member (26%)

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## Children's sport participation

### Top sports

- Swimming
- AFL
- Basketball
- Netball
- Soccer

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## Most used facilities

- Paths/trails
- Parks/open spaces
- Beach and sports grounds

## Least used facilities

- Bowling greens
  - Skate/BMX parks
-

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## Facility Ratings - Good or Excellent

- Paths and trails (59%)
- Parks and open spaces (66%)
- Playgrounds (66%)

## Facility Ratings - Less Favourable

- Indoor sports facilities and affordability

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## Community perceptions

- 81% strongly agree that active recreation is vital for health

## Mixed views on:

- Affordability (only 36% agree it is affordable)
- Opportunities for older adults, young people, and women/girls
- Only 43% agree that facilities meet their needs

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## Suggestions for supporting participation opportunities

- More inclusive and affordable facilities
  - Improved maintenance
  - Access to trails and sports grounds
  - Greater support for non-competitive activities
  - Facilities for diverse age groups and abilities
- 

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## Suggested improvements to sport and recreation assets (# of responses)

• Improved access/parking	56
• More green/public spaces	44
• Better maintenance	43
• Funding and investment	27
• Facilities for all abilities	22
• Casual/social sport options	21
• Dog-friendly spaces	19
• Inclusive facilities	14
• More facilities	14
• Improved beach access	1

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