

Leisure Facilities ***Strategy Plan***

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u>	i-vi
<u>PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS</u>	vi - xiv
SECTION ONE PROJECT OVERVIEW	1
1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.2 KEY PROJECT OUTCOMES.....	1
1.3 PROJECT METHODOLOGY.....	1
1.4 PROJECT REPORT SCOPING.....	2
SECTION TWO PROJECT AREA OVERVIEW FINDINGS	3
2.1 INTRODUCTION	3
2.2 PROJECT AREA DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE (Refer Vol 1: Technical Paper No.2: Section 2.2)	3
2.2.1 Population Distribution	4
2.2.2 Leisure Spending Patterns	4
2.3 REGIONAL FACILITY REVIEW (Refer Vol 1: Technical Paper No 3: Section 3.5).....	5
2.3.1 Regional Facility Use.....	5
2.3.2 Local Facility Usage	6
2.3.3 Regional Facility Distribution (<i>Refer Vol 1: Technical Paper 1: Section 1.2</i>).....	7
SECTION THREE LEISURE FACILITIES OVERVIEW	10
3.1 INTRODUCTION	10
3.2 REVIEW OF MAJOR AQUATIC FACILITIES.....	10
3.2.1 Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre (<i>Refer Vol. 1 Technical Paper 1 Section 1.1.1</i>)	12
3.2.2 Kew Recreation Centre (<i>Vol. 1. Technical Paper 1 Section 1.1.2</i>).....	11
3.2.3 Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre (<i>Vol. 1. Technical Paper No. 1 Section 1.1.3</i>)	15
3.2.4 Northern Pool, Balwyn (<i>Refer Vol. 1. Technical Paper 1 Section 1.1.5</i>).....	14
3.2.5 Central Pool (<i>Refer Vol. 1: Technical Paper 1: Section 1.1.10</i>).....	15
3.3 MAIN STADIUM FACILITIES.....	16
3.3.1 Balwyn Leisure Centre (<i>Refer Vol 1. Technical Paper No. 1 Section 1.1.4</i>).....	16
3.3.2 Swinburne Secondary College Recreation Centre (<i>Refer Vol.1: Technical Paper 1 Section 1.1.6</i>).....	17

3.3.3	Hawthorn Secondary College Recreation Centre (<i>Refer Vol. 1: Technical Paper No. 1 Section 1.1.9</i>).....	18
3.4	OTHER MAIN RECREATION FACILITIES	19
3.4.1	Boroondara Freeway Golf Course (<i>Refer Vol.1: Technical Paper No. 1 Section 1.1.7</i>)	22
3.4.2	Boroondara Tennis Centre (<i>Refer Vol.1: Technical Paper No. 1 Section 1.1.8</i>).....	20
3.5	REVIEW OF COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD CENTRES (Refer Vol 1: Technical Paper 1:Section 1.4)	21
3.5.1	Ashburn Grove Neighbourhood Centre, Ashburn Grove, Ashburton	21
3.5.2	Ashburton Community Centre, 160 High Street, Ashburton.....	21
3.5.3	Balwyn Community Centre, 412 Whitehorse Road, Balwyn.....	22
3.5.4	Bowen Street Family Centre, 102 Bowen Street, South Camberwell.....	22
3.5.5	Camberwell Community Centre, 33 Fairholm Grove, Camberwell and 405 Camberwell Road, Camberwell.	22
3.5.6	Canterbury Neighbourhood Centre, Corner Canterbury and Balwyn Road, Canterbury	22
3.5.7	Craig Family Centre, 7 Samarinda Avenue, Ashburton.....	23
3.5.8	Hawthorn Community House, 39 William Street, Hawthorn and 32 Henry Street, Hawthorn	23
3.5.9	Kew Community House, 6-12 Derby Street, Kew.....	23
3.5.10	Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre, Union Road, Surrey Hills	23
3.6	MAIN RECREATION FACILITY PROVISION	24
3.6.1	Regional Facility Comparison.....	29
SECTION FOUR MARKET RESEARCH FINDINGS		31
4.1	INTRODUCTION	31
4.2	LEISURE FACILITY AND PARTICIPATION TRENDS	31
4.3	PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS (Refer Vol 1: Appendix 5).....	33
4.4	SCHOOL SURVEYS (Refer Vol 1: Technical Paper 3 Section 3.3).....	34
4.5	CLUBS SURVEY (Refer Vol 1: Technical Paper 3 Section 3.6).....	34
4.6	RESIDENTS HOUSEHOLD SURVEY (Refer Vol 1: Technical Paper No. 3 Section 3.5).	34
4.7	PUBLIC FORUMS.....	41
SECTION FIVE LEISURE FACILITIES		43
STRATEGY OPTIONS		43
AND RECOMMENDATIONS		43
5.1	INTRODUCTION	43
5.2	FUTURE TRENDS AFFECTING THE LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY	43

5.3	LEISURE FACILITY STRATEGY FRAMEWORKS.....	45
5.3.1	Leisure Facility Development Principles	46
5.3.2	Leisure Facilities Development Principles Recommendation.....	48
5.4	PRIORITISATION OF FACILITY CAPITAL ASSISTANCE	48
5.4.1	Leisure Facilities Contribution Schedules.....	49
5.4.2	Leisure Facilities Priority Criteria Rating System.....	50
5.4.3	Leisure Facility Priority Criteria Point Score Rating System Recommendations.....	51
5.5	AQUATIC FACILITIES STRATEGY.....	51
5.5.1	Business Performance 1995/96	52
5.5.2	Business Trends	52
5.5.3	Market Research Findings	53
5.5.4	Centre Reviews and Strategy Directions	53
5.6	INDOOR STADIUMS.....	67
5.6.1	Balwyn Leisure Centre	71
5.7	RESERVES AND SPORTS GROUNDS.....	72
5.7.1	Major Outdoor Sporting Venues	74
5.7.2	Reserves and Sports Grounds Recommendations.....	75
5.8	PLAYGROUNDS.....	76
5.9	COMMUNITY CENTRES/NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES.....	78
5.10	FREE WAY GOLF COURSE.....	82
5.11	BOROONDARA TENNIS CENTRE.....	85
5.12	BOWLING CLUBS	87
5.13	TENNIS CLUBS.....	88
5.14	HALLS.....	90
5.15	OPEN SPACE/LINEAR TRAILS.....	91
5.15.1	Key Study Findings.....	91
5.16	LEISURE FACILITIES INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES	95
5.17	ACCESS TO RECREATION FACILITIES	97

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Boroondara Leisure Facilities Strategy Plan 1997 provides a guide to the current and future provision of sporting and recreational facilities to meet local and the broader communities leisure needs and aspirations.

The study was conducted between November 1996 and June 1997 and provides information about the City of Boroondara's residents leisure facility needs and likely demands for the next five years. Significant community, club and Council facility input has been interwoven into the projects key issues and findings. The studies findings are supported through a range of consultation and market research processes including:

- Leisure participation survey (completed by 610 residents)
- School facilities survey (completed by 38 schools)
- Public forums (5 local area forums and three service specific forums held)
- Key informant interviews (involving large range of Associations and clubs)
- Club surveys (Analysis involves 90 clubs)
- Public submissions (14 lodged with project)

The leisure facility strategy plan is presented in two volumes as follows:

- **Volume One: Technical Papers**

Covers working papers on the project area facilities, demographic review, market research and review of previous research

- **Volume Two: The Strategy**

Covers all research findings, key issues, strategy directions and facility recommendations.

The main identified trends and findings of the study are summarised as follows:

(i) **Existing Facility Provision**

The City of Boroondara has an extensive range of leisure facilities including:

INDOOR FACILITIES

- Three major aquatic & leisure centres
- Three indoor stadiums
- One outdoor swimming pool
- Forty nine community halls
- Eighteen scout halls
- Ten community/neighbourhood centres
- Eight commercial gyms

OUTDOOR FACILITIES

- One hundred and nine playgrounds
- Fifty outdoor sports grounds
- Thirty one tennis clubs
- Seventeen bowling clubs
- One public golf course

(ii) Leisure Trends

The following leisure trends were identified from analysis of the project research:

- The City of Boroondara's population is ageing and creating a slow but steady change in demand from active outdoor areas to multi-use indoor areas.
- The City has a high number of people in full time work and the average weekly hours worked by these people is increasing, resulting for some in less available non-committed time for recreation.
- The City's household weekly income levels are high for most residential areas indicating many residents have a continued ability to allocate discretionary spending on use of recreation facilities.
- Social pattern changes are evident for many residents with people becoming more health conscious and for example recorded decreases in smoking, cardiac disease and extended exposure to sunlight.
- Increased concern for conservation and environmental issues have led to a very high value placed on open space, parkland and natural attractions by residents.
- Noticeable decreases in voluntary support for clubs and organisations with many clubs reporting reduced numbers of people prepared to do voluntary work.

(iii) Participation Trends

The following participation trends were identified from the analysis of project research:

- Boroondara residents are extremely active with local market research highlighting that 88% of randomly sampled residents had participated in a recreation activity in the past 12 months. This rate is 18% above national participation figures (1993).
- Most people recreate close to home, at infrequent times and are involved in non-organised, non-competitive activities. Recent ABS studies show that people spend up to 190 minutes a day involved in passive leisure (non-active such as reading, TV, videos, computers etc), up to 100 minutes per day socialising or being entertained and up to 50 minutes per day involved in active leisure (sport, exercise, travel, games, hobbies).
- Approximately (25%) of activities residents are involved in could be regarded as sporting activities. This participation rate is slightly less than the Victorian Average which saw (29%) of people are involved in competitive sport (1995).
- Popularity of an activity changes with age and therefore Council's range of facilities need to be flexible and multipurpose to respond to changes in popularity or participation.
- Participation in leisure activity fluctuates by age and area of residence. The most active sectors of the City were Glen Iris (+10% above City average), Balwyn and Canterbury

(+5%) and Surrey Hills and Kew (+3%). The most active age ranges and highest users of recreation facilities, were people aged 30 to 59 years.

- Residents are involved in an extremely broad range of activities with 125 different activities nominated indicating leisure is a very important aspect of residents lifestyle. The most popular current and future aspired activities by adults were:

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

- Casual walking
- Indoor swimming
- Golf
- Swimming outdoors
- Tennis
- Basketball

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

- Indoor swimming
- Golf
- Tennis
- Bike riding
- Bush walking
- Visiting gardens

- The most popular current activities and future aspired activities by children were:

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

6 months to 5yrs

- Using playgrounds
- Indoor swimming
- Casual walking
- Libraries
- Picnics

5yrs to 10yrs

- Indoor swimming
- Using playgrounds
- Bike riding
- Tennis
- Basketball

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

6 months to 5yrs

- Using playgrounds
- Indoor swimming
- Casual walking
- Libraries
- Picnics

5yrs to 10yrs

- Indoor swimming
- Using playgrounds
- Bike riding
- Basketball
- Libraries

(iv) Future Priorities

Survey respondents rated current services highly with Parks and Gardens (75.6% good rating), Library Services (68.4% good rating) and Indoor Swimming and Leisure Centres (56.9% good rating). Poor ratings were received for entertainment activities (24.4% poor rating), festivals/celebrations (23.9% poor rating) and Indoor Sport Facilities (22.3% poor rating).

- The top five future facility priorities were:
 - Libraries
 - Parks and gardens
 - Walking paths/trails
 - Indoor pools
 - Health and fitness centres
- The most used regional and local recreation facilities by residents were:

REGIONAL FACILITIES

- Yarra Bend and river area
- Bike path networks
- Kew Recreation Centre
- Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre

LOCAL FACILITIES

- Closest library
- Closest walking paths
- Closest indoor pools

- Survey residents indicated the future highest priority groups who required assistance to recreate were:
 - People restricted to their homes
 - Older adults
 - People with disabilities
 - Youth.
- The main leisure features and constraints identified in the City were:

LEISURE FEATURES

- Parks and gardens
- Walking paths
- Good libraries
- Bike paths

LEISURE CONSTRAINTS

- Cost of activities
- Poor or lack of childrens playgrounds
- Unrestrained dogs
- Safety issues in public parks

- Survey respondents supported:
 - Recycle and/or improve existing facilities
 - Greater sharing and joint use of facilities
 - Providing concessions for children and special needs groups using Council Recreation facilities
 - Expansion of network of cycle and walking paths in the City
 - Facility use should be maximised before any new facility development is considered.

(v) Leisure Facilities Strategy Framework

The leisure strategy identifies key issues and future strategy directions for Councils major and minor leisure facilities. The detailed findings and recommendations are listed in section five of this report. The main trends affecting the strategy recommendations are:

- There is a slow reduction in participation in competitive and traditional sports, with people becoming increasingly unwilling to commit themselves to play ‘for a whole season’ or available to play and train a number of days a week.
- Due to time constraints, people are cutting back some of their leisure and recreation activities and are more demanding about those which remain. To remain viable, the quality of facilities, programs and services will have to continually improve.
- There will be a greater demand for indoor facilities (available all year/every day) and higher quality outdoor playing surfaces.
- With increased age longevity and larger numbers of fit, healthy older people, the demand for exercise, and for conveniently located facilities will increase.
- Because of their reliance on young players, many sports will grow more slowly than the adult population as a whole.
- With ongoing Government economic constraints and limited capital and operational budgets many new sports facilities may have to be joint venture arrangements between private and public sectors and sports clubs.

- Sports clubs dependent on voluntary labour and support will be required to provide greater incentives and better management to attract volunteers.
- The costs to sports clubs of equipping, insuring and managing players and administering games will continue to increase.
- The reduction in commitment to curriculum based school sports in state schools, the amalgamation of schools and the sale of school properties will have impacts on the local availability of school sports facilities while also discouraging public sector investment in new facilities at schools.
- Contracting of facility management has greatly improved industry services and management systems. Management is now regarded as more accountable to the owner and user of the facility.
- Due to restricted rate and other revenue bases, local Councils, will have to encourage greater private investment in leisure facilities and services. This may be achieved by a mix of rate concessions, payback loans, management rights in return for investment, provision of land and planning concessions.
- Recreation facilities will be increasingly targeted towards paying customers that attend programs or become members to ensure higher frequency of visitations and spends per visit.
- Facility provision is changing from single-purpose to multi-purpose. A great deal of infrastructure expenditure is now being directed to the development of larger public and private complexes providing aquatic, health, fitness and indoor sports facilities because of the higher utilisation which can be achieved. There is less emphasis on the development of traditional single purpose outdoor sports facilities.
- More flexible designs are being created and there is a growing expectation that facilities will need to be renovated/upgraded on a periodic basis. There is a realisation that facilities have a “**customer interest life-span**” which is much less than the facility life-span. There has been a significant improvement in the design of leisure facilities with more care being given to improved materials, management and cost control issues and integrated planning approaches.
- There is a growing emphasis in the public sector on managing facilities to be more sensitive to the needs of customers and more accountable in the areas of service quality and cost.
- The planning process for new facilities has improved significantly with the conduct of effective feasibility studies being the norm. These studies have generally included management/marketing/financial plans with demand projections based on sophisticated survey data.
- Internal management teams will be expected to face increasing pressure of competition from private operators and not for profit competitors in second round contract tenders.

- There has been considerable improvement in the management of leisure facilities, with increased expectations of managers to produce better financial outcomes and generate higher attendances. Public sector facility managers now need higher skill levels, face broader roles, need access to better training and professional networks and improved financial reporting systems.
- As competition increases there will be an increased emphasis on programming and target marketing based on adopting consumer driven strategies and performance evaluation techniques. This indicates a greater resourcing of local area planning, knowing who are your customers and how to attract them.

(vi) Leisure Facilities Strategy Plan Recommendations

The strategy recommendations have been developed under an extensive array of service headings. A summary of the project recommendations and identified priority time frames are detailed in the following summary tables. Detailed key issues for each service area is listed in section five of this report:

**CITY OF BOROONDARA
LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

SERVICE AREA RECOMMENDATION	VOL TWO PAGE NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	TIME FRAME		
			High (1 yr)	Medium (2 - 3 yrs)	Low (3 - 5 yrs)
Leisure Facilities Development Principles (Section 5.3 and 5.4)	48	1. That Council adopt the Leisure Facilities Development Principles listed in Volume 2 Section 5.3.1 as criteria for prioritising facility projects.	✓		
Leisure Facilities Assistance Schemes (Section 5.4)	51	1. That Council adopt, in principle, the joint contribution schedules and priority grant scheme point score as detailed in Tables 5.1 and 5.2.	✓		
	51	2. That Council form an integrated planning team involving relevant officers, to review, modify and recommend final contribution schedules and grant point score schemes. This review to be completed by late 1997 to enable new scheme guidelines to be adopted and publicised.	✓		
Aquatic Facilities Maintenance And Capital Upgrade of Facilities	55	1. That Council adopt service standards that give consideration to amenity, community needs and financial performance for future capital upgrade and maintenance.	✓		
	55	2. That Council establish clear Asset Management systems with maintenance schedules for ongoing 5 year plans.	✓		
	55	3. That Council involve Centre Management in developing the plans and report back by the end of 1997.	✓		

SERVICE AREA RECOMMENDATION	VOL TWO PAGE NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	TIME FRAME		
			High (1 yr)	Medium (2 - 3 yrs)	Low (3 - 5 yrs)
Kew Recreation Centre (Section 5.5.4.2)	57	1. That Council allocate \$30,000 in the 1998/99 budget to fund a masterplan and feasibility review to develop a long term facility development for the Centre. The review should consolidate and prioritise future conceptual layouts for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •New entry/food/beverage area •New lap/activity pool •Enlarged toddlers/shallow water areas •New change/amenities to service new activity area •New plant rooms to service new activity area. 	✓		
	57	2. That Council consider the findings of the masterplan/feasibility review and the recommendations from the maintenance and capital upgrade review (see section 5.5.4.1) and set up a 1 st stage works and funding schedule to develop new entry foyer/food and beverage area.		✓	
	57	3. If Council cannot resource the required capital works recommended in the masterplan/feasibility study then consideration should be given to attracting a commercial investor to fund the food and beverage areas in return for operational rights. The timing of such an investment could be done in the next management contract period and linked to management rights.		✓	
	58	1. Any redevelopment and upgrade of aquatic facilities at Northern Pool will have a negative effect on Kew business and attendances. Alternatively any future decision concerning Northern Pool should be linked to Kew Recreation Centre future plans.		✓	
Ashburton Pool And Recreation Centre (Section 5.5.4.3)	59	1. That Infrastructure Services review the water play equipment and determine its lifespan before replacement is required.		✓	
	59	2. That Council allocate \$15,000 in the 1998/99 budget to develop concepts and costings for redevelopment of the water play area.		✓	
	59	3. That an area of 50m x 50m behind the existing stadium be reserved for possible future Centre extensions (i.e. no outdoor reserve developments be approved within this reserved zone).			✓

SERVICE AREA RECOMMENDATION	VOL TWO PAGE NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	TIME FRAME		
			High (1 yr)	Medium (2 - 3 yrs)	Low (3 - 5 yrs)
	60	1. That Infrastructure Services develop an annual maintenance schedule and regularly monitor Centre maintenance (to ensure high wear and tear areas are continually refurbished) and the Centre is presented, at all times, with high quality finishes and fittings.	✓		
	60	2. That Council provide funds in the 1998/99 budget to increase outdoor shade areas surrounding the outdoor pool.	✓		
Hawthorn Aquatic And Leisure Centre (Section 5.5.4.4)	62	1. That a further detailed operation and financial review be carried out to review business performance targets for each Centre component. The review to identify income, attendance and expenditure break-ups for each area to assist with determining main priorities for business development. The results of this review to be used by Leisure and Cultural Services staff to negotiate business plan targets for future operating years.	✓		
	62	2. That Leisure and Cultural Services staff be endorsed to work with Victorian Water Polo to develop a new business plan, directly aimed at them attracting more users to the pool.	✓		
	62	3. That Leisure and Cultural Services staff in conjunction with Centre Management identify current Swinburne University students and staff use of facilities.		✓	
	62	4. That Leisure and Cultural Services staff complete discussions with Swinburne University and Centre Management about potential recreation facility needs and possible new partnership arrangements to make greater use of the Centre.		✓	
	62	5. That discussions be held with Victorian Water Polo and the YMCA about possible lease/management contract changes with the aim of putting in place one management contract at the Centre prior to or on expiry of the current lease.		✓	
Northern Pool (Section 5.5.4.5)	65	1. That Council undertake a detailed technical and physical review of the pool. This review to be completed by the end of 1997	✓		
	65	2. That Council undertake detailed market research (customer surveys) on users of the pool for the 1997/98 season.	✓		
	65	3. That leisure and culture staff investigate and identify alternative user groups and potential organisations to be involved in discussions		✓	

SERVICE AREA RECOMMENDATION	VOL TWO PAGE NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	TIME FRAME		
			High (1 yr)	Medium (2 - 3 yrs)	Low (3 - 5 yrs)
		about the future of Northern Pool.			
	65	4. That Council monitor the business performance of the pool in 1997/98 and review its future operation in line with all report findings, by June 1998.	✓		
Central Pool (Section 5.5.4.6)	66	1. That the Consultants endorse Council's decision that the pool should not be reopened for public use.	✓		
	66	2. That Council undertake a technical and physical review of the Central Pool by the end of 1997 to identify the state of facilities	✓		
	66	3. Following completion of the technical review, Leisure and Cultural Services staff enter into discussions on Camberwell High School's viability of undertaking maintenance and upgrading for the Centre and report back to Council with a view to longer term leasing arrangements.	✓		
Indoor Stadium Strategy (Section 5.6)	70	1. That Council recognises the need for a regional four-court indoor sport complex to service the City of Boroondara.	✓		
	70	2. That Leisure and Cultural Services staff complete discussions with basketball, netball, badminton and volleyball Associations to identify the level of co- operation in developing a multi-use stadium.	✓		
	70	3. That Council complete discussions with representatives from the City of Stonnington, City of Yarra and City Glen Eira to identify any proposals for indoor stadiums they are considering, and also their support for a joint regional project.	✓		
	70	4. That Infrastructure Services and Strategic Planning and Leisure and Cultural Services form a review group to complete site investigations on nominated potential sites or other sites identified during the review. This group to recommend a short list of sites for future detailed feasibility by February, 1998.	✓		
	71	1. That Leisure and Cultural Services complete discussions with State Sporting Associations to identify any proposed stadiums in the region and their likely support for a regional project by April, 1998.	✓		
	71	2. That Leisure and Cultural Services complete a summary report of all recommendation findings and present a final report on viability, potential partners and potential sites by June, 1998.	✓		

SERVICE AREA RECOMMENDATION	VOL TWO PAGE NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	TIME FRAME		
			High (1 yr)	Medium (2 - 3 yrs)	Low (3 - 5 yrs)
Balwyn Leisure Centre (Section 5.6.1)	72	1. That Infrastructure Services and Leisure and Cultural Services complete a review and costings on the Balwyn Leisure Centre immediate maintenance upgrade works to bring the facilities up to the required user standard. These works to be identified for funding consideration in the next financial year.	✓		
	72	2. That Leisure and Cultural Services complete a detailed review on the opportunity of adding extra indoor sports courts to the Balwyn Leisure Centre and needs and demands be considered with the indoor stadium strategy.		✓	
Reserves And Sports Grounds (Section 5.7)	75	1. The strategy findings indicate that demand for new or additional outdoor sport grounds will be minimal due to the trends of reduced participation in outdoor sports and, therefore, Council prioritise its capital funding to upgrading and expanding existing facilities that will reduce maintenance costs or increase usage opportunities.	✓		
	75	2. That Council prioritise future existing facility upgrades through use of the leisure facility contribution and priority criteria listed in 5.4 of the report, in conjunction with the need to upgrade low grade standard facilities.	✓		
	75	3. Parks and Gardens, Environmental and Building and Leisure and Cultural staff to consolidate all inventory data on reserves and sports grounds onto one system and allocate each facility into one of the following categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Local: Provides for local use or multiple sport code use in local area. •Suburban: Main facility in suburb for each code. •Municipal: Facility covers range of suburban areas. •Regional: The main venue for a sports code. 		✓	
	75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Parks and Gardens, Environment and Building and Leisure and Cultural staff set up a point score system (for each of the facility inventory listings) for all facilities to create a standard of provision rating for each facility to identify: •Priority list of works for active facilities. •Improvement works to landscape areas. 		✓	
	75	1. Parks and Gardens staff develop a standards of provision priority list based on facilities that do not meet the average point score for facilities in each category.		✓	

SERVICE AREA RECOMMENDATION	VOL TWO PAGE NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	TIME FRAME		
			High (1 yr)	Medium (2 - 3 yrs)	Low (3 - 5 yrs)
Playground Upgrade Strategy (Section 5.8)	77	1. That Council endorse, in principle, the need to develop a priority list of playgrounds for annual upgrading over an agreed number of years.	✓		
	78	1. That Council use the playground inventory review system detailed in Section 5.8 as the approved process to determine development priorities and area for future review, rationalisation.		✓	
	78	2. Playground improvements must be based on range and type of playgrounds required in line with local area demographics and site capacity.			
Community Centres And Neighbourhood Houses (Section 5.9)	81	1. That Leisure and Cultural Services, in conjunction with Infrastructure Services, complete an activity area capacity and infrastructure (services, carparking, etc) review on the Council-funded Centres to record existing buildings capacities and capabilities.		✓	
	81	2. That Leisure and Cultural Services introduce a new monthly usage review report for Council-funded Centres as detailed in Section 5.9.	✓		
	82	1. That, at the completion of the first 12 months of the new occupancy review report that Leisure and Cultural Services and Infrastructure Services use summary report findings to assist with prioritising any future upgrade or extension requests for Centres.		✓	
	82	2. That Leisure and Cultural Services encourage and facilitate co-operation between Neighbourhood Centres to undertake training support, instructor and tutor skills registers and computerised booking systems as future operational service support initiatives.		✓	
	82	3. That Council allocate annual ongoing improvement funding for Centre upgrades (for the next five years) and a priority list be developed for annual funding consideration based on the findings of Recommendation Three and the Community support Strategic Plan.		✓	
Freeway Golf Course Recommendations (Section 5.10)	84	1. That Council continue to recognise that the Golf Course is a viable, well used and high quality public facility that will continue to require annual capital upgrades to maintain its attractiveness to users.	✓		

SERVICE AREA RECOMMENDATION	VOL TWO PAGE NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	TIME FRAME		
			High (1 yr)	Medium (2 - 3 yrs)	Low (3 - 5 yrs)
Boroondara Tennis Centre (Section 5.11)	84	2. That Council continue to fund and implement the Course improvement plan detailed in the 1995 Golf Course Review and that annual revenue surplus be reserved to fund these works.			
	84	3. That an annual budget allocation be made to fund six monthly (winter and summer) golfer profile surveys to be conducted at the Course to monitor player demographics and customer satisfaction levels and identify ongoing user target markets.	✓		
	85	1. That the Course Contractor develop a joint promotion and marketing strategy aiming to increase Green Fee rounds to 62,000 over the next three years and aim in future, years for a maximum of up to 75,000 rounds. This strategy be funded as part of the management contract.	✓		
	86	1. That council continue to recognise that the Tennis Centre is a viable, well-used and high quality public tennis facility that is able to continue to fund its operations and expansion from user fees and secondary site income.			
	86	2. That Council request Tennis Victoria to complete an independent business and Facility Expansion Opportunity Report to identify viable and needed facility extensions at the complex during the course of the current agreement (1997 - 2003).		✓	
	87	1. That the joint site committee and Council consider the findings of the Facility Opportunity Report and, in conjunction with Tennis Victoria, prioritise and develop funding strategies for future agreed improvements.			✓
Bowling Clubs (Section 5.12)	88	1. That Leisure Facilities Strategy findings indicate more Bowling Clubs in the future will need to merge or close and Council should support sporting codes combining to form broad sports clubs to (assist them with long-term viability).			
	88	2. That Leisure and Cultural Services staff be made available to assist Clubs facing merger or closure to provide an independent viewpoint on future options.		✓	

SERVICE AREA RECOMMENDATION	VOL TWO PAGE NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	TIME FRAME		
			High (1 yr)	Medium (2 - 3 yrs)	Low (3 - 5 yrs)
Tennis Court (Section 5.13)	89	3. That council support local Tennis Clubs that make courts available for public and casual use and categorise such facilities as Category B (available for council capital assistance).		✓	
	89	4. That Council be an advocate and support non-viable tennis clubs to merge with other tennis clubs and support vacant facilities, in strategic locations, being kept as public and casual use courts subject to local management support to oversee the courts being available.			
Halls Strategy (Section 5.14) Open Space And Linear Trails (Section 5.15)	90	1. That Council actively encourage single purpose Hall controllers to open up facilities to compatible other users and such facilities be categorised as accessible facilities available for Council funding consideration.		✓	
	90	2. That single purpose Hall facilities in poor condition on Council land be reviewed and an agreed facility upgrade schedule be required of the user group within a 12 to 24 month period.		✓	
	94	1. That this Study confirms the importance residents place on open space and parkland in the Municipality and that Council continue support and give priority to implement the District Strategies as presented in the 1996 Open Space Strategy.	✓		
	94	2. That Council adopt annual funding to complete Recreation Reserve Masterplans (as detailed in the Open Space Strategy) and complete facility inventories to identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Level and standard of facility provision. •Potential improvement or upgrades at sportsgrounds/reserves. •Planned approach to improved facilities with no further alienation of public open space areas unless other new areas are available. 	✓		
	95	1. That Council prioritise funding to continue upgrading and expanding the linear trail network particularly concentrating on creating offroad cross municipality links and riverside trails and also link other community facilities such as picnic areas, playgrounds and amenities to high use public areas.	✓		
Information And Communication Strategies (Section 5.16)	96	1. That Council ensure its logo and name is on all leisure facilities provided, maintained or supported by Council.	✓		

SERVICE AREA RECOMMENDATION	VOL TWO PAGE NO.	RECOMMENDATIONS	TIME FRAME		
			High (1 yr)	Medium (2 - 3 yrs)	Low (3 - 5 yrs)
	96	2. That Leisure and Cultural Services, in conjunction with Strategic and Management support, develop ongoing financial report summaries that are forwarded to leisure facilities and groups highlighting the level of financial support provided to the facility. (Note: This to be done within existing CCT policies).	✓		
	97	1. That Leisure and Cultural Services investigate with Council Communication Services ways that the print and telecommunication media can be provided with ongoing leisure facility information.	✓		
	97	2. That all sections of Council that receive leisure facility service enquiries, conduct a sample monitoring of call types (for an agreed period) and response outcomes. This is to investigate resident satisfaction with the current system and monitor need to set up a leisure facilities/services enquiry hotline. Leisure and Cultural Services should co-ordinate this review.		✓	
	97	3. That resident recognition of Council's role in providing and supporting leisure facilities be tested and monitored in any resident surveys or annual service rating systems.			
	97	4. That Council's name as facility provider/supporter be prominent in any correspondence, publicity or information that is generated from leisure facilities including major leisure centres, community centres, etc.	✓		
	97	5. That Council adopt a high profile signage strategy that assists people to locate and use facilities and recognise Council's involvement in facility provision and maintenance.	✓		
	97	6. That Council allocate resources to continually upgrade data collected for this plan to ensure regular monitoring of community needs and review of The Strategic Plan.		✓	
Access To Recreation Facilities (Section 5.17)	98	1. That Council recognise that a range of people are constrained to participate in use of recreation facilities and that concession and support services for such groups be considered to assist their participation.	✓		
	98	2. That Council monitor user profile data at a range of recreation facilities to test disadvantaged or special needs groups use of such facilities on an ongoing basis and that future service targets support such groups use and access to recreation facilities.	✓		

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The City of Boroondara has commissioned this Study to develop a strategic plan that would guide the future provision of leisure facilities and direct the ongoing provision of leisure opportunities, to meet the local and broader community's needs and aspirations.

This Study was commenced in November 1996 and aimed to investigate and gather information about the community's leisure and cultural needs, as well as leisure facility requirements.

In particular, Council was seeking, through this report, to develop detailed strategy plans for leisure facility provision, with particular reference to the provision of major sport and recreation facilities.

Michael King and Associates experienced leisure and tourism planners were appointed to complete market research and consultation in conjunction with a Project Steering Committee and an Officer team.

1.2 KEY PROJECT OUTCOMES

The key project outcomes set at the commencement of the project were:

- To assess the leisure and cultural needs of the residents, visitors and workers within the City of Boroondara through market research and key informant interviews.
- To establish the future direction, priorities and role of the City in the provision of recreation and sporting facilities.
- To establish a profile of the existing recreation and sporting facilities within the local and broader community.
- To develop a strategic plan for leisure facilities and related services for use by the community for the next three to five years.

1.3 PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The project was divided into two distinct stages with inter-related phases.

The first stage involved project research and consultation in three sequential phases covering the following tasks:

Phase 1: Background Review

- Task 1: Clarification of Study Process
- Task 2: Review of Previous Research

- Task 3: Overview of Facility Service Areas
- Task 4: Demographic Profile of the Area.
- Task 5: Regional Facility Overview.
- Task 6: Financial Review of Facilities.

Phase 2: Market Research

- Task 1: Household Survey (609 survey sample return)
- Task 2: Schools Survey (38 survey sample return)
- Task 3: Public Forums (8 held).
- Task 4: Key Informant Interviews (10 held)
- Task 5: Club Surveys (Open Space Survey completed by 90 Clubs)
- Task 6: Public Submissions (14 submissions received).

Phase 3: Analysis of Data

- Task 1: Market Research Summaries
- Task 2: Project Steering Committee workshop on Research Findings.

Stage Two involved the development of the Leisure Facilities Strategy Plan and was completed in two phases as follows:

Phase 1: Development of Planning Guidelines

- Task 1: Categorisation of Facilities
- Task 2: Review Market Research Summaries
- Task 3: First cut Priority List
- Task 4: Report Back

Phase 2: Final Reports

- Task 1: Draft Final Report
- Task 2: Final Report

1.4 PROJECT REPORT SCOPING

The report's market research and findings have been developed into two volumes. Volume One contains detailed background research and consultation technical papers and Volume Two covers a summary of strategy findings and recommendations.

For detailed information on each of the study findings, the reader should refer to Volume One and the relevant Section. *(This is marked in bold in brackets next to relevant Volume Two section headings).*

A total of five appendices are also contained in Volume One covering household survey comments, stadium occupancy, public submissions, club survey summaries and listings of Council Recreation Facilities

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section summarises the report's findings in relation to the project area's demographic profile, leisure facility regional competitor reviews and local and regional leisure area facility provision.

2.2 PROJECT AREA DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE (REFER VOL 1: TECHNICAL PAPER NO.2: SECTION 2.2)

The City of Boroondara covers a total area of 60 square kilometres, with an estimated population in 1996 of 150,000 people. Current population predictions indicate that over the next 15 years the population will not fall below 140,000 or rise above 160,000.

A review of the City's age profiles indicates:

- The highest proportion of people are aged 20-29 years (16.4%), followed by 30-39 years (14.6%), 10-19 years (13.2%) and 70 years plus (12.4%)
- People in their most active years 0-39 years account for 82,965 (55.1%) of the total population of Boroondara. This is significantly lower than the proportion of people 0-39 years (60.2%) in the Melbourne statistical District (MSD).
- The City of Boroondara has considerable higher proportions of residents aged 60 years and over (21.5%) compared with the MSD (15.6%)
- The City of Boroondara has a lower proportion of residents aged 0-9 years (10.9%) than the MSD average (13.5%)

Peoples usage of leisure facilities can be constrained by access/transport and cost issues. A review of Boroondara residents vehicle ownership, employment status and household income levels indicates:

- Overall, the majority of households (86.6%) have access to one vehicle or more. A total of (46.6%) of these households have two or more vehicles garaged at home. This indicates a relatively mobile population able to travel to recreation facilities.
- The City has a higher proportion of employed Managers and professionals than the MSD averages indicating potentially higher than average household income levels by residents.
- Main household incomes are over \$60,000 (27.9%) and between \$40,001 - \$60,000 (19.9%) representing (47.8%) of the City of Boroondara's households compared with the MSD (40.2%). This indicates a capacity to use disposable income to pay for recreation activities.

2.2.1 Population Distribution

The City's total area and population can be broken up into 13 district neighbourhood zones as follows:

**TABLE 2.1
NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA POPULATION 1991**

SUBURB	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL BOROONDARA POPULATION
Kew	21,933	14.8
Kew East	7,010	4.7
Balwyn	14,003	9.4
North Balwyn	18,945	12.8
Hawthorn	18,945	12.8
Hawthorn East	18,112	12.3
Camberwell	15,317	10.4
Burwood	8,704	5.9
Canterbury	7,732	5.2
Surrey Hills	7,851	5.3
Box Hill North	724	0.5
Glen Iris	9,268	6.3
Ashburton	6,251	4.2
TOTAL	147,766	100.0%

The neighbourhood profile indicates that the main population areas of the City of Boroondara are Kew (21,933), followed by North Balwyn (18,445), Hawthorn (18,112) Camberwell (15,317) and Balwyn (14,003).

2.2.2 Leisure Spending Patterns

Though there is no reliable or up-to-date data on leisure spending patterns in the City, weekly household expenditure reviews for Melbourne Metropolitan areas indicate the following main weekly household expenditure categories (1993/94 ABS data):

- Tax, rates, payments \$233.19
- Food/Drink \$115.35
- Transport \$ 94.70
- Housing costs \$ 93.14
- Recreation/Sport \$ 86.33
- Miscellaneous \$ 50.00
- Clothing/Footwear \$ 40.67
- Household furniture \$ 35.82
- Household services \$ 35.00

The weekly expenditure review indicates that Recreation and Sport Services are the fifth most purchased household service. Based on average total weekly household expenditure of \$870, recreation spending represents approximately 10% of total weekly household expenditure (in Melbourne Metropolitan areas)

Of the average \$86 spent per week on recreation services, a total of \$42 is spent on product purchases, memberships, entry fees and charges and \$31 is spent on visiting, holidays and entertainment.

These statistics indicate that recreation spending in the City of Boroondara is currently supporting a considerable sized service industry.

2.3 REGIONAL FACILITY REVIEW (REFER VOL 1:TECHNICAL PAPER NO 3:SECTION 3.5)

The household survey reviewed a broad range of residents' use of recreation facilities use The results indicated that residents are using a broad range of regional and local facilities.

2.3.1 Regional Facility Use

The following table details regional leisure facilities and residents usage patterns identified in the household survey.

TABLE 2.2
RESIDENTS USAGE RESPONSE FOR REGIONAL FACILITIES BY GENDER

FACILITY	USED AT LEAST ONCE PER MONTH			NEVER USED		
	MALE	FEMALE	COMBINED	MALE	FEMALE	COMBINED
Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre	21.8	30.0	26.6	78.2	70.0	73.4
Kew Recreation Centre	29.1	32.9	31.3	70.9	67.1	68.7
Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre	16.2	16.3	16.3	83.8	83.7	83.7
Balwyn Leisure Centre	14.1	13.4	13.7	85.9	86.6	86.3
Northern Pool, Balwyn	10.3	9.8	10.0	89.7	90.2	90.0
Winning Edge Gymnasium	4.3	4.2	4.2	95.7	95.8	95.8
Findlays Gym	3.0	2.7	2.8	97.0	97.3	97.2
Bike Path Network	48.7	42.4	45.0	51.3	57.6	55
Aquarena Doncaster	7.7	8.6	8.2	92.3	91.4	91.8
Lady Works, Fernwood	0.4	4.2	2.6	99.6	95.8	97.4
Harold Holt Pool and Recreation Centre	17.9	20.8	19.6	82.1	19.2	80.4
Xavier Recreation Centre	9.0	9.2	9.1	91.0	90.8	90.9
Richmond Recreation Centre	4.3	3.9	4.0	95.7	96.1	96.0
Freeway Camberwell Golf Course	19.2	5.9	11.4	80.8	94.1	88.6
Ivanhoe Public Golf Course	14.1	3.6	7.9	85.9	96.4	92.1
Malvern Valley Golf Course	10.3	4.2	6.7	89.7	95.8	93.3
Yarra Bend Golf Course	16.7	5.3	10.0	83.3	94.7	90.0
Yarra Bend and Surrounds	60.3	54.9	57.1	39.7	45.1	42.9
Hawthorn Town Hall	17.5	25.2	22.1	82.5	74.8	77.9
The Camberwell Centre	28.6	24.0	25.9	71.4	76.0	74.1
MLC Recreation Centre	4.7	8.6	7.0	95.3	91.4	93.0
Boroondara Tennis Centre	6.8	5.3	6.0	93.2	94.7	94.0

The results show the most used regional facilities were:

- Yarra Bend and surrounds 57.1% used (Male 60.3% Female 54.9%)
- Bike Path Networks 45.0% used (Male 48.7% Female 45.0%)
- Kew Recreation Centre 31.3% used (Male 29.1% Female 32.9%)

- Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre 26.6% used (Male 21.8% Female 30.0%)

The most used aquatic facilities were:

Kew Recreation Centre	31.3% used
Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre	26.6% used
Harold Holt Pool and Recreation Centre	19.6% used

The most used stadium facilities were:

Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre	26.6% used
Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre	16.3% used
Balwyn Leisure Centre	13.7% used

2.3.2 Local Facility Usage

The following table details local leisure facilities and residents usage patterns identified in the Household survey:

**TABLE 2.3
USAGE RESPONSE FOR LOCAL FACILITIES BY GENDER**

FACILITY	USED AT LEAST ONCE PER MONTH			NEVER USED		
	MALE	FEMALE	COMBINED	MALE	FEMALE	COMBINED
Closest Library	73.9	79.5	77.2	26.1	20.5	22.8
Closest Playground	46.6	54.9	51.5	53.4	45.1	48.5
Closest Public Hall	21.8	26.4	24.5	78.2	73.6	75.5
School Facilities - Indoor Sports	20.1	18.4	19.1	79.9	81.6	80.9
School Facilities - Outdoor Sports	21.8	17.5	19.3	78.2	82.5	80.7
School Facilities - Performance Arts	19.2	19.6	19.4	80.8	80.4	80.6
Closest Community/ Neighbourhood Centre	14.5	24.6	20.5	85.5	75.4	79.5
Closest Golf Course	37.2	14.5	23.8	62.8	85.5	76.2
Closest Tennis Courts	32.1	23.4	27.0	67.9	76.6	73.0
Closest Bike Paths	44.9	44.2	44.5	55.1	55.8	55.5
Closest Walk Paths	67.9	75.7	72.5	32.1	24.3	27.5
Closest Commercial Fitness Centre	20.1	29.4	25.6	79.9	70.6	74.4
Closest Performance Centre	20.1	28.2	24.9	79.9	71.8	75.1
Closest Council Fitness Centre	15.0	22.0	19.1	85.0	78.0	80.9
Closest Indoor Sports Centre	32.1	28.2	29.8	67.9	71.8	70.2
Closest Indoor Pool	49.6	56.4	53.6	50.4	43.6	46.4

The most used local facilities are:

- Closest library (77.2%) used
- Closest walking paths (72.5%) used
- Closest indoor pool (53.6%) used
- Closest Playground (51.5%) used
- Closest Bike Path (44.5%) used

Those facilities that recorded highest never used ratings included:

- Closest council fitness centre (80.9%) not used
- School facilities - indoor sports (80.9%) not used
- School facilities - outdoor sports (80.7%) not used

- School facilities - performing arts

(80.6%) not used

2.3.3 Regional Facility Distribution (*Refer Vol 1:Technical Paper 1:Section 1.2*)

A competitor review of the ten main regional facilities residents are using was completed and the details on each facility are listed in Volume One, Technical Paper No. 1 Section 1.2.

The maps on the following two pages provide locational data on aquatic centres and stadiums in the North Eastern and Southern areas of Metropolitan Melbourne. The maps indicate:

- There is an even distribution of major aquatic facilities in the region.
- There are a large range of aquatic facilities surrounding the Boroondara City Council area, indicating strong competition likely for customer attraction.
- The Boroondara City Council's area indoor aquatic facilities are located at either end of the Municipal area, indicating residents in the central area have choices of centre to use.
- There appears to be a major gap in provision of multi-court indoor stadiums in the Cities of Boroondara, Stonnington and Glen Eira.

MAPS: (Regional Stadium Facilities, Regional Aquatic Facilities)

MAPS: (Regional Stadium Facilities, Regional Aquatic Facilities)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section summarises the main issues identified from reviewing the following Council-owned or part-owned leisure facilities. Key summaries of each Centre is detailed under:

- Aquatic Facilities
- Stadium Facilities
- Other Recreation Facilities

The facility reviews conducted for these centres include:

- Attendance review for the past three years.
- Interviews with facility management to discuss current and future issues.
- Identification of facility development needs, opportunities and constraints.

This section also includes a range of information on Community Centres/Neighbourhood Houses and a range of facility provision within the City.

3.2 REVIEW OF MAJOR AQUATIC FACILITIES

3.2.1 Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre (*Refer Vol. 1 Technical Paper 1 Section 1.1.1*)

The Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre was redeveloped in 1979 and is located in Linda Crescent, Hawthorn. The dry area is currently operated by the YMCA and the wet area by Victorian Water Polo Incorporated. The YMCA has a (3) year Management Contract with a (2) year option at Council's discretion. The Victorian Water Polo lease expires in the year 2001.

(i) Attendance Review

The annual attendance at the Centre for the past two years was:

- 1994/95 260,000
- 1995/96 230,000
- 1996/97 Dry Area 176,000 Wet Area 62,000.
Total attendance 238,000.

(ii) Financial Review

A review of the Centre's financial performance has been summarised for the past three years in the following table:

TABLE 3.1
HAWTHORN AQUATIC AND LEISURE CENTRE
FINANCIAL REVIEW

YEAR	INCOME \$	EXPENDITURE \$	NETT (LOSS)/ SURPLUS \$
1994/95	330,000	420,000	(-90,000)
1995/96	316,000	388,000	(-72,000)
1996/97	410,000	530,000	(-120,000)

Note: These figures are for dry component only and exclude VWP costs.

The financial review indicates that the average nett cost to operate the Centre over the past three years has been approximately \$94,000. These figures do not include capital, depreciation or major maintenance costs.

(iii) Future Development Issues

The following current facility and future development issues were raised from discussions with Centre Management.

- The Centre has poor visual access and is hidden away from main roads and passing traffic. Parking at times is difficult because local shoppers and Swinburne Students also use the closest car parking area.
- The Centre is well positioned for public transport users being close to train and tram routes.
- There is no air conditioning in the aerobics, weight or circuit rooms.
- The equipment in the weights room needs upgrading and the purchase of treadmills would assist the operation and marketability of the gym.
- Split management of wet and dry areas creates issues with customer service and supervision. Some supervision issues should be overcome with the redevelopment of the changerooms with separate wet and dry areas.

3.2.2 Kew Recreation Centre (Vol. 1. Technical Paper 1 Section 1.1.2)

The Kew Recreation Centre is located in High Street, Kew. The Centre opened in 1989, and was extended in 1994 with the addition of larger gymnasium, crèche, dry change rooms and aerobic studio. The Centre is currently operated by the YMCA under a (3) year Management Contract until May 1999, with a (2) year option at Council's discretion.

(i) Attendance Review

The annual attendance at the Centre for the past three years was:

1993/94	-	655,766
1994/95	-	640,000
1995/96	-	663,000
1996/97	-	670,000

(ii) Financial Review

A review of the Centre's financial performance for the past three has been summarised in the following table:

TABLE 3.2
KEW RECREATION CENTRE
FINANCIAL REVIEW

YEAR	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NETT (LOSS)/SURPLUS
	\$	\$	\$
1994/95	1,980,000	1,886,000	94,000
1995/96	2,407,000	2,220,143	186,857
1996/97 (est.)	2,199,800	2,003,364	196,000

The financial review indicates that the average surplus for the Kew Recreation Centre over the past three years is \$159,000. **Note:** These figures do not include capital, depreciation or major maintenance costs.

(iii) Future Development Issues

The following current facility and future development issues were raised from discussions with Centre Management:

- There is no dedicated rooms or space available to use as public meeting space, therefore, it is difficult to introduce new dry programs.
- There is no food and beverage area which limits the opportunity of secondary expenditure by customers. The average industry spend of 75 cents to \$1 per user would indicate major capacity to self fund such improvements.
- A street front café could be developed in the existing reception area, the existing reception area moved to the opposite side and the entry foyer size increased by building in the existing entry. The area next to the pool could then be glazed in to separate the pool and café area. The extra dry program area could go above this.
- A future development option could be building over any new entry with an addition of a first floor area which could provide meeting rooms and function space.
- The addition of an outdoor pool area to complement the existing indoor areas is possible as enough space exists for an outside lap pool and a water play area.
- Access to the crèche is poor which is limited to 21 spaces. Developing other dry program space areas would enable the current multi-purpose room to become a dedicated crèche. The crèche hours and service could then be extended.

3.2.3 Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre (*Vol. 1. Technical Paper No. 1 Section 1.1.3*)

The Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre is located in Warner Avenue, Ashburton and was opened in 1993. The Centre is currently operated by the YMCA under a three year management contract.

(i) Attendance Review

The annual attendance at the Centre for the past three years was:

- 1994/95 - 700,000
- 1995/96 - 650,000
- 1996/97 - 686,000

(ii) Financial Review

TABLE 3.3
ASHBURTON POOL AND RECREATION CENTRE
FINANCIAL REVIEW

YEAR	INCOME \$	EXPENDITURE \$	NETT SURPLUS/ (LOSS) \$
1994/95	2,496,985	2,195,941	301,044
1995/96	2,955,000	2,667,038	287,962
1996/97	2,934,544	2,518,617	415,927

The financial review indicates that the average operating surplus for the Centre over the past three years of operation is \$335,000. **Note:** This does not include capital, depreciation or major maintenance costs.

(iii) Future Development Issues

The following current facility and future development issues were raised from discussions with Centre Management:

- Outdoor shading is required, preferably structural rather than landscape due to the nature of the soil.
- There is a need for constant renewal and upgrade of equipment due to wear and tear by high patronage and use.
- Competition from proposed developments in neighbouring cities e.g. City of Monash may reduce business opportunities.
- A recent post code search indicates 52% of the Centre's users live within the Boroondara Council area.
- Possible future extension of indoor sport courts and link to upgraded outdoor reserve area.

3.2.4 Northern Pool, Balwyn (*Refer Vol. 1. Technical Paper 1 Section 1.1.5*)

The Northern Pool is an outdoor pool located in Belmore Road, Balwyn and was built in 1961. The pool is currently managed by the YMCA with a three year management contract.

(i) Attendance Review

The annual attendance for the past three years was:

- 1994/95 - 25,000
- 1995/96 - 18,000
- 1996/97 - 26,000

(ii) Financial Review

A review of the Centre's financial performance for the past three years is summarised in the following table:

TABLE 3.4
NORTHERN POOL
FINANCIAL REVIEW

YEAR	INCOME \$	EXPENDITURE \$	NETT SURPLUS/ (LOSS) \$
1994/95	89,700	147,423	(-57,723)
1995/95	83,200	156,825	(-73,625)
1996/97	69,366	128,811	(-59,444)

The financial review indicates the average nett cost to Council for the past three years was \$63,600.

Note: These figures do not include capital, depreciation or major maintenance costs.

(iii) Future Development Issues

The following current facility and future development issues were raised from discussions with management:

- The pool is not heated and therefore it is very difficult to run programs at the pool. In particular the lack of heated water effects any swimming lessons conducted at the pool. In 1995/96 only 4 children enrolled on the Vicswim program at the pool due to the temperature. These children were then placed at Kew Recreation Centre due to lack of numbers.
- There has been significant concourse movement causing tiles to fall off the pool walls indicating the facility is reaching the end of its construction life and major refurbishment will be required soon.

- Heating the pool would enable the pool to operate for a longer season and take the chill off the water but the capital cost of (\$80-100K) plus annual heating service cost of (\$40-50K) is prohibitive.
- Low annual usage of facilities occurred this summer, although most pools in Melbourne recorded 20% to 30% more users.
- Annual attendances have dropped to 26,000 users which is less than 5,000 users a month. This is well below expected attendances.
- Annual attendance targets of 35,000 to 40,000 should be aimed for in the future.

3.2.5 Central Pool (*Refer Vol. 1: Technical Paper 1:Section 1.1.10*)

The Central Pool site is located within Riversdale Park, Camberwell. The facility has been closed for the past three seasons. It is not available for public use and operates under a license agreement with Camberwell High School. Short-term summer agreements are negotiated for the school to use the pool.

(i) Financial Review

A review of the financial data for the past three years indicates the following costs to Council:

TABLE 3.5
CENTRAL POOL PREVIOUS FINANCIAL HISTORY

YEAR	EXPENDITURE \$	NETT LOSS \$
1994/95	7,600	(-7,600)
1995/96	2,600	(-2,600)
1996/97 Est.	2,600	(-2,600)

Council does not receive any income from this facility.

(ii) Future Development Issues

The following current facility and future development issues were raised:

- The Central Pool is not currently in use due to poor condition and maintenance issues.
- The Centre has been closed for the past three seasons.
- Camberwell High School has shown an interest in this facility on a longer term lease basis.

3.3 MAIN STADIUM FACILITIES

3.3.1 Balwyn Leisure Centre (*Refer Vol 1. Technical Paper No. 1 Section 1.1.4*)

The Balwyn Leisure Centre is located in the Gordon Barnard Reserve in Balwyn Road, Balwyn and is thirty-six years old. It is currently managed by the YMCA under a three year contract term.

(i) Attendance Review

The annual attendance for the past three years was:

- 1994/95 - 130,000
- 1995/96 - 160,000
- 1996/97 - 152,252

(ii) Financial Review

A review of the Centre's financial performance for the past three years has been summarised in the table below:

TABLE 3.6
BALWYN LEISURE CENTRE
FINANCIAL REVIEW

YEAR	INCOME \$	EXPENDITURE \$	NETT SURPLUS/ (LOSS) \$
1994/95	540,665	545,198*	(-4,533)
1995/96	585,000	660,000	(-75,000)
1996/97	584,286	621,688	(-37,402)

*This figure does not include Council staffing costs of approximately \$65,000.

The financial review indicates that the average nett cost to Council over the past three years for Balwyn Leisure Centre is (-\$39,000). **Note:** This does not include capital, depreciation or major maintenance costs.

(iii) Future Development Issues

The following issues on future development and current facility use were raised from discussions with management:

- The building was built in 1961 and, due to its age is in constant need of maintenance.
- The multi-purpose room has a smell seeping in from under the floor. It is suspected that this is due to the floor rotting underneath which is caused by drainage problems outside this room. Currently the down pipes lead to an area where water cannot drain. There is also severe wall watermarks in this room..
- Throughout the Centre the walls and window sills are rotting and fungus is Becoming a problem.

- The stadium and gymnastic room have birds nesting within the roofs and walls.
- The floor in the gymnastics room is not full size. A full-sized floor area would be an asset.
- If the gymnastic room area was increased, the program could be extended. Any development in this area would need to continue to provide recreation gymnastics.
- The basketball court is utilised to approximately 89% capacity. Another court could be utilised due to unmet demand.

3.3.2 Swinburne Secondary College Recreation Centre (*Refer Vol.1: Technical Paper 1 Section 1.1.6*)

The Swinburne Secondary College Recreation Centre is located in Camberwell Road, Hawthorn. The land is owned by the Directorate of School Education and the Centre is managed by a joint Management Committee representing the Swinburne Secondary College and the Council.

(i) Attendance Review

The Centre has an annual visitation of approximately 50,000.

(ii) Financial Review

TABLE 3.7
SWINBURNE SECONDARY COLLEGE RECREATION CENTRE FINANCIAL REVIEW
1994-1997

YEAR	INCOME \$	EXPENDITURE \$	NETT PROFIT/ (LOSS) \$
1994/95	68,240	46,044	22,196
1995/96	109,564	142,200*	(-32,636)
1996/97 (est)	114,000	94,000	20,000

*Purchased bus from accumulated funds of \$50,000

The financial review over the three years indicates that the average surplus is \$3,000 per annum.

(iii) Future Development Issues

The following issues were raised from discussions with the Executive Officer:

- To reduce noise and improve the area the Committee is currently investigating the possibility of providing a different barrier between the Mezzanine area and the court. Currently only mesh wire separate the two areas.
- The existing signage needs to be replaced.
- Additional court space and centre upgrades required.

- The wall outside the Centre is being vandalised with graffiti more often and needs to be cleaned up.

3.3.3 Hawthorn Secondary College Recreation Centre (*Refer Vol. 1: Technical Paper No. 1 Section 1.1.9*)

The Hawthorn Secondary College Recreation Centre is located in Burgess Street, Hawthorn. The land is owned by the Department of School Education and Centre is operated with a joint Management Agreement between the Council and Hawthorn Secondary College. A Recreation Committee consisting of Council staff, School staff and a community representative oversee the Management of the facility.

(i) Attendance Review

The facility receives approximately 50,000 visitations per year but the main court is undersize.

(ii) Financial Review

A review of the Centre's financial performance for the past three years is summarised in the following table:

TABLE 3.8
HAWTHORN SECONDARY COLLEGE RECREATION CENTRE FINANCIAL REVIEW
1994 - 1997

YEAR	INCOME \$	EXPENDITURE \$	NETT SURPLUS/(LOSS) \$
1994/95	61,874	30,085	\$31,789
1995/96	37,245	34,889	\$2,356
1996/97 (est.)	31,200	36,250	(-\$5,050)

The financial review indicates the Centre average nett operating surplus for 1994/95 and 1995/96 was approximately \$17,074. In 1996/97 the Centre is estimated to operate at a loss of \$5,050.

A new full-sized court was constructed in 1996 and is now available for use.

(iii) Future Development Issues

The following current facility and future development issues were raised from discussions with the schools Executive Officer:

- Current demand needs will be met with the extension, however if the current court was full size, it would allow for greater bookings.
- At the moment storage space is not adequate. Equipment surrounds the perimeter of the existing court which is a safety concern.

- Would like to see the mezzanine room upgraded. This would then provide a quality facility which would be hired to the community.

3.4 OTHER MAIN RECREATION FACILITIES

3.4.1 Boroondara Freeway Golf Course (*Refer Vol.1: Technical Paper No. 1 Section 1.1.7*)

The Boroondara Freeway Golf Course is located in Columba Street, North Balwyn. The 18-hole course was officially opened in 1978. For the past four years, the facility was managed by a Committee of Management with a Contract golf Professional running the Golf Shop. The Management Committee recently resigned and the Manager is now on Contract to Council.

(i) Attendance Review

The annual green fee attendance for the past three years was:

- 1994/95 - 65,000
- 1995/96 - 62,056
- 1996/97 (est) - 60,000

(ii) Financial Review

A review of the Course's financial performance for the past three years is summarised in the following table:

TABLE 3.9
FREEWAY GOLF COURSE
FINANCIAL REVIEW

YEAR	INCOME \$	EXPENDITURE \$	NETT PROFIT/ (LOSS) \$
1994/95	708,200	607,500	\$100,700
1995/95	717,000	615,000	\$102,000
1996/97 (est.)	680,000	620,000	\$60,000

The financial review indicates the average profit at the Freeway Golf Course for the past three years was approximately \$94,000.

(iii) Future Development Issues

Discussions with Management at the Centre indicates the following future development and current facility usage issues:

- Subsurface drainage is minimal, the existing surface drainage does not work effectively. Concern exists that the new irrigation system could raise the water table so it is possible there will be more water in Winter which would escalate drainage problems.
- There has been no price increase for three years. A price increase was introduced in January 1997. Pricing structure is at the middle to bottom end of price range compared with other metropolitan public facilities.

- Priority greens that need redeveloping are the 6th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 15th greens.
- The length of the course is quite short and greens small with 11th, 16th, 14th, 5th. need to be increased.
- In previous years minimal promotion has been carried out. Now that improvements have been carried out, there is a plan to promote facility more.
- The majority of users live close to the course i.e. Doncaster, Balwyn, Kew, Auburn, Hawthorn East and Ivanhoe were the most frequent users.
- Based on industry trends green fee rounds are below average. In future service targets should be developed to increase rounds to 70,000 to 75,000 per annum.

3.4.2 Boroondara Tennis Centre (*Refer Vol.1: Technical Paper No. 1 Section 1.1.8*)

The Boroondara Tennis Centre (previously Camberwell Tennis Centre) is situated on the Corner of Bulleen Road and Thompsons Road, Bulleen. It is a joint venture between the City of Boroondara and Tennis Victoria. The Management of the Centre is controlled by a Committee with representatives from Council and Tennis Victoria. The existing Manager is employed by a Committee of Management.

Any profits from the facility are divided between Tennis Victoria and the Council. A 10 year lease on management currently exists to the year 2003.

(i) Attendance Review

The annual attendance at the Centre for the past three years was:

- 1994/95 - 120,000
- 1995/96 - 130,000
- 1996/97 est - 150,000

(ii) Financial Review

A review of the Centre's financial performance has been summarised for the past three years in the following table:

TABLE 3.10
BOROONDARA TENNIS CENTRE
FINANCIAL REVIEW

YEAR	INCOME \$	EXPENDITURE \$	NETT SURPLUS/ (LOSS) \$
1994/95	424,750	337,110	\$87,640
1995/95	467,736	355,422	\$112,316
1996/97 (est.)	466,500	304,600	\$107,820

The Boroondara Tennis Centre profit shares with Tennis Victoria and the Council, therefore the Council received 50 percent of the above profits for each year.

The average total profit is approximately \$102,000. Council's average share over the past three years is approximately \$51,000.

(iii) Future Development Issues

The following current facility and future development issues were raised from discussions with Centre Management:

- A problem exists with the lack of car parking, particularly during peak period and tournaments. The Committee and Management are currently investigating this concern. Consideration has been given to developing the car park at the Thompsons Road end of the courts.
- The kiosk area is not large enough to adequately cater for the facility.
- Office space and storage areas are a concern at the facility.
- An ideal situation would see the development of (6) indoor courts, with a moveable roof that could come off in Summer. A provision such as this would relieve the existing situation that occurs, i.e.: when weather is wet and courts cannot be used reducing income capacity.

3.5 REVIEW OF COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD CENTRES (REFER VOL 1: TECHNICAL PAPER 1:SECTION 1.4)

A review of the Council area's Community and Neighborhood Centres has been completed. The current program facilities and services key issues are summarised as follows:

3.5.1 Ashburn Grove Neighbourhood Centre, Ashburn Grove, Ashburton

Current Situation

- Council owned facility Managed by Committee of Incorporated Association established by Alamein Community Committee.
- Targets lower socio-economic groups and non-English speaking groups. Service provider, food co-operative, education programs and full-time drop-in facility.

Future Issues

- Extension to provide office facilities, venue for adult classes and childcare.
- Childcare subsidy for classes.

3.5.2 Ashburton Community Centre, 160 High Street, Ashburton

Current Situation

- Council-owned facilities, managed by an Incorporated Committee of Management.
- Extensive community program targeted towards pre-school children, school age children, mature adults and those seeking new skills via programs.
- Car parking is a problem. Need dedicated spaces.

Future Issues

- Hall required for large group activities.
- Ability to keep price competitive when other facilities at other venues have to be hired for programs.

3.5.3 Balwyn Community Centre, 412 Whitehorse Road, Balwyn

Current Situation

- Council-owned facilities.
- Managed by an Incorporated Committee of Management.
- Extensive program servicing predominantly young families and special interest groups.

3.5.4 Bowen Street Family Centre, 102 Bowen Street, South Camberwell

Current Situation

- Council-owned facility operated by an Incorporated Committee of Management.
- Neighbourhood network program predominantly accessed by young families, adults seeking health, leisure, parenting and return to work skills and isolated women.
- An estimated 370 adults and 360 children attend the Centre weekly.

Future Issues

- Room or hall space to meet increased demand on adults classes.
- Additional paid worker time.

3.5.5 Camberwell Community Centre, 33 Fairholm Grove, Camberwell and 405 Camberwell Road, Camberwell.

Current Situation

- Council-owned facility operated by an Incorporated Committee of Management.
- Facilities available for hire by community and independent groups for leisure activities.
- Offering extensive programs predominantly attended by adults interest in art/craft. Approximately 36,000 visits are made to the Centre annually.

Future Issues

- Poor car parking facilities.

3.5.6 Canterbury Neighbourhood Centre, Corner Canterbury and Balwyn Road, Canterbury

Current Situation

- Facility auspiced by Church, without Council subsidy. Approximately 560 people use the Centre weekly.

Future Issues

- Need to obtain alternative support funding to continue to provide/develop services at the Centre.
- Plenty of time available for more activities.

3.5.7 Craig Family Centre, 7 Samarinda Avenue, Ashburton

Current Situation

- Council-owned facility operated by an incorporated Committee of Management.
- Extended purpose built facility as an early childhood services centre. Programs cater for young families and school age children.
- Current membership approximately 500 families.

3.5.8 Hawthorn Community House, 39 William Street, Hawthorn and 32 Henry Street, Hawthorn

Current Situation

- Two separate facilities owned by Council and managed by an Incorporated Committee of Management. Programs predominantly focused towards adults seeking English, return to work, literacy and computer skills. Also persons with disabilities, living in isolation and of non-English speaking background.
- In excess of 450 people attend activities weekly.

Future Issues

- Requiring additional space for extended childcare facilities, meeting rooms for groups and a drop-in facility for people from local rooming houses. These problems have been somewhat remedied with the opening of the Henry Street facility.
- Poor car parking access.

3.5.9 Kew Community House, 6-12 Derby Street, Kew

Current Situation

- Council-owned facilities operated by an Incorporated Committee of Management.
- Extensive number of personal support groups and self-help groups housed at Kew Community House. Predominantly isolated people, people experiencing personal/life crises and families requiring childcare.
- On average 450 people attend activities at the House per term.

Future Issues

- Application for funding from Council for future developments on existing facilities

3.5.10 Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre, Union Road, Surrey Hills

Current Situation

- Council owned facility operated by an Incorporated Committee of Management. Council fund half-time position for Co-Ordinator. Programs target elderly, isolated, new arrivals to the community and children.
- An estimated 500 users per week with access to 140 program hours weekly.

Future Issues

- Lack of adequate space.
- Are currently investigating proposals for facility modifications/extensions.

3.6 MAIN RECREATION FACILITY PROVISION

The following is a summary of the main recreation facility provision in the City of Boroondara:

• Major Recreation and Aquatic Facilities	x	9 venues
• Community Halls	x	49 venues
• Bowling Clubs	x	17 venues
• Senior Citizens Centre	x	6 venues
• Scout Halls	x	18 venues
• Commercial Gyms	x	8 venues
• Outdoor Sports Grounds	x	50 venues
• Tennis Clubs	x	31 venues
• Community Centres/Neighbourhood Houses	x	10 venues

Facility location maps have been developed and are listed on the following pages for:

- Aquatic/Gymnasium/Fitness Centre Facilities
- Indoor Stadiums
- Reserves
- Playgrounds

3.6.1 Regional Facility Comparison

The table on below provides a comparison of the provision of recreation facilities in the City of Boroondara compared with neighbouring municipalities facility provision. The information has been developed through information supplied by each Council's Leisure Services Section. In some cases, interpretation of information and facility type has been completed by the Consultant Team to allow comparisons.

**TABLE 3.11
REGIONAL FACILITY COMPARISON**

FACILITY TYPE	CITY OF BOROONDARA	CITY OF YARRA	CITY OF STONNINGTON	CITY OF MANNINGHAM	CITY OF WHITEHORSE	CITY OF MONASH	CITY OF GLEN EIRA
Population	149,950	62,500	83,900	114,500	142,400	162,100	116,500
Major Facilities							
Stadiums	3	0	2	7	2	4	1
Outdoor Pools	1	1	1	0	N/A	2	2
Leisure Centres (Wet/Dry)	3	2	2	1	2	1	0
Outdoor Facilities							
Bowling Clubs	17	4	5	5	9	4	11
Outdoor sports grounds	50	16	26	28	30	13	17
Tennis Clubs	31	2	9	12	19	24	24
Playgrounds	109	60	52	180	160	150	40
Golf Courses (Public)	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
Athletics Track	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
Indoor Facilities							
Community Halls	49	6	5	9	6	5	4
Senior Citizens Centres	7	2	4	3	6	21	4
Scout Halls	18	1	6	14	26	N/A	20
Community / Neighbourhood Centres	10	10	2	7	14	17	3
Commercial Gyms	8	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	4

It should be noted that when comparing the number of recreational facilities across neighbouring Municipalities, factors including population characteristics, distribution and quality of facilities should also be taken into consideration. Such information was beyond the scope of this study and is not available in comparable format.

An analysis of the facility provision comparisons by Municipal area indicates:

- In terms of major facilities such as stadiums, aquatic centres, etc., the City of Boroondara have one facility for every 21,421 residents. The number of major facilities per resident for the neighbouring municipalities (from lowest provision to highest provision) is as follows:
 - Glen Eira: 1: 38,830 residents
 - Whitehorse 1: 35,680 residents
 - Monash 1: 23,150 residents
 - Boroondara 1: 21,420 residents
 - Yarra 1: 20,830 residents
 - Stonnington 1: 16,780 residents
 - Manningham 1: 14,310 residents

Of the seven stadiums available at the City of Manningham, six of these are based at educational institutions and have mixed use of public and school access. These results indicate the City of Boroondara's provision of major facilities is the fourth highest.

- In comparison with the neighbouring municipalities, the City of Boroondara has the highest number of bowling Clubs per resident being one Club per 8,820 residents. In comparison the City of Monash has the lowest being one Club per 40,525 residents.
- The provision of playgrounds in the City of Boroondara was the fifth highest of neighbouring municipalities. The following provides a list of the number of playgrounds per resident (from highest to lowest provision)
 - Manningham 1:636 residents
 - Whitehorse 1:890 residents
 - Yarra 1:1,041 residents
 - Monash 1:1,080 residents
 - Boroondara 1:1,376 residents
 - Stonnington 1:1,613 residents
 - Glen Eira 1:2,912 residents
- The provision of Community Halls (49) in Boroondara is also significant. This is 40 greater than the next highest Council area being Manningham which has nine community facilities (some definition differences may account for some of the differences ie. community hall, Arts Centre etc).
- The City of Boroondara has the highest provision of smaller community facilities with 49 Community Halls, 10 Community Centre/Neighbourhood Houses, 18 Scout Halls and 7 Senior Citizen Centres, totalling 86 facilities of this type. The next highest provision is, the City of Whitehorse with 52 Community facilities and City of Monash with 43 Community facilities..

The facility comparison across municipalities indicates that City of Boroondara's ratio of facilities to residents is within the mid-range of provision when compared to adjoining municipalities and associated population bases.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

An intensive array of market research and consultation techniques were used to investigate the leisure and cultural needs of the City of Boroondara residents. These included:

- Identifying relevant Leisure facility trends and participation.
- Conducting Public Forums.
- Seeking Public Submissions.
- Surveying Local Schools and Clubs using Councils previously conducted surveys.
- Surveying local residents through a household facility survey.
- Conducting Key Informant Interviews.
- Reviewing Previous Research.

Summaries of key findings are contained in the following sections/ Detailed information is listed in Volume One as marked in the brackets next to each subject heading.

4.2 LEISURE FACILITY AND PARTICIPATION TRENDS

A review of Recreation Industry trends and how they impact on the City of Boroondara area is summarised as follows;

(i) Population Change

- The Cities population is aging and showing an increasing number of frail and aged people who require less active recreation.
- The Melbourne Metropolitan area is experiencing a 2.4% population growth with a large percentage attributable to people from different ethnic backgrounds which creates a diverse mix of cultural and recreation interests.

(ii) Labour Markets

- The City has a high number of people in full time work. The weekly hours worked for these people is increasing resulting in less available non-committed time for recreation.
- Though there has been a decline in salary workers income levels, the Cities household income levels are very high indicating a continued ability to make discretionary spending on recreation activities.

(iii) Social Patterns

- People are becoming more health conscious with recorded decreases in smoking, drink driving and extended exposure to sunlight.

- There has been increased healthy lifestyle interest in diet and exercise with main causes of death, heart disease and cancer, showing reduced prevalence. This has resulted in a trend of average life expectancy increasing to 72 years for men and 78 years for women.
- Increased concern for conservation and environmental issues have led to increased value placed on open space, parkland and natural attractions.
- Increase in general education levels and higher retention rates at secondary schools.
- Increased population mobility through higher car ownership.
- Decrease in voluntary support with reduced numbers of people prepared to do voluntary work.

(iv) Recreation Demand/Participation Trends

- National recreation participation research indicates more than 70% of Australians took part in a recreation activity during the past 12 months. This projects research indicates that higher rates (88%) of recreation participation are recorded in Boroondara.
- Most people recreate close to home, at infrequent times and are involved in non-organised, non-competitive activities.
- Recent ABS reports on how Australians spend their time indicates that most people spend between 5 to 6 hours per day involved in leisure activities. The time split is:
 - **Active leisure** (sport, exercise, travel for pleasure, games, hobbies) took up 57 minutes per day.
 - **Passive leisure** activities (non-active such as reading, TV, videos, computers, relaxing) took up 194 minutes per day.
 - **Socialising and being entertained** (visiting, socialising, cinema, theatre, spectators) took up 100 minutes per day.
- Research indicates a significant number of Australians are involved in competitive sport (3.1 million) with a further half a million people involved as non-players and administrators. Recent Victorian state research indicates up to (29%) of Victorians are involved in competitive sport.

More men (35%) than women (23%) are involved whilst fewer than (5%) of participants have some paid involvement.

- The most popular sports for Australians (1993/94) as indicated by National registrations were:

MEN		WOMEN	
Golf	303,000	Netball	301,000
Cricket	193,000	Tennis	162,000
Basketball	153,000	Golf	80,000
Australian Rules	151,000	Basketball	77,000
Tennis	137,000	Lawn Bowls	75,000
Lawn Bowls	115,000	Squash	46,000

- The popularity of an activity changes with age, therefore there is constant change in participation levels, as people move between different activities.
- The percentage of people participating in clubs and competitive organised sport is decreasing down from (32%) in 1988 to (29%) in 1996 (Victorian Averages) due to high demand for casual, unstructured participation at a time people are available. This places a pressure on providing a more diverse range of recreation facilities and greater emphasis on casual unstructured areas i.e. bike trails, parkland, open space, etc.
- Melbourne households on average spend \$86 per week (out of an average \$860 total expenditure) on recreation/leisure related expenditure. This relates to 10% of total weekly household expenditure and indicates a potential large income source that can be attracted if the right facilities are built and programs available.

4.3 PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS (REFER VOL 1: APPENDIX 5)

Interested people were invited to lodge public submissions on Recreation Facilities and associated issues. A total of 27 public submissions were received, 13 by telephone, one by e-mail and 13 by letter.

A review of the submissions indicates the following issues were raised:

- Improvement of Balwyn Park and Associated amenities: (three submissions.)
- Provision of leisure programs for severely overweight people: (one submission.)
- Maintain squash courts at Hawthorn Recreation Centre: (one submission.)
- Lack of netball facilities within Boroondara: (five submissions.)
- Concern increase rental fees Balwyn Library Meeting Room: (one submission.)
- Concern with Howard Dawson Reserve and Nettleton Park: (one submission.)
- Upgrade Hawthorn Leisure Centre to indoor aquatic facility: (three submissions.)
- Closure of Central Pool: (four submissions.)
- Development of Hays Paddock to include playground facility with disabled access: (one submission.)
- Preservation of natural settings within Boroondara: (two submissions.)
- Development of Civic Square Ashburton: (one submission.)
- Heating of Northern Pool: (two submissions.)
- Need for Regional Indoor Stadium (two submissions.)

4.4 SCHOOL SURVEYS (REFER VOL 1: TECHNICAL PAPER 3 SECTION 3.3)

A total of 66 schools were sent school facility surveys by the City of Boroondara in 1996. A total of 38 schools completed the surveys. A summary of key results is as follows:

- From the 38 schools that responded, 21 schools have hall or theatre facilities available for community use.
- Eleven schools have indoor multi-purpose court facilities available.
- The majority of facilities are owned by the Department of Education and usage conditions must meet their requirements.
- A total of 23 schools recreation facilities are managed by the School Council Board.
- Seven schools indicated that future developments of school recreation facilities are proposed including proposed theatre (Bailik College), extensions to hall (Balwyn Primary School), Performing Arts Complex (Swinburne Secondary College and Xavier College), hall renovation (Ruyton Girls School) and a boat jetty (Strathcona Girls Grammar).

4.5 CLUBS SURVEY (REFER VOL 1: TECHNICAL PAPER 3 SECTION 3.6)

In 1996 the City of Boroondara conducted an open space club survey. A total of 197 clubs were invited to complete this survey. A total of 66 club surveys were returned and the results indicated:

- A large range of Basketball Clubs indicated the need for a regional basketball stadium with a minimum four courts provision.
- Netball Associations indicated the need for an indoor stadium (2-4 courts) and outdoor courts (8).
- Hockey indicated the need for an extra synthetic pitch facility (Wet based pitch).
- Baseball indicated the need for improvements to existing facilities.
- Reserves Committees of Management strongly indicated improvement is needed to existing sports grounds including drainage, amenities and car parking.

4.6 RESIDENTS HOUSEHOLD SURVEY (REFER VOL 1: TECHNICAL PAPER NO. 3 SECTION 3.5)

A total of 609 residents were surveyed on their current recreation participation, use of facilities and likely future needs. A summary of the key results of the residents' survey is detailed as follows:

(i) Rates of Participation

Residents in the City of Boroondara indicated they have a very high participation rate in leisure activities with (88.2%) of the respondents indicating they had taken part in a leisure activity in the past 12 months. This is extremely high for such an ageing community.

Participation fluctuated by area of residence, with Kew (90%), Balwyn (93%), Canterbury (91%), Surrey Hills (93%) and Glen Iris (98%), all recording high participation rates. East Kew (77%) and Camberwell (73%) recorded lower than average participation rates.

The respondent age participation rates indicate that younger age profiles were less active. People aged 10-29 years recorded activity rates on average (4%) less than the City's average. People in this age category indicated lack of time, school and education commitments and not interested as the main reasons they were not more active.

On the other hand, people aged 30-59 years recorded participation rates of between (3%) to (6%) higher than the City average.

(ii) Most Popular Activities

Residents nominated 125 different activities in which they were currently involved indicating recreation is a very important aspect of residents lifestyle.

The most popular activities and potential numbers of people (based on projection of area population) participating were identified as:

• Casual Walking	41.6%	62,400 estimated participants in City.
• Indoor Swimming	17.5%	26,250 estimated participants in City.
• Golf	16.9%	25,300 estimated participants in City.
• Swimming Outdoors	14.1%	21,150 estimated participants in City.
• Tennis	13.9%	20,850 estimated participants in City.
• Basketball	7.2%	10,800 estimated participants in City.

A review of National leisure trends indicates that all activities except Golf are on average in the most popular activities of Australians. Golf participation in Boroondara is well above National averages.

Activity choice changes by gender, age and area where people live. This is also influenced by availability of facilities, programs and services. The large number of choices indicates and ongoing resource for Council to support a diverse range of facilities and activities.

(iii) Most Popular Future Activities

A total of 116 different activities were nominated by residents as future aspired activities. The most popular future aspired activities and potential number of people (based on projection of area population) who wish to participate were:

- Indoor swimming 12.5% 17,176 estimated future participants.
- Golf 11.7% 16,878 estimated future participants.
- Tennis 11.2% 16,157 estimated future participants.
- Bike Riding 10.1% 14,570 estimated future participants.
- Bush Walking 9.0% 12,983 estimated future participants.
- Visiting Gardens 8.4% 12,117 estimated future participants.

Future activity choices do change by gender and age. The large number of future activity choices indicates future resourcing of new activities and facilities will be a priority of residents and this is expected to cause additional demand in Council leisure facility resourcing.

(iv) Main Constraints on Future Aspired Activities

The main constraints nominated by residents for preventing them from currently participating were:

- Work commitments 15.8%
- Family commitments 12.2%
- Activity not available 7.1%
- Leisure commitments 6.1%
- No one to go with 5.3%
- Health Problem 4.4%

Constraints to participation changed with gender, age and where people live.

(v) Childrens' Current Participation

The most popular activities, nominated by parents for the children's age **group 5-10 years** were:

- Indoor swimming 51.9%
- Using playgrounds 36.4%
- Bike Riding 26.0%
- Tennis 24.7%
- Basketball 18.2%
- Libraries 14.3%

Activity choices changed for this age group by gender and residential area.

The most popular activities nominated by parents for the children's age group **six months to four years** were:

- Using playgrounds 88.3%
- Indoor swimming 36.7%
- Casual walk 30.0%
- Libraries 21.7%
- Picnics 10.0%
- Visiting Gardens 10.0%

(vi) Childrens' Future Activity Choices

There were 51 different activities nominated as future aspired activities. The most popular for children aged **5-10 years** were:

- Indoor swimming 51.9%
- Using playgrounds 36.4%
- Bike Riding 26.0%
- Basketball 18.2%
- Libraries 14.3%
- Cricket 11.7%

There were 25 different activities nominated as future aspired activities. The most popular for children **aged 6 months to 4 years** were:

- Using playgrounds 88.3%
- Indoor swimming 36.7%
- Casual walk 30.0%
- Libraries 21.7%
- Picnics 10.0%

(vii) Summary of Current and Future Activity Patterns

The following table summarises Adults and Childrens most popular current and future activity patterns

CURRENT ACTIVITIES					
ADULT			CHILD		
1.	Casual Walking	41.6%	1.	Using Playgrounds	62.3%
2.	Indoor Swimming	17.5%	2.	Indoor Swimming	44.3%
3.	Golf	16.9%	3.	Bike Riding	26.0%
4.	Outdoor Swimming	14.1%	4.	Using Libraries	18.0%
5.	Tennis	13.9%	5.	Tennis	12.4%

FUTURE ACTIVITIES					
ADULT			CHILD		
1.	Indoor Swimming	12.6%	1.	Using Playgrounds	62.3%
2.	Golf	11.7%	2.	Indoor swimming	44.3%
3.	Tennis	11.2%	3.	Libraries	18.0%
4.	Bike Riding	10.1%	4.	Walking	15.0%
5.	Bush Walking	9.0%	5.	Bike Riding	13.0%

The results indicate walking and swimming are the most popular adult activities whilst using playgrounds and swimming are childrens. In the future indoor swimming and using playgrounds are still highest rated choices.

(viii) Rating of Current Services

The leisure services rated by residents as good were:

- Parks and Gardens 75.6%
- Library Services 68.4%
- Indoor Swimming and Leisure Centres 56.9%

These indicate a high satisfaction rating with main leisure facilities (excluding stadiums).

The highest poorly rated services were:

- Entertainment activities 24.4%
- Festival, celebrations and events 23.9%
- Indoor sporting facilities 22.3%

These indicate that one in four people rated such services and facilities poorly.

Services that people could not rate or were uncertain about were:

- Leisure activities for people with special needs 66.3%
- Arts and cultural facilities 39.3%
- Arts and cultural activities 39.1%

These results indicate people were uncertain about arts and cultural facilities and services.

(ix) Priorities for Facility and Program Funding

The top five future funding priorities for future leisure facilities were:

- Libraries 28.1%
- Parks and Gardens 8.5%
- Walking paths/trails 8.3%
- Indoor pools 7.4%
- Health and Fitness Centres 7.4%

Facilities rated with low future funding priority were:

- Playing fields 7.0%
- Sports pavilion 6.0%
- BMX facilities 1.3%
- Skateboard facilities 1.8%

(x) Regional Facility Usage

The most used regional facilities by residents were:

- Yarra Bend and surrounds 57.1% used
- Bike path networks 45.0% used
- Kew Recreation Centre 31.3% used
- Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre 26.6% used

The least used regional facilities by residents were:

- Ladyworks Fernwood gym 97.4% had not used
- Findlays Gym 97.2% had not used
- Richmond Recreation Centre 96.0% had not used
- Winning Edge Gym 95.8% had not used
- Malvern Valley Golf Course 93.3% had not used.

(xi) Local Facility Usage

The most used local facilities by residents were:

- Closest library 77.2% used
- Closest walking paths 72.5% used
- Closest indoor pool 53.6% used

The least used local facilities by residents were:

- Closest Council fitness centre 80.9% not used
- School facilities - indoor sports 80.9% not used
- School facilities - outdoor sports 80.7% not used
- School facilities - performing arts 80.6% not used

(xii) Priority Demographic Groups

The highest priority for future funding was given to the following groups:

- People restricted to their homes 28.8%
- Older adults 18.3%
- People with disabilities 13.2%
- Youth 11.8%

(xiii) Information Sources

The most used information source for finding out about leisure services was local newspapers (33.1%), Council Offices (15.7%), Boroondara Bulletin (13.0%) and ask friends or relatives (11.2%).

(xiv) Main Leisure Features

The main leisure features in the City cited by residents were:

- Parks and gardens 121 responses
- Walking Paths 55 responses
- Good Libraries 54 responses
- Bike Paths 51 responses
- Kew Recreation Centre 19 responses

The main leisure problems cited by residents were:

- Cost of activities 15 responses
- Lack of children’s playgrounds 15 responses
- Unrestrained dogs 12 responses
- Safety Issues 12 responses

(xv) Rating of Leisure Service Issues

A range of statements and questions were asked to test agreement or disagreement with a broad range of leisure facility issues:

Residents highly supported:

- Council should improve or “recycle” existing facilities, which are not well used to encourage alternative leisure or community activities (82.1% agree)
- Greater sharing of facilities by clubs and groups should be encouraged by Council (81.7% agree)
- Council should subsidise charges or make concessions for children and special needs groups using Council facilities (79.8% agree)
- Council should provide recreation programs for disadvantaged groups. (77.7% agree)
- Council should expand the network of cycle and walking paths in the City (74.4% agree)
- Council should support and resource community groups to assist them in providing recreation opportunities (73.1% agree)
- Council should assist the development of community recreation facilities at schools (69.4% agree)
- Facility use should be maximised before any new facility development is considered (66.9% agree)
- Council should provide rental assistance for community groups and organisations to use the Camberwell Centre and the Hawthorn Town Hall (59.1% agree)
- The City of Boroondara has enough indoor swimming facilities to meet my needs. (58.4% agree)
- Council’s Leisure and Aquatic Centres should cover annual operating and capital improvement costs (53.3% agree)

Residents disagreed with:

- There is no need for more than one outdoor pool in the municipality (61.3% disagree)
- Council should not provide facilities which directly compete with commercial leisure centres (54.4% disagree)
- I have difficulty in using local community leisure and cultural programs/facilities (39.8% disagree)
- There is no need for Council to provide an outdoor netball complex within the municipality (35.0% disagree)

Residents were uncertain about:

- Council should extend the facilities at Balwyn Leisure Centre to provide for more indoor sports (66.2% uncertain)
- Council should consider other uses for the Northern Pool (65.6% uncertain)
- Council should not provide more indoor sports courts in the Hawthorn/Kew area for basketball (63.8% uncertain)
- There are not enough indoor sports courts in the City of Boroondara (62.5% uncertain)
- The City of Boroondara has an adequate range of performing/visual arts venues. (57.2% uncertain)
- Council should encourage multiple sporting uses in the development of Markham Reserve, Victory Boulevard, Ashburton (53.5% uncertain)
- Facilities that cater for multiple uses should be a priority to be funded over single use facilities. (53.5% uncertain)
- Sportsgrounds in my suburb do not need upgrading (48.9% uncertain)
- There is a need to attract more commercial leisure and entertainment facilities to the City (45.0% uncertain)
- Council should not duplicate major leisure and sports facilities which are outside the City, that are available for residents uses. (36.4% uncertain)
- Sports clubs should pay up to 25% of the cost of maintaining the sports grounds they use. (35.5% uncertain)

4.7 PUBLIC FORUMS

Five public forums were held in late November and early December. Three issue based forums were held in February 1997, to provide residents with the opportunity to discuss issues in relation to sports courts, recreation facilities and community/neighbourhood facilities and leisure facilities.

Key issues identified are summarised as follows (*For detailed information refer to Vol. 1. Technical Paper No. 3*).

- There is a lack of indoor stadiums in the municipality.
- The Ashburton Aquatic Centre caters for residents outside the City of Boroondara.
- Council needs to work in partnership with residents and groups.
- Maintenance of grounds is poor.

- There is a lack of communication between Committees and Council as to maintenance responsibilities.
- Standard of pavilion facilities needs to be reviewed.
- Existing drainage and water management at grounds should be regarded as a priority in the future.
- There is a need for indoor/outdoor netball facility within Boroondara.
- Various buildings and operational improvements were identified at a number of Community and Neighbourhood Centres.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides details on Councils main leisure facility and services strategy options and details specific recommendations on:

- Future trends affecting Leisure Facilities Strategy
- Leisure Facility Strategy frameworks
- Capital Assistance Systems
- Aquatic Facilities
- Indoor Stadiums
- Reserves/Sports Grounds
- Playgrounds
- Tennis courts
- Bowling clubs
- Golf club
- Community Centre/Neighbourhood Houses
- Open Space/Linear Trails
- Information and Communication Strategies

Each section is presented in summary format that covers:

- Key findings/main issues
- Strategy directions
- Recommendations

5.2 FUTURE TRENDS AFFECTING THE LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY

The studies key findings combined with the consultants' teams previous experience, current industry trends and latest research findings indicate Councils Future Leisure Facilities Strategy is expected to be impacted by the following factors:

- There is a slow reduction in participation in competitive and traditional sports, with people becoming increasingly unwilling to commit themselves to play 'for a whole season' or available to play and train a number of days a week.
- Due to time constraints, people are cutting back their leisure and recreation activities and are more demanding about those which remain. To remain viable, the quality of facilities, programs and services will have to continually improve.
- There will be a greater demand for indoor facilities (available all year/every day) and higher quality outdoor playing surfaces.

- With increased age longevity and larger numbers of fit, healthy older people, the demand for exercise, and for conveniently located facilities will increase.
- Because of their reliance on young players, many sports will grow more slowly than the adult population as a whole.
- Sports activities with high projected growth rates include golf (20%), Bowls/Ten-Pin Bowling (18%), Sailing (15%), Archery (13%), Fishing (13%), Jogging and Running (11%).
- With new technologies and commercial interests investing in leisure, a wide range of activities, particularly those targeting teenagers, will continue to undergo cyclic popularity.
- With ongoing Government economic constraints and limited capital and operational budgets, new sports facilities may have to be joint venture arrangements between private and public sectors and sports clubs.
- Sports clubs dependent on voluntary labour and support will be required to provide greater incentives and better management to attract volunteers.
- The costs to sports clubs of equipping, insuring and managing players and administering games will continue to increase.
- The reduction in commitment to curriculum based school sports in state schools, the amalgamation of schools and the sale of school properties will have impacts on the local availability of school sports facilities while also discouraging public sector investment in new facilities.
- Contracting of facility management has greatly improved industry services and management systems. Management is now regarded more accountable to the owner and user of the facility.
- Due to restricted rate and other revenue bases, local Councils, will have to encourage greater private investment in leisure facilities and services. This may be achieved by a mix of rate concessions, payback loans, management rights in return for investment, provision of land and planning concessions.
- Recreation facilities will be increasingly targeted towards paying customers that attend programs or become members to ensure higher frequency of visitations and spends per visit.
- Facility provision is changing from single-purpose to multi-purpose. A great deal of infrastructure expenditure is now being directed to the development of larger public and private complexes providing aquatic, health, fitness and indoor sports facilities because of the higher utilisation which can be achieved. There is less emphasis on the development of traditional single purpose outdoor sports facilities.

- More flexible designs are being created and there is a growing expectation that facilities will need to be renovated/upgraded on a periodic basis. There is a realisation that facilities have a “**customer interest life-span**” which is much less than the facility life-span. There has been a significant improvement in the design of leisure facilities with more care being given to improved materials, management and cost control issues and integrated planning approaches.
- There is a growing emphasis in the public sector on managing facilities to be more sensitive to the needs of customers and more accountable in the areas of service quality and cost.
- The planning process for new facilities has improved significantly with the conduct of effective feasibility studies being the norm. These studies have generally included management/marketing/financial plans with demand projections based on sophisticated survey data.
- There has been considerable improvement in the management of leisure facilities, with increased expectations of managers to produce better financial outcomes and generate higher attendances. Public sector facility managers now need higher skill levels, face broader roles, need access to better training and professional networks and improved financial reporting systems.
- Internal management teams will be expected to face increasing pressure of competition from private operators and not for profit competitors in second round contract tenders.
- As competition increases there will be an increased emphasis on programming and target marketing based on adopting consumer driven strategies and performance evaluation techniques. This indicates a greater resourcing of local area planning, knowing who are your customers and how to attract them.

5.3 LEISURE FACILITY STRATEGY FRAMEWORKS

The Leisure Facilities Strategy Plan must be closely linked to the City’s Corporate Vision, current leisure policies, operating principles and goals to provide a consistent framework for future decision-making.

Council’s Leisure and Culture Policy was adopted in August 1996 with the following values and principles:

Leisure and Culture Values

- Equity and Access
- Responsive to customer needs
- respect for people
- Accountability
- Innovation

Leisure and Cultural Services Principles

- Integrated and strategic planning for general well being of the community.
- Community involvement in determining needs and forming decisions.

Leisure and Cultural Services goals

- Developing a sense of neighbourhood and community ownership with the recognition of diversity resulting in the growth of a vibrant and active community.
- Provide high quality, cost effective professional and responsive services.

5.3.1 Leisure Facility Development Principles

Throughout the course of this project, a range of consistent issues have been raised about the need to expand on Council's Leisure and Cultural Services principles to provide a more clear cut and definite guide to decision-making and resource allocations. Such principles need to allow Council to be able to make clear decisions on future facility development priorities, that are strategically placed to:

- Meet the majority of community needs
- Are cost-effective
- Maximise existing resource allocations
- Ensure equity and access
- Represent best value for money investment.
- Do not duplicate existing services.

Council already has in place a range of facility development criteria for specific grants or facility support projects. A review of these indicates the need to bring these together into a combined priority criteria guide for all facility types.

Council should adopt an updated set of Leisure Facility Development Principles that will provide a total facility type priority criteria. This can be used for future decision-making and facility project prioritisation.

The following principles have been developed using Council's existing priority statements in its existing Reserves and Sporting Facilities Policy and adding new statements and criteria. The principles are not listed in any priority order.

CITY OF BOROONDARA LEISURE FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

1. Council will work in partnership with leisure organisations, clubs and industry groups to plan, develop and operate facilities, programs and services, which enhance the image and amenity of each community of interest and enhance opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in a range of activities.
2. Council will encourage community involvement in leisure facilities, programs and services by supporting the continued development of local groups and organisations.

3. Council accepts responsibility to ensure that its leisure facilities are used and maintained efficiently and effectively and protected from damage and overuse. Clubs/organisations who assist this aim will get priority, over clubs/organisations who limit community use or do not maintain or care for the facilities.
4. To ensure leisure facilities are distributed equitably throughout the community, Council as a priority, will support resource and facility sharing and encourage projects that allow joint development by Council, clubs and users.
5. Council will maximise financial, physical and human resource contributions for facilities and programs by supporting, as a priority, projects that encourage maximum and multi-functional use of facilities.
6. Council will play a direct role in encouraging clubs, organisations and participants to make facilities and activities available to residents and facilities by prioritising Council grants, capital funding and loan schemes to such projects
7. Council will work in partnership with State and Federal Governments to attract funding resources to leisure facilities that meet the needs of the residents.
8. Council will give priority to supporting upgrading of existing facilities, programs and services to achieve optimum use and development, before supporting development of similar new services.
9. Council will give priority to facilities, programs and services that are effectively and efficiently managed by local Committees of Management that involve local groups and users and share the cost of provision, maintenance and operations.
10. Council, as a priority, will support projects that protect the City's natural assets and outdoor recreation/leisure areas to ensure they will continue to meet people's need for high quality environmental experiences.
11. Council will strategically plan to provide an equitable distribution of different size and standard facilities based on categorisation of facilities as local, suburban, municipal and regional.
12. Council will allocate funds using a joint contribution and standards of provision points score rating system that encourages greater sharing of facilities, reflects areas of high need and attracts partnership funding.
13. Council will ensure funds generated from leisure facilities are reinvested into maintaining, expanding and maximising development of such facilities.

5.3.2 Leisure Facilities Development Principles Recommendation

The Leisure Facilities Development Principles' recommendation is:

LEISURE FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Council adopt the Leisure Facilities Development Principles listed in Volume 2 Section 5.3.1 as criteria for prioritising facility projects.

5.4 PRIORITISATION OF FACILITY CAPITAL ASSISTANCE

Council has already in place capital assistance schemes for sporting and recreational facilities. These schemes are well set up and have effective application procedure time-lines, broad funding limits, selection criteria and cover both minor and major capital assistance.

In summary, the schemes rate facilities under categories A to E as follows:

- Category A:** Free and open access and traditionally Council funds all capital improvements and majority of operational costs.
- Category B:** Multi-use, open access and exist in a non-competitive environment i.e. sportsgrounds, pavilions, community centres. Council funds core facilities and will consider funding or providing loans for up to 50% of non-core facilities.
- Category C:** Large scale multi-use facility with open access in a competitive market (i.e. major leisure centres). Council aim these facilities to be self-supporting (excluding depreciation) and contribute operational funds towards capital improvements. Partnership funding with community, educational and private sector groups is covered in this category.
- Category D:** Facilities that provide restricted or exclusive use and generally operate under a lease. Council may contribute up to 25% of the total cost of the facility by way of loan provision or under certain circumstances capital grants.
- Category E:** Civic/cultural facilities. Council allocates funding to these facilities based on available resources and community needs.

Discussions with officers indicates that even with such a developed system, it is still difficult to prioritise projects, as there are annually more applications than can be funded. There is also the problem of stronger clubs being in a position to attract funding due to higher club contributions and experience in meeting Council funding criteria.

The main constraint to prioritisation is the inability to rate the different levels of standard of provision of each facility to judge priorities over other similar facilities.

It is therefore supported that Council continue to detail inventories on all its facilities and rate them under a standards of provision formula. This data base should be supported by two improvements to existing schemes being:

- Facility contribution schedules.
- Point score rating systems for applications.

5.4.1 Leisure Facilities Contribution Schedules

The large range of Leisure Facilities improvement applications by clubs and organisations indicates a high demand for facility upgrades and expansion funding, well outside the ability of Council to meet. In line with continued tightening fiscal policies and Local

Government rate capping, it is further envisaged that future funds available for such works, will continue to be reduced while demand is high.

The Study findings indicate that Council does not currently have an extensive priority system to determine each facility's standard of provision and therefore decisions on funding may be at times based on application and individual project assessment.

Due to the lack of funding, Council needs to encourage clubs to make a greater contribution to facility development. It is recommended that Council introduce a joint facility development and improvement funding schedule that provides clear indications to Council's maximum contribution it will consider for any project type. This will allow Council to better target priority areas and encourage clubs to plan and fund a share of the development.

A draft contribution schedule has been developed to identify potential capital contributions for different project types. The percentage contributions from Council can be reviewed annually and changed in line with Council's changing facility provision and facility supply priorities. The percentages allocated for each project are based on an interpretation of current policies and practices. Funding for categories C and D will generally be considered through loan provision or funded through operational surpluses.

TABLE 5.1
CITY OF BOROONDARA
SUGGESTED FACILITY TYPE GRANT OR LOAN CONTRIBUTION SCHEDULE

FACILITY CATEGORY TYPE	PROJECT	SUGGESTED COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION (GRANTS/LOANS)	SUGGESTED CLUB/ COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION
A	Playgrounds and neighbourhood parks	Up to 100%	-
	Public Open Space and linear parks	Up to 100%	-
B	Upgrading of playing surfaces from basic standard (that are available for general public uses)	Up to 50%	50% and greater
	Development of new pavilions, changerooms/amenities to service outdoor areas (available to the public) to core standard	Up to 75%	25% and greater
	Upgrading of pavilion/changerooms amenities to above core standard (available to public)	Up to 50%	50% and greater

FACILITY CATEGORY TYPE	PROJECT	SUGGESTED COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION (GRANTS/LOANS)	SUGGESTED CLUB/ COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION
	Clubrooms/meeting/social facility development or upgrades, primarily built for club purposes	Up to 25%	75% and greater

B (cont'd)	Neighbourhood and Community Centre upgrades available for community use	Up to 90%	10% and greater
C	New school/community activity areas (indoor and outdoor) where substantial community use is available	Up to 25%	75% and greater
	Upgrading of school community activity areas to allow greater community use	Up to 50%	50% or greater
	Indoor multi-purpose aquatic or dry activity areas that increase community use		
	Indoor activity areas meeting full size standard requirements in multi-purpose centres	Up to 80%	20% and greater
D	Club facilities for restricted public use	Up to 25%	75% and greater

The contribution percentages are listed as a guide only reflect the new leisure facility principles and criteria listed in Section 5.3. They support facilities as a priority that encourage multi-purpose and maximum use, indoor facilities and refurbishment/upgrading of standards of current facility provision.

5.4.2 Leisure Facilities Priority Criteria Rating System

To assist council in rating and prioritising projects, it is recommended that all applications for funding are assessed under a new point score system. The proposed system has been developed from Council's current policies and suggested new principles. As a guide, we have created 16 assessment criteria based on a rating system of one to five points per category. The one to five scoring system will allow the project rating to be decided as to the degree the project meets or does not meet each criteria. The suggested point score rating system is detailed as follows:

These will need to be reworked and added to by various Council sections but, as a guide, there are 16 assessment criteria based on a rating system of up to five points per category, as follows:

**Table 5.2
Leisure Facilities Priority Point Score Rating System**

PROJECT PRIORITY CRITERIA	PROJECT RATING CONTINUUM					SCORE
	Does Not Meet Criteria	Meets part Criteria	Meets			
Does the project create new or increased recreation or sporting opportunities for residents	1	2	3	4	5	
Will the project increase operational self-sufficiency or improve financial viability	1	2	3	4	5	
Will the development reduce the level of maintenance costs to Council.	1	2	3	4	5	
Is the facility available for public use and is it accessible?	1	2	3	4	5	
Will the project provide increased safety and security to users	1	2	3	4	5	
Will the project reduce gaps in current facility provision	1	2	3	4	5	
Is there an under supply of similar facilities in the catchment area	1	2	3	4	5	

PROJECT PRIORITY CRITERIA	PROJECT RATING CONTINUUM					
	Does Not Meet Criteria ☒ Meets part Criteria ☒ Meets					SCORE
Is the club/organisation able to fund its required capital contribution	1	2	3	4	5	
Is the project compatible with other site users and site facilities	1	2	3	4	5	
Will the project increase multi-use and cater for a broader range of users	1	2	3	4	5	
Will the project upgrade an existing low standard facility	1	2	3	4	5	
Is the project identified as a priority in Council's Facilities Development Plan	1	2	3	4	5	
Are there alternative facilities in the area that, if upgraded, would provide greater benefits?	1	2	3	4	5	
Has the project previously been short listed but not funded due to lack of funds	1	2	3	4	5	
Does the facility generate an operating surplus that could be used to assist funding the project	1	2	3	4	5	
Will the project have minimum impact on amenity of surrounding areas?	1	2	3	4	5	
TOTAL PROJECT RATING SCORE						

The Project's priority criteria have been developed to provide Council with a model for review, refinement and adjustment. It is recommended that Council adopt the criteria in principle and form an integrated planning group to review and recommend a final project criteria scoring system.

5.4.3 Leisure Facility Priority Criteria Point Score Rating System Recommendations

The Leisure Facility Priority Criteria Rating Scheme recommendations are:

LEISURE FACILITIES ASSISTANCE SCHEMES	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Council adopt, in principle, the joint contribution schedules and priority grant scheme point score as detailed in Tables 5.1 and 5.2.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Council form an integrated planning team involving relevant officers, to review, modify and recommend final contribution schedules and grant point score schemes. This review to be completed by late 1997 to enable new scheme guidelines to be adopted and publicised.

5.5 AQUATIC FACILITIES STRATEGY

The projects key findings in relation to Aquatic facilities indicate that Council's four operating aquatic/recreation centres attracted the following visitations in 1996/97:

- Kew Recreation Centre 670,000
- Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre 689,000
- Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre* 238,000
- Northern Pool, Balwyn 26,000

Total estimated attendance 1.623 million users/yr (1996/97)

**Pool attendees were approximately 60,000 and the balance dry centre users.*

A total of 1.623 million people visited the centres in 1996/97 which represents 10.8 visits per head of population. Even taking into account visitations by people living outside the municipality, indications are that residents are making high use of Councils Indoor pool facilities and lower use of outdoor pool facilities.

5.5.1 Business Performance 1995/96

A review of each Centres business and attendance performance shows the following trends:

**TABLE 5.3
REVIEW OF MAJOR AQUATIC FACILITIES 1996/97**

FACILITY	1996/97 INCOME	1996/97 EXP.	1996/97 (LOSS)/ SURPLUS	1996/97 TOTAL ATT.	AVE. INC/ USER	AVE.EXP/ USER	NETT (LOSS)/ SURPLUS/ USER	INCOME RECOVERY
	\$	\$	\$		\$	\$	\$	%
Kew Recreation centre	2,199,800	2,003,364	196,000	67,000	3.28	2.99	0.29	109.8
Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre	2,934,544	2,518,617	415,927	686,000	4.27	3.67	0.60	116.5
Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre ①	410,000	530,000	(-120,000)	238,000	1.72	2.22	(-0.50)	77.3
Northern Pool	69,636	128,811	(-59,444)	26,000	2.67	4.95	(-2.28)0	54.0

① Dry centre income only as VWP keep all pool income.

These results indicate:

- Kew Recreation Centre though attracting the highest use records a lower income per user (then Ashburton) primarily due to lack of food, beverage and merchandising areas to attract secondary spending revenue.
- The indoor pools generate operating profits ranging from 29¢ per user to 60¢ per user whilst the outdoor pools generate losses of 0.50¢ per user to \$2.29.
- The Kew Recreation Centre has the smallest water area of the four pools but is attracting only slightly less users than Ashburton. This supports the development issue of continual overcrowding of water space and the need for more pools.
- Though the indoor pools are generating profits, the income recovery ratio is between 9% and 16% above expenses. This is not a large margin for an annual operational expenditure at the pools in excess of \$2.0M to \$2.5M.

5.5.2 Business Trends

The following table details the Centre's business trends:

**TABLE 5.4
BUSINESS TRENDS**

CENTRE	1994/95			1995/96			1996/97 Est		
	Income	Exp.	Net (Loss)/ Surplus	Income	Exp	Net (Loss)/ Surplus	Income	Exp	Nett (Loss)/ Surplus
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Kew Recreation Centre	1,980,000	1,886,000	94,000	2,407,000	2,220,000	187,000	2,199,800	2,003,364	196,000
Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre	2,497,000	2,195,000	302,000	2,955,000	2,667,000	288,000	2,934,544	2,518,617	415,927
Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre	330,000	420,000	(-90,000)	316,000	388,000	(-72,000)	410,000	530,000	(-120,000)
Northern Pool	89,700	147,400	(-57,700)	83,200	156,800	(-73,600)	69,636	128,811	(-59,444)

The business review indicates:

- Kew Recreation Centre's nett surplus has increased from \$94,000 in 1994/95 to \$196,000 in 1996/97. During this period, income has increased each year at a higher rate than expenditure.
- Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre's nett surplus has also increased slightly during the three years, from \$302,000 to \$416,000.
- Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre had gradually reduced its operating loss, to 1995/96. The 1996/97 performance records a higher loss of (\$120,000).
- Northern Pool is showing a trend of increasing annual loss, reducing income and increasing expenditure.

5.5.3 Market Research Findings

Swimming was highlighted as adults second highest participation activity with indoor swimming (17.5%) and outdoor swimming (14.5%), combining to represent (32%) of active adults participation choice. Children also indicated indoor swimming was the second highest participation activity.

When considering future demand, adults chose indoor swimming (12.6%) as the highest future choice as did children.

Survey respondents also rated indoor swimming centres as good (56.9% satisfaction rating) while indoor pools were rated as the fourth highest future project funding priority.

Both Kew and Ashburton Pools showed up as high use regional facilities with monthly usage rates of (31.3%) and (26.6%). Locally (53.6%) people also make use of their closest indoor pool.

The Household Survey results indicated that (58.6%) of respondents agreed that the City had enough indoor swimming facilities to meet their needs, while (53.3%) agreed that Council's Leisure and Aquatic Centres should cover annual operating and capital improvement costs.

Respondents (61.3%) disagreed that there is no need for more than one outdoor pool in the municipality, while they were uncertain about Council considering other uses for the Northern Pool (65.6%).

5.5.4 Centre Reviews and Strategy Directions

This section details the key issues and strategy direction identified for each of Council's aquatic facilities.

5.5.4.1 Maintenance and Capital Upgrade Provision

Council's current combined aquatic services, in 1996/97, had an approximate total income of \$5.613M and a total expenditure of \$5,180M, resulting in an annual operating surplus of approximately \$433,000. (This excludes depreciation and major maintenance costs).

The two indoor pools are generating \$5.134M in income, which is 91% of total aquatic income raised. They also are generating \$4.887M in expenditure which is 79.5% of total aquatic expenditure. The combined Centres contributed a surplus of \$253,000 in 1996/97. This was a return above expenditure of 9.7%.

The two indoor pools are currently the third (Ashburton) and fourth (Kew) highest attended facilities in Victoria with a combined annual attendance in excess of 1.356M users in 1996/97.

Such use does cause high wear and tear on facilities and requires considerable maintenance provision funding.

(a) **Key Aquatic Facility Issues**

Council's previous system of considering centre maintenance and capital works in its annual budget is not regarded as "industry best practice". A drop in maintenance standard or facility quality does have an affect on business returns if funding is not allocated. The aquatic centres should be considered as a business unit that is able to fund maintenance and capital upgrades with funds held from surplus.

A detailed study of the Asset Maintenance Requirements of all its Recreation Facilities has been undertaken. The study has identified annual maintenance requirements and costs for its centres. A planned maintenance schedule is currently being developed to guide council on what costs need to be estimated for ongoing maintenance and upgrade works. Annual maintenance budgets should reflect the cost of works estimated. The centres should receive a priority over other Council facilities maintenance programs because:

- Drop in standards of presentation or operational efficiencies of the Centres will affect customer visits and corresponding bottom line returns.
- The high use of the indoor centres (1.356 million visits a year) creates major wear and tear that must be repaired immediately or the centres may be unsafe or secure for high use participation.
- The legal responsibility associated with charging a fee for service, but the facility not meeting standards of safety, security and operational performance.

If annual combined surpluses of around \$300,000 are achieved over the next four years, there could be \$1.2M available to reinvest in the facilities over that time. Council also needs to consider the aquatic facilities ongoing need to be upgraded/ renovated to ensure it prolongs each centres "**customer interest life span**" ie. add new and renovated customer attracting facilities to the centre.

The aquatic facilities review has highlighted the need for long-term planning and upgrading of aquatic facilities to ensure residents have access to some of Victoria's best aquatic opportunities. This requires considerable annual operational and capital funding. If Council does not continually reinvest in these facilities they may gradually lose some customer appeal, resulting in a drop in attendances, causing a change to the current operating returns.

In the private sector, many hospitality and leisure companies reinvest between 3% and 5% of annual revenue back into maintenance and capital upgrade provision to ensure they can fund long-term wear and tear and the cost of updating facilities. Many of these companies work on a four to five year major refit of facilities to stimulate existing customer interest and to attract new customer interest.

It is the Consultant Team’s opinion that council needs to update its financing systems to reflect the major business its aquatic facilities are currently in and ensure annual budget and improvements and cyclic maintenance/facility upgrades.

(b) Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in relation to maintenance and capital upgrade provision of aquatic facilities:

MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL UPGRADE PROVISION OF AQUATIC FACILITIES	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Council adopt service standards that give consideration to amenity, community needs and the financial performance for capital upgrade and maintenance works.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Council establish clear Asset Management systems with maintenance schedules in ongoing 5 year plans.
<u>RECOMMENDATION THREE:</u>	That Council involve Centre Management in developing the maintenance plans and report back by end of 1997.

5.5.4.2 Kew Recreation Centre

The Kew Recreation Centre is one of Melbourne Metropolitan’s most successful aquatic facilities. Currently it is placed as Melbourne’s fourth busiest pool (670,000 users) with only the Dandenong Oasis (890,000 users), Moorabbin Waves (735,000 users) and Ashburton (686,000 users) recording higher usage.

The Centre, located within a catchment area that has a number of competing major aquatic facilities is returning an operating surplus, although it suffers from:

- No dedicated food/beverage or merchandising area resulting in minimal secondary spend income being raised. Currently service is limited to vending machines and results in a lower spend per user than Ashburton Pool (i.e. Ashburton Pool average spend per user is \$4.27, while Kew is \$3.28).
- A restrictive entry foyer, small pool concourse areas and no dedicated social/relaxation spaces to attract people to stay longer at the Centre and purchase secondary spend items.
- Undersized changerooms for numbers of users (wet/dry centre users access same change area).

- At times overcrowded waterspace when casual use is competing with pool area program use.
- Lack of multi-purpose room areas and meeting spaces.
- Undersize crèche area only allowing 21 placements at any time.
- No annual maintenance provision allowance with all upgrades and refurbishments having to be considered in line with Council's annual budget.

(a) **Key Issues:**

The main issues raised during the Study in relation to operational performance and future development issues are as follows:

- Operates at annual surplus of \$100K to \$200K.
- Records 650,000 to 670,000 users per annum.
- Has limited water space for high volume users (children, lessons and frequent visitations) and limited water variety for long course and water program areas.
- Has no dedicated food/beverage service areas and records low secondary spending compared to Ashburton (\$500k plus)
- Lacks dry program spaces.
- Crèche is undersize for user demand (21 places).
- Has large health and fitness area.
- Has large range of competitor facilities within 5km radius that compete for users etc., Collingwood, Fitzroy, Northcote and Private School facilities.
- New pool area in long-term would provide expanded venue if Northern Pool closes.
- Due to site area restrictions, upstairs multi-purpose space should be considered.
- Surveys indicate users come from the following areas, Kew (37%), North Balwyn (13%), East Kew (12%), Hawthorn (9%) and Balwyn (3%).
- Centre receives high daily use causing major wear on facilities, fittings and finishes. Needs annual maintenance provision account to fund ongoing wear and tear. Need planned preventative maintenance program.

(b) **Strategy Direction**

The centre is currently not able to generate potential income from secondary spend sales due to limited food and beverage provision. The C.E.R.M indicators for similar centres show that the average spend per user on secondary spend items is around 75

cents per visit. Based on 660,000 users, this could return up to \$500,000 extra Centre income.

Industry returns on sales are estimated at around 25% (after expenditure) and this would see an additional profit on their sales to the centre of approximately \$100,000 to \$125,000 per annum. Such a profit could be used to finance loans for the required works over say a 5 to 10 year period (subject to final design and cost).

Recognising the existing annual operational surplus generated, the payback period could even be shorter if Council reinvested existing operational surpluses back into centre upgrades. Before any works occur, Council also needs to develop a master plan for the centre to position short term and long term facility extensions.

The key strategy directions for the centre based on the study findings are:

- Consolidate Kew Recreation Centre as the main northern leisure facility by prioritising capital works over other aquatic facilities, in the future.
- Complete feasibility/masterplan for long term centre development
- Development of new foyer extension to provide food and beverage area to increase secondary spend (i.e. \$500K to \$550K increase). Possible off High Street siting to cater for street trade as well.
- Long term development of new pools extension to northern end of pool hall to provide lap pool and enlarged toddlers' pool. First stage could be outdoor pool (laps) but designed for possible future covering and linking to existing pool hall.
- New changeroom area linked to extended pool area.
- Long-term development of more multi-purpose room areas (possibly upstairs over new foyer/food/beverage area) to minimise facility area take-up on site.

(c) **Strategy Recommendations**

The following strategy recommendations area made in relation to Kew Recreation Centre:

KEW RECREATION CENTRE RECOMMENDATIONS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	<p>That Council allocate \$30,000 in the 1998/99 budget to fund a masterplan and feasibility review to develop a long term facility development for the Centre. The review should consolidate and prioritise future conceptual layouts for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New entry/food/beverage area • New lap/activity pool • Enlarged toddlers/shallow water areas • New change/amenities to service new activity area • New plant rooms to service new activity area.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO</u>	<p>That Council consider the findings of the masterplan/feasibility review and the recommendations from the maintenance and capital upgrade review (see section 5.5.4.1) and set up a 1st stage works and funding schedule to develop new entry foyer/food and beverage area.</p>
<u>RECOMMENDATION THREE:</u>	<p>If Council cannot resource the required capital works recommended in the masterplan/feasibility study then consideration should be given to attracting a commercial investor to fund the food and beverage areas in return for operational rights. The timing of such an investment could be done in the next management contract period and linked to management rights.</p>

KEW RECREATION CENTRE RECOMMENDATIONS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION FOUR:</u>	Any redevelopment and upgrade of aquatic facilities at Northern Pool will have a negative effect on Kew business and attendances. Alternatively any future decision concerning Northern Pool should be linked to Kew Recreation Centre future plans.

5.5.4.3 Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre

The Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre is also one of Melbourne's busiest aquatic centres and is currently placed as the third most used centre in Victoria with 686,000 users in 1996/97.

The Centre is positioned at the southern end of the municipality. Because of this location it currently records similar use from people who live in other municipalities (combined use 1995/96 48%), than City of Boroondara residents (combined use 1995/96 52%).

Currently the Centre has minimal competition in its catchment zone from other facilities but any development of indoor aquatic centres in the City of Monash or Stonnington will affect customer numbers. This appears the main area of concern as operationally the Centre is currently operating extremely efficiently.

(a) Key Issues

The Study findings indicates the Centre:

- Operates at annual surplus of \$250K to \$420K per annum.
- Has 650,000 to 700,000 users per annum.
- Has both indoor and outdoor water areas satisfying broad aquatic markets.
- High user impact requires annual maintenance budget allocations to regularly replace fittings and fixtures.
- Indoor sports courts are located at rear of site adjoining reserve area. Possible future location to add more courts (in five to 10 years) subject to demand.
- Outdoor area needs increased shade areas.
- Majority of users come from outside City of Boroondara (56% estimated of all users) and facility aquatic development by City of Monash or Stonnington may affect future business.
- Indoor play area will soon need major upgrade or new play structure to compete against more modern regional leisure complexes.
- Customer Surveys indicate users come from Glen Iris (19%), Ashburton (16%), Burwood (12%), Mt. Waverley (10%), Camberwell (8%), Malvern East (6%) and Chadstone (3%).

(b) Strategy Directions

The main capital works identified at the Centre is the eventual need to replace the water play feature in the shallow water area. This receives high use and will require replacement over the next few years.

The replacement will provide the Centre with a chance to update one of the main customer drawing attractions. Instead of replicating the equipment, funding should be made available to introduce a themed state of the art leisure area. This will allow the Centre to market a new attraction, while also providing a high profile visual impact, as customers enter the Centre.

The other strategy directions relate to reserving an area adjacent to the rear of the indoor courts as a future development zone for sports court extensions. Such development demand is envisaged to be five to ten years on, but the area should be kept free of any major reserve improvements, in case extensions are needed.

A summary of key strategy directions for the Centre is as follows:

- Add more shade structures to the outdoor area.
- Increased annual maintenance allowances funded from operating profits to refurbish and refit Centre ensuring Centre is always presented at highest quality.
- Monitor local indoor stadium occupancies and consider future indoor court extensions (say 5 to 10 years) built adjoining existing courts. This will require minimal development of outdoor reserve area during this time to ensure development zone is clear of other buildings or playing areas.
- Provide major facelift to leisure water by theming play equipment area (when play structure needs replacing). This will provide a new entry image and provide a new regional user attractor.

(c) **Recommendations**

The following strategy recommendations are made in relation to Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre

ASHBURTON POOL AND RECREATION CENTRE	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Infrastructure Services review the water play equipment and determine its lifespan before replacement is required.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Council allocate \$15,000 in the 1998/99 budget to develop concepts and costings for redevelopment of the water play area.
<u>RECOMMENDATION THREE:</u>	That an area of 50m x 50m behind the existing stadium be reserved for possible future Centre extensions (i.e. no outdoor reserve developments be approved within this reserved zone).

ASHBURTON POOL AND RECREATION CENTRE	
<u>RECOMMENDATION FOUR:</u>	That Infrastructure Services develop an annual maintenance schedule and regularly monitor Centre maintenance (to ensure high wear and tear areas are continually refurbished) and the Centre is presented, at all times, with high quality finishes and fittings.
<u>RECOMMENDATION FIVE:</u>	That Council provide funds in the 1998/99 budget to increase outdoor shade areas surrounding the outdoor pool.

5.5.4.4 Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre

The Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre is a mix of facilities incorporating a 40 year old retro-fitted outdoor heated pool, with an 18 year old dry recreation centre. Although the redeveloped Centre has now linked both areas with common entry and reception, it is still operated under a split management system. The YMCA manage the dry area and Victorian Water Polo, the wet area.

All customers come in through the dry area foyer and YMCA management provides reception services with pool users controlled by Water Polo management.

The combined Centre is well used recognising it does not have large court or fitness areas and the pool is outdoors and unattractive to use on cold or wet days.

The Centre is landlocked and cannot be extended and therefore is not expected to have much greater capacity to attract more users, unless existing areas are substantially upgraded.

The 1996/97 season has seen 62,000 visitations to the pools and 176,000 to the dry facilities. This is a total attendance of 238,000 users. The Centre operates at an annual deficit of approximately \$120,000 per annum in 1996/97. The split of operational costs, and revenue, between both management groups, is difficult to identify. For example a clear picture of costs in providing reception, cleaning and electricity costs by the YMCA to the pool, is uncertain.

(a) Key Issues

A summary of key issues raised during the consultation were:

- Pool was originally built in early 1900's.
- Major Centre refurbishment was carried out 18 years ago.
- Centre runs at an annual deficit of \$50K to \$120K (dry component only).
- Annual attendance is between 200,000 and 250,000 users.
- Split management of wet and dry areas is not considered efficient for users, customer service, supervision, security and marketing.

- Centre is located in a constrained setting behind shopping centre and set on a small site landlocked by shopping centre car park, railway line and Glenferrie Oval. This indicates no opportunity to expand activity areas to encourage greater use.
- Fitness areas need services upgrade.
- Centre is located close to Swinburne University, Hawthorn Campus, which has no leisure facilities but student use is not that high.
- High energy cost to heat outdoor pool.

(b) **Strategy Directions**

The main issues of concern relate to the split Centre Management model that sees two management groups based at the Centre and the potential duplication of management costs.

The average spend per user is also very low with only \$2.22 raised per user. (Note Dry Centre income only). This indicates a mix of low entry charges, high concessional use or free use and low returns from secondary spending. Council's long-term strategy should be to consolidate management into one Centre based contract and to market and promote the outdoor pool to attract more users. For example, the Prahran Outdoor Heated Pool attracts 120,000 to 140,000 users per year and raises an income in excess of \$300,000 per annum. Hawthorn is well located to attract a similar market.

The Centre is also positioned to attract greater use by residents, shopping and business precinct users and Swinburne University students and staff.

In particular a closer link to Swinburne University student and staff recreation facility needs should be encouraged as they currently have no recreation facilities on campus. Consideration of increased student discounts or free use in return for an annual University payment could be an option. In the long-term, capital support from the University to upgrade the pool (possible cover) may be an option if students and staff being more frequent users.

The current high aquatic participation rate of residents indicates that the market for increasing residential use may be limited. Therefore the viability of covering the pool would be at a high capital cost with possible minimal attendance increase. The first action therefore should be to increase user numbers by promoting and targeting outdoor pool users.

A summary of strategic directions is detailed as follows:

- In short-term discuss with water polo options for their use of other facilities or improved business plan to attract more users.
- In the long-term set up one management contract for the combined Centre (water polo lease ceases in Year 2001).
- Complete fit out of health and fitness areas.
- Commence discussions with Swinburne University about greater involvement in use and development of the Centre in return for increased student concessions/ membership.
- Test Water Polo Association's interest in Northern Pool Balwyn.

- Long-term monitoring of the need to cover the outdoor pool to allow 12 month use or close pool and use site for redevelopment of dry facilities (ie. extra indoor sports courts).

(c) **Recommendations**

The following strategy recommendations are made in relation to the Hawthorn Aquatic and Leisure Centre:

HAWTHORN AQUATIC AND LEISURE CENTRE	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That a further detailed operation and financial review be carried out to review business performance targets for each Centre component. The review to identify income, attendance and expenditure break-ups for each area to assist with determining main priorities for business development. The results of this review to be used by Leisure and Cultural Services staff to negotiate business plan targets for future operating years.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Leisure and Cultural Services staff be endorsed to work with Victorian Water Polo to develop a new business plan, directly aimed at them attracting more users to the pool.
<u>RECOMMENDATION THREE:</u>	That Leisure and Cultural Services staff in conjunction with Centre Management identify current Swinburne University students and staff use of facilities.
<u>RECOMMENDATION FOUR:</u>	That Leisure and Cultural Services staff complete discussions with Swinburne University and Centre Management about potential recreation facility needs and possible new partnership arrangements to make greater use of the Centre.
<u>RECOMMENDATION FIVE:</u>	That discussions be held with Victorian Water Polo and the YMCA about possible lease management/contract changes with the aim of putting in place one management contract at the Centre prior to or on expiry of the current lease.

5.5.4.5 Northern Pool

The Northern Pool is a 37 year old outdoor cold water facility that is open for a limited (three month) period each year and attracting a low number of users. In 1996/97 the pool attracted 26,000 users which is, on average, less than 6,500 per month or 1,600 users per week which translates to 230 users per day.

Centre income is reasonable for the number of users with average spend per user being \$2.67. Kiosk purchases are included in the income and this causes the per person spend to be higher than expected.

Centre expenditure for an outdoor unheated pool is high when considering cost per user at \$4.95. The subsidy cost per user in 1995/96 was also high at \$2.28. The business trends at the Centre indicate slight increases in attendance in 1996/97 but the Centre deficit has also increased.

An annual pool attendance of 26,000 puts the Northern Pool within the lowest attendance category for most Melbourne outdoor pools (average range 35,000 to 50,000 users). Excluding the social and recreation equity issues of providing for local access the facility is economically and usage wise performing poorly.

(a) Key Issues

The key issues raised through the project consultation include:

- Centre is now 37 years old and is nearing the end of its operational life, unless major upgrade is undertaken.
- Annual season use is limited to a three months (cold water pool) of the year and attendances fluctuate between 18,000 and 26,000 users. Final attendance for 1996/97 was 25,900 users.
- Annual deficit has ranged from \$60K to \$70K.
- Water is unheated and too cold for most users.
- Facility appears to have significant concourse movement and associated pool cracks and tile damage.
- Large range of competing pools in area but these are mainly short course indoor pools.
- Diving facilities are considered a significant asset as there are not many such facilities within the region.
- Local organisations have formed together or presented Council with an idea of developing a major leisure complex at the site. No feasibility or demand factors are available to test viability. Additional discussion and review required ie impact on Kew Recreation Centre for any major development at the Balwyn site.

(b) Strategy Directions

Customer profiles indicate the Northern pool provides a cool off summer facility for close by residents and will therefore be highly regarded as a place for families and children. The dilemma Council faces is that the facility is old, in poor condition, unattractive to use due to unheated water and it is only able to be opened for a limited period of time each year.

Continuation of the service, for low numbers of users, at a high subsidised cost, for a short usage season will not change unless the facility is upgraded. At the moment annually operating the centre in the condition it is in will see continual deterioration of business performance. There will soon need to be a major capital investment in the facilities to keep them operational. With a deteriorating business performance such investments will be hard to justify.

If it was only an economic assessment then Council's best long-term strategy would be to close the pool and redevelop more water space at the Kew Recreation Centre.

Public consultation in the project area indicates this would not be a decision accepted by many residents. Even though they are not making a lot of use of the facility, they value its availability in their neighborhood. Alternative public open space or other recreation use may reduce resident complaints such as development of an indoor stadium, etc.

Attendances at the Kew Recreation Centre show that North Balwyn users make up (13.1%) and Balwyn (2.8%). Based on 1995/96 attendances this translates to 105,000 visits per year with 86,000 coming from North Balwyn and 18,500 from Balwyn. There is no reliable customer profile residential data from Northern Pool to identify and compare its main catchment zones and this should be undertaken next season (97/98).

Due to the high number of existing aquatic participation in the City it is not expected that a major upgrade at Northern Pool will attract viable user numbers. The age of the facility (37 years old) also indicates any major redevelopment may best start with demolition of existing facilities.

Council therefore is faced with a hard decision where it will politically have to keep a poorly performing facility open at a high annual cost.

Before Council can make a fully informed decision, there is need to complete a technical and physical review of the facilities including, leak detection, pool shell, concrete testing and filtration systems review. This report should provide Council with lifetime assessment of facilities, capital cost projections for fixing up facilities (and period of operation this will provide). This report should also identify cost projections for development of heating systems.

Detailed user surveys should also be conducted next to identify customers profile, facilities they use when the Northern Pool is closed and residential profile.

This information will provide Council with determining the future of the centre. If there is a reasonable life in facilities (i.e 5-7 years) then consideration of adding a water heating system to attract more users should be considered. This would be expected to be in the vicinity of \$80,000 to \$100,000 capital cost and \$40,000 to \$50,000 annual operating service cost.

If the report identifies the facility requires major capital investment to keep it open then an analysis of the cost versus expending such funds at the Kew Recreation Centre needs to be conducted.

If the pool is to be upgraded it needs to be positioned as an outdoor training, competition and fitness venue that could attract new groups such as triathletes, swim diving and water polo clubs to the centre as a Northern Regional Headquarters. Heated water would add to feasibility of attracting such groups. Victorian Water Polo may be interested in relocating their activities to this site due to deep water facilities being available.

(c) **Recommendations**

The following strategy recommendations are made in relation to the Northern Pool.

NORTHERN POOL RECOMMENDATIONS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Council undertake a detailed technical and physical review of the pool. This review to be completed by the end of 1997
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Council undertake detailed market research (customer surveys) on users of the pool for the 1997/98 season.
<u>RECOMENDATION THREE:</u>	That leisure and culture staff investigate and identify alternative user groups and potential organisations to be involved in discussions about the future of Northern Pool.
<u>RECOMMENDATION FOUR</u>	That Council monitor the business performance of the pool in 1997/98 and review its future operation in line with all report findings, by June 1998.

5.5.4.6 Central Pool

The Central Pool is in very poor condition and has been closed to the public for the past three seasons. The pool is poorly located to main public access and the age and quality of the facilities are not up to standard for current market expectations.

(a) **Key Issues**

The key issues identified from strategy consultations include:

- The Centre has been closed for three seasons and only used by the adjoining school under an annual licence agreement. They are responsible for management operational costs and user safety.
- Residents in the catchment area currently have options to use wide range of centres including Box Hill, Ashburton, Hawthorn, Kew, Northern Pool and range of private school pools.
- High use of pools already in the Municipality with in excess of 1.7 million visitations to Council's existing four pools. This equates to 11 visits per head of population. This is

well within State industry standards and indicates a limited new user market available to attend any new pools.

- Development of Kew and Ashburton and Box Hill appear to have attracted the traditional user market of the Central Pool. Reopening of this facility, although providing a closer facility for Camberwell residents, will be done at a high capital cost (major refurbishment needed) and effect to the profitability of Council's major aquatic facilities' business (reduced users spread over more facility options).

(b) Strategy Directions

There is currently minimal demand to reopen the pool except for school usage or as a local cool-down venue for closeby residents.

Pool use profiles indicate Camberwell residents are making reasonable use of Ashburton, Box Hill and Kew Pools, therefore, since closure three seasons ago, aquatic use patterns have moved to these indoor centres.

A detailed technical and physical audit should be completed to sign off on the state of the facilities, life expectancy and compliance with health and safety standards. Subject to the results it is recommended Council offers the facility to the adjoining school to assume responsibility of or closes and demolishes the pool to return the area to public open space. The amenity buildings have heritage listing and could be remodelled to provide toilet areas for users of any redeveloped public open space.

If the Camberwell High School is interested in taking over the pool including all required maintenance and upgrading costs. Council may be able to arrange long-term lease arrangement.

(c) Recommendations

The following strategy recommendations are made in relation to the Central Pool:

CENTRAL POOL RECOMMENDATIONS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That the Consultants endorse Council's decision that the pool should not be reopened for public use.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Council undertake a technical and physical review of the Central Pool by the end of 1997 to identify the state of facilities.
<u>RECOMENDATION THREE:</u>	Following completion of the technical review, Leisure and Cultural Services staff enter into discussions on Camberwell High School's viability of undertaking maintenance and upgrading for the Centre and report back to Council with a view to longer term leasing arrangements.

5.6 INDOOR STADIUMS

The Study has identified there are currently 13 venues that have indoor courts available for community use in the City of Boroondara. There are a total of 21 courts provided at these venues.

Public controlled centres are at Hawthorn Recreation Centre (1 court), Ashburton Pool and Recreation Centre (2 courts) and Balwyn Leisure Centre (1 court). All other venues are based at schools and are primarily only available for community use after 4.00 p.m. weekdays and all weekends. Some school facilities though are available during school vacation periods. Council also has long term management rights to ensure public access to Hawthorn Secondary College (2 courts) and Swinburne Secondary College (1 court).

The table on the following page summarises the occupancy results of centres (that were prepared to provide usage details (11 out of 13):

**TABLE 5.5
SUMMARY OF STADIUM USER OCCUPANCY**

NAME OF FACILITY	PEAK HOURS AVAIL. (EVENINGS)	PEAK HOURS USED	PEAK HOURS OCC. %	NON-PEAK HRS. AVAIL. (DAY TIME)	NON-PEAK HOURS USED	NON-PEAK OCC. %	TOTAL COURT OCC. %
Camberwell High School	30	30	100	61	35	57	71
Stephenson Centre (Xavier College)	60	51	85	122	61	50	80
Hawthorn Aquatic & Leisure Centre	30	29	96	53	14	30	52
Balwyn High School	60	60	100	116	116	100	100
Balwyn Leisure Centre	30	29	96	58	50	86	92
Hawthorn Secondary College	60	42	70	126	77	61	63
Swinburne Secondary College	30	23	77	61	48	79	78
Ashburton Pool & Recreation Centre	60	46	77	118	45	38	43
Kew High School	60	60	100	122	104	94	90
Ruyton Girls School	25	10	40	60	49	81	69
Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre	30	4	13	26	0	0	0

All courts have high occupancies in peak times ranging from 70% to 100% utilisation. In off-peak times usage is still high ranging from 40% to 100% utilisation.

Most stadiums indicated little capacity for extra use in peak periods, indicating demand for more sports courts.

(a) **Key Issues**

In relation to user demand the Study findings indicate:

- Large numbers of users of indoor sport and outdoor court areas in the Municipality with major associations based in the Hawthorn, Camberwell and Balwyn areas.
- The Hawthorn Basketball Association have approximately 283 teams per week playing in competition involving 1,300 children and 1,200 adults. The Association currently uses eight different centres for competition paying an annual rental of \$185,000 for use of these centres.
- The Balwyn Basketball Club has 58 teams involving 450-500 players per week. The Club uses three venues for training in the Balwyn area.
- The Camberwell Basketball Association plays in the Victorian State League and has 19 junior teams, three womens division teams and one mens division team.
- Netball is still primarily an outdoor sport with no major indoor courts in the City of Boroondara. The main competition is being played out of the City (at the Koonung Secondary College courts 6 outdoor courts), involving approximately 900 players per week. The majority of players come from Balwyn, Surrey Hills and Canterbury. In future netball is seeking an indoor/outdoor venue.
- Central Badminton Association uses a range of church halls in the City area for weekly competition. All facilities are unsuitable due to low roof heights, and poor court surfaces. Envisage use of courts if new stadium was built.
- Regional review shows lack of indoor stadiums also in the Stonnington and Glen Eira Council areas.
- All school site areas are presently highly used and are limited in future more court extensions.

(b) **Strategy Direction**

The current ratio of indoor sport courts to resident population is one court per 7,140 residents. The recreation industry currently uses one court per 5,000 people as a standard planning tool. Using this ratio the current provision of courts needed in the City could be up to 30. This would be an increase of nine extra courts on current provision.

The Study has received strong representation from basketball, netball, badminton and volleyball for the need for a regional stadium that has four or more courts at the one site. A review of the adjoining Municipalities of **Stonnington, Glen Eira** and **Yarra** also indicates there is a lack of a major multiple court venues in these areas. The City of Whitehorse has adequate provision in the nearby areas of Box Hill and Burwood.

Basketball has the highest participation numbers using indoor facilities in the City but player numbers are split between the Balwyn, Hawthorn and Camberwell areas. Currently netball is still predominantly an outdoor sport with most players having to travel outside the municipality to play in competitions.

Indoor sport trends indicate that these two sports are the fastest growing participating sport. In particular, due to the lack of netball venues in the City, this sport is expected to create considerable demand for indoor facilities, in the future. It should be recognised that none of the 900 plus players using Koonung School courts (in City of Whitehorse) are recorded in the current stadium occupancy figures.

The Consultant Team recommend that Council's future stadium strategy should incorporate the following facility provision:

- Single/multiple courts should be available in suburban areas for local and junior competition and training use.
- Major multiple court venues should be located in high profile, easily accessible locations to provide major competition venues for City-wide, regional and metropolitan activities.
- Regional facility provision should be strategically planned with the range of Councils requiring facility upgrades.
- Indoor netball facilities demand is low because of high outdoor competition use, but future sport trends indicate the demand will continue to change to indoor facilities for this sport.

The current participation levels in existing associations indicate there is adequate demand to fill a new four to five court complex but this should be a multi-purpose venue (due to the needs of the four main sports). Any more courts than four will have a detrimental affect of major reductions in business at existing stadiums.

The strategy should be directed by the following key indicators:

- Major multi-purpose regional indoor sport complex is needed for the City to cater primarily for basketball and netball while some use would be made by volleyball and badminton.
- Possible joint development between City of Boroondara, City of Stonnington and City of Yarra.
- Site needs to be able to cater for Hawthorn, Camberwell and Balwyn Association and Club use, but also need to be located to attract Stonnington, Glen Eira and Yarra Council area use.
- High profile site needed to ensure regional access. Freeway and main access roads would be a priority.
- Area for development zone should include approximately two hectares to allow for four courts, administration area provision for 150 car parks and future expansion areas and possible outdoor courts provision (ie. outdoor netball courts).

A major issue will be locating a suitable site for such a facility recognising the lack of large available open space areas in the City.

Possible sites that may meet this criteria and should be included in a Strategic Options Review include:

- Area near Auburn Road (close to south-eastern freeway) for regional stadium such as Patterson Reserve. Note: Bialik College are considering a new stadium at their school site adjoining Auburn Road as part of longer term development plans.

- Swinburne Secondary College Recreation Centre site off Camberwell Road.
- Rose Street Depot site.
- H.A. Smith Reserve, Hawthorn.
- Gordon Barnard Reserve Balwyn as an extension to the Balwyn Leisure Centre.
- Sites outside of Municipality such as Kooyong Park (City of Stonnington).

A range of Sporting Associations are currently independently seeking Council funds for such a stadium and it is essential these groups are brought together to ensure financial viability and potential increased sharing of capital costs of any regional stadium development.

The Study findings strongly support the need for a regional complex. A new multi-court complex will provide also for an increasing regional team demand where Associations are fielding teams in State and Metropolitan competitions. Such competitions require spectator facilities and social amenities and these capacities should be planned for in any final concept.

(c) **Recommendations**

The following information details strategy recommendations for indoor stadiums:

INDOOR STADIUM STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Council recognises the need for a regional four-court indoor sport complex to service the City of Boroondara.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Leisure and Cultural Services staff complete discussions with basketball, netball, badminton and volleyball Associations to identify the level of co- operation in developing a multi-use stadium.
<u>RECOMENDATION THREE:</u>	That Council complete discussions with representatives from the City of Stonnington, City of Yarra and City of Glen Eira to identify any proposals for indoor stadiums they are considering, and also their support for a joint regional project.
<u>RECOMMENDATION FOUR</u>	That Infrastructure Services and Strategic Planning and Leisure and Cultural Services form a review group to complete site investigations on nominated potential sites or other sites identified during the review. This group to recommend a short list of sites for future detailed feasibility by February, 1998.

INDOOR STADIUM STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

<p><u>RECOMMENDATION FIVE:</u></p>	<p>That Leisure and Cultural Services complete discussions with State Sporting Associations to identify any proposed stadiums in the region and their likely support for a regional project by April, 1998.</p>
<p><u>RECOMMENDATION SIX:</u></p>	<p>That Leisure and Cultural Services complete a summary report of all recommendation findings and present a final report on viability, potential partners and potential sites by June, 1998.</p>

5.6.1 Balwyn Leisure Centre

The Balwyn Leisure Centre is located in the Gordon Bernard Reserve and is now thirty-six years old. The Centre is in poor condition and needs constant maintenance, due to its age.

In 1995/96 the Centre raised a total income of \$585,000 and was used by 160,000 people. The Centre expenditure was \$660,000 resulting in an annual operating deficit of \$75,000.

Centre Management has raised the poor condition of the building as the major issue for strategy resolution. The Centre is receiving high usage for a local suburban facility. For example, the single court stadium is used a total of 79 hours out of a possible 88 hours a week. This is an average occupancy of 92% Basketball is the main user, recording in excess of 950 users per week.

Gymnastics is the second largest program with in excess of 800 users a week, followed by playgym having 700 users per week.

The main development requests from management and area research indicate renovating and updating the building is an immediate priority. Additional indoor court space and remodelling of gymnastics areas would increase user attraction.

Development of an extra indoor sports court will require some remodelling of area surrounds. Demand for such extensions will also depend on Council's final indoor court strategy that it adopts in June 1998 (See Section 5.6).

(i) **Recommendation**

The following information details strategy recommendations for the Balywn Leisure Centre:

BALWYN LEISURE CENTRE RECOMMENDATIONS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Infrastructure Services and Leisure and Cultural Services complete a review and costings on the Balwyn Leisure Centre immediate maintenance upgrade works to bring the facilities up to the required user standard. These works to be identified for funding consideration in the next financial year.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Leisure and Cultural Services complete a detailed review on the opportunity of adding extra indoor sports courts to the Balwyn Leisure Centre and needs and demands be considered with the indoor stadium strategy.

5.7 RESERVES AND SPORTS GROUNDS

The City of Boroondara has a large range of reserves and sports grounds of varying quality, size and capacity. Reviewing and visiting all sites was outside of the scope and resourcing of the strategy project, but through discussions with relevant officers, it was identified there are in excess of 50 different sites and 60-70 playing areas in the City.

(a) **Key Findings**

Key Study findings in relation to reserves and sports grounds include:

- No major future demand experienced for more playing areas. There is in fact a strong industry trend of reduced participation shown up in sports traditionally using outdoor reserves.
- Most playing areas have poor or no drainage and many become unplayable or unusable in Winter. Use of areas when in poor condition affects quality of playing surface in Summer. It should be noted that many facilities are located on old water courses and therefore basic drainage will be hard to improve.
- No recognised standards of development or provision by facility type are in place. Areas are currently categorised as follows:
 - Category A - Free/open access.
 - Category B - Small multi-use and non-competitive facility.
 - Category C - Large multi-use in competitive market.
 - Category D - Specialist purpose-built or restricted facilities.
 - Category E - Civic/cultural facilities.

- Different size facilities can also be classified as local, Municipal and Regional/Metropolitan.
- Clubs involved in the project support upgrading of existing facilities. There is a history in some sports of joint development and recent mergers i.e. bowls clubs.
- Council has supported the development of local Committees of Management at major reserve sites and these groups co-ordinate usage and management of facilities. In most cases they also prioritise future development priorities.
- Improvement works for these areas are considered under either the Minor Capital Assistance Scheme (grants up to \$20,000) or Major Capital Assistance Scheme.
- A review of applications for the 1997/98 Sports Ground Improvement Program indicates that there were 24 different site applications requesting a total funding of works in excess of \$275,900. Not all works were costed and when these are taken into account, the total amount could be in excess of \$400,000. This is approximately four times the amount normally made available.
- The majority of works requested would be categorised into:
 - Pavilion repairs and upgrades.
 - Landscaping and paving.
 - Upgrading of playing surfaces.
 - Development of recreational/social facilities e.g. barbecues, rebound walls, etc.
- During the course of this study, a major Council facility asset review was completed to determine the state and standard of facilities. A review of the draft documents in relation to recreation reserves and associated facilities indicated:
 - Large range of buildings on recreation reserves require immediate upgrades.
 - Large list of ongoing maintenance works needs to be annually funded to keep facilities at a safe and useable level.
 - Most buildings on recreation reserves were old and require upgrading.
 - The standard and quality of playing spaces vary greatly.

(b) Strategy Direction

To adequately assess the priority for such a large number of projects Council needs to have a proper categorisation system in place that rates the facilities into like groups and uses a set of basic standards of provision to assess which facilities need to be upgraded. This is because the list of facilities requiring upgrades will be much greater than Council or clubs will ever be able to fund.

Interviews with Parks and Gardens staff and review of inventories indicates that Council does not have a detailed inventory data base that could identify the different standards of provision. During the course of this Study the asset review of facilities was commenced and this data, once collected, should allow more definitive categorisation.

An asset rating system now adopted by a range of Local Councils is based on a point score rating for the level and quality of each facility inventory item, creating a total point score for the facility. Putting these facilities into Local, Suburban, Municipal/ Regional categories allows comparison of like type facilities to create a list of poor and high quality facilities. Until Council has such data and is able to compare standards and provision of facilities, then prioritisation of projects will be difficult.

Council's future reserves and sports grounds facility strategy needs to also take into account the trends that with minimal expected growth in population and an ageing population in the future, there will be little demand for new outdoor playing areas. The major demand will come from existing groups wishing to upgrade existing outdoor facilities.

The introduction of the recommended project funding contributions and priority project rating criteria covered in Section 5.4 will assist Council in more clearly choosing the most needed and viable outdoor facility upgrades. These can be prioritised and funded through the Capital Works Grant Schemes.

Reserves and Sports Grounds inventory data should be able to assess each facilities standard of provision against similar type facilities (i.e. Local, Suburban, Municipal/ Regional) and a priority list of the low grade facilities with high community demand generated for annual budget allocation consideration.

If the inventory system being completed is not detailed enough to allow rating of rate standards of provision, then Council should support upgrading of this information as soon as possible.

5.7.1 Major Outdoor Sporting Venues

Council does not currently have a system in place that identifies each sporting code's major sporting venue in the City. Such a system could allow Council to resource one major venue for Municipal or Regional use. This could reduce future duplication of club requests to have their local facilities constantly upgraded, to the highest competition standard. Only one site for each sport should be upgraded to the highest standard.

A review of current major outdoor venues indicates the following potential major sports venues in the City:

SPORT	VENUE
Cricket (District)	Camberwell Sports Ground
Football (AFL)	Glenferrie Oval (Training purposes)
Hockey (State League)	Hawthorn/Malvern Hockey Centre Patterson Reserve
Baseball (State League)	Macleay Reserve Balwyn

In line with future Council's rating of sporting reserves all major sporting codes base venues should be categorised as Regional. There should only be one facility for each code in the Regional category and other facilities of slightly less standard should be either rated as Municipal or Suburban.

5.7.2 Reserves and Sports Grounds Recommendations

The leisure facilities strategy recommendations on Reserves and Sports Grounds are:

RESERVES AND SPORTS GROUNDS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	The strategy findings indicate that demand for new or additional outdoor sport grounds will be minimal due to the trends of reduced participation in outdoor sports and, therefore, Council prioritise its capital funding to upgrading and expanding existing facilities that will reduce maintenance costs or increase usage opportunities.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Council prioritise future existing facility upgrades through use of the leisure facility contribution and priority criteria listed in 5.4 of the report, in conjunction with the need to upgrade low grade standard facilities.
<u>RECOMMENDATION THREE:</u>	<p>Parks and Gardens, Environmental and Building and Leisure and Cultural staff to consolidate all inventory data on reserves and sports grounds onto one system and allocate each facility into one of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local: Provides for local use or multiple sport code use in local area. • Suburban: Main facility in suburb for each code. • Municipal: Facility covers range of suburban areas. • Regional: The main venue for a sports code.
<u>RECOMMENDATION FOUR:</u>	<p>Parks and Gardens, Environment and Building and Leisure and Cultural staff set up a point score system (for each of the facility inventory listings) for all facilities to create a standard of provision rating for each facility to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority list of works for active facilities. • Improvement works to landscape areas.
<u>RECOMMENDATION FIVE:</u>	Parks and Gardens staff develop a standards of provision priority list based on facilities that do not meet the average point score for facilities in each category.

5.8 PLAYGROUNDS

The consultation highlighted that residents place a high priority on Council playground provision and quality of facility. Many current playgrounds were rated poorly by residents and were also highlighted as a high priority for future funding.

Visiting playgrounds was the most participated activity for children 1 to 5 years and second highest activity for children 6 to 10 years.

(a) Key Issues

The Study findings identified in relation to playgrounds:

- There are in 109 playground sites in the City that have play equipment plus an extensive range of open space use for play activities.
- Residents highly valued playgrounds and supported upgrading at consultation forums, public submissions and household surveys.
- There currently is no strategy in place to upgrade or prioritise playgrounds. Currently safety issues prioritise playground development was a high priority in the Open Space Study recommendations.
- Many playgrounds do not cater for different age ranges and ability needs and have older equipment not suitable for pre-schoolers or infants.
- Need to add more shading into play areas.
- Current playground development focuses mainly on condition the of existing facilities and surfaces. It does not concentrate on identifying new area development and play zone requirements.

(b) Strategy Direction

Resourcing playground improvements is a task that, due to the large number of sites, would be beyond the financial capacity of Council to fund. The upgrades need to be prioritised to ensure ongoing improvement can be achieved with available budgets on an ongoing basis.

The recommended strategy actions (that have been adopted from playground improvement strategies we have completed at similar Councils) would include:

- Parks and Gardens staff to review existing playground provision by setting up a playground development taskforce and completing a detailed inventory on all play spaces highlighting:
 - **Equipment:** Type, age range, condition, suitability, location to other equipment.
 - **Site Amenities:** Type, condition, stability.
 - **Landscape:** Drainage, tree cover, ground surface condition, under surfacing,
 - **Theme:** Amenity and environment links i.e. river parkland etc.
 - **Safety:** Fencing from roads.

- **Location:** Link to other facilities, close to main trail routes.
- **Barriers:** Play boundary zone to identify if local, township or regional area.
- **Land:** Availability of site areas to further develop
- **Accessibility** Able to be used by all people
Location of other facilities

- The taskforce to use the playground inventory to develop a City wide playground distribution map and plot play boundary zones (ie: bounded by major roads, rivers, creeks, railway lines, etc.).
- Prioritise a main park that is the most central and suitable site (sufficient land, pleasant landscape, environmentally suitable, etc.) to service the majority of residents in each play boundary zone.
- Identify unsuitable (unsafe/close to main roads) or surplus play areas (close to other parks) that may either have play equipment removed (turned back into passive parkland) or may be sold (funds used to finance priority playground upgrades).
- Council to develop a five year funding strategy to upgrade/improve the priority park in each play area based on a main park being completed in each zone during this time-frame.
- Council to set up a resident involved (ie: adopt a park scheme) master planning process for each main park playground upgrade to ensure all play area improvements are designed and suited to local resident/environment needs (i.e. local area meetings, surveys and site inspections). This may be done in conjunction with Park Master Plans.
- Council to be aware and provide encouragement for the trend of commercial operators developing indoor playgrounds for public use. Council should encourage such developments in appropriate locations throughout the Municipality.

(c) **Recommendations**

The Leisure Facility Strategy recommendations in relation to Playgrounds upgrades is as follows:

PLAYGROUND UPGRADE STRATEGY	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Council endorse, in principle, the need to develop a priority list of playgrounds for annual upgrading over an agreed number of years.

PLAYGROUND UPGRADE STRATEGY	
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Council use the playground inventory review system detailed in Section 5.8 as the approved process to determine development priorities and area for future review, rationalisation.
<u>RECOMMENDATION THREE:</u>	Playground improvements must be based on range and type of playgrounds required in line with local area demographics and site capacity.

5.9 COMMUNITY CENTRES/NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES

The consultation highlighted that an important aspect of local leisure facility provision is the supply of Community Centres/Neighbourhood Houses spread throughout the Municipality.

The facility review identified that there are currently nine Centres run by Incorporated Associations or special committees under authority of Council as follows:

<u>AREA</u>	<u>NAME OF CENTRE</u>	<u>MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE</u>
Ashburton	: Ashburn Grove Neighbourhood House Ashburton Community Centre Craig Family Centre	Incorporated Association Incorporated Association Incorporated Association
Balwyn	: Balwyn Community Centre	Incorporated Association
Camberwell	: Bowen Street Family Centre Camberwell Community Centre	Incorporated Association Incorporated Association
Kew	: Kew Community House	Incorporated Association
Hawthorn	: Hawthorn Community House	Incorporated Association
Surrey Hills	: Surrey Hills Neighbourhood Centre	Incorporated Association

There are also two other independently run Community Centres that provide leisure opportunities for residents. These are:

<u>AREA</u>		<u>NAME OF CENTRE</u>	<u>PROVIDER</u>
Canterbury	:	Canterbury Neighbourhood Centre	Church auspiced (No recurrent Council funding)
North Balwyn	:	Unicare Neighbourhood House	Church auspiced (No Council funding)

A map detailing the facility locations is listed in Section 3.6 of this report.

The Centres are providing residents with a broad range of services including:

- Providing community based education and vocational skills.
- Providing personal development courses.
- Providing creative activities and skill learning classes.
- Providing childcare for class participants and occasional care services.
- Offer playgroups for parents/caregivers and children.
- Facilitate support groups for people with special needs.
- Offer meeting and social venues.
- Act as an information and service referral.
- Providing local area focus point and neighbourhood information service.

A review of the combined Centres' operations indicates that in excess of 5,000 people per week use these Centres. There is a strong and effective network between the Centres and Council. Marketing, promotion and, to some extent, programming is linked under a centralised publicity system. There is no centralised booking system but each Centre is responsible for their bookings and referral of customers on to other Centres, as appropriate.

As a combined service, it was estimated in 1995 that:

- In excess of 1,200 volunteer hours per week were provided for the Centres' operations and administration. This was estimated to be a work cost in excess of \$500,000 if all hours were paid for.
- Centres' annual operational cost was \$1.382M with Centre income (52%) meeting the majority of this, followed by Council grants (20%) and Government Grants (20%).

(a) Key Issues

The Study findings for Community Centre/Neighbourhood Houses are:

- Large shortfall in most Centres of employed staff. Due to this shortfall existing, staff may be working significant hours of unpaid overtime to service Centre needs. A large portion of time is spent on training volunteers, but this is done Centre by Centre.

- Range of individual Centre building upgrades needs including:
 - Ashburn Grove Neighbourhood Centre: Building extension to provide office facilities and more class areas.
 - Ashburton Community Centre: Larger hall or large activities. Need dedicated parking area.
 - Bowen Street Family Centre: More rooms/larger spaces for more adult classes.
 - Camberwell Community Centre: Increased car parking areas. Many rooms too small for program areas.
- Most Centres' computer resources are out of date but are still regarded suitable because they are being operated by volunteers who are skilled for basic systems. No computerised booking systems are currently in place.
- Volunteers contribute 1,200 staff hours a week, but each Centre has to train and support volunteers. This takes up a large portion of Co-Ordinators time. Need to develop specific general training modules that could be done across Centres, i.e. computer skills, telephones, record keeping.
- Most Centres are not purpose-built for their current uses and therefore capacities and capabilities will be unique at each site.
- Large range of tutors needed but each Centre is currently reliant on attracting own tutors. Need for a City-wide skills register that can be resourced to keep updated.
- Most Centres have parking problems due to their neighbourhood settings and surrounding urban car parking issues.
- Most Centres complained about the Council maintenance system in place that currently has long delays from notification of problem to fixing of problem. Centres may be best given responsibility and budgets for minor maintenance repairs to reduce time delays, etc.

(b) Strategy Direction

The Centres are providing a highly valued local outlet for residents with in excess of 200,000 visitations to the combined facilities per year. They are also excellent models for council and community service partnerships. The main issues revolve around facility suitability and operational finance support.

In any future strategy it needs to be clearly recognised that the majority of the buildings that house Community and Neighbourhood Centres are not purpose-built for their current uses. Therefore, the capacities compared to program needs and capabilities to meet new needs will be different for each Centre.

Each Centre, needs to have agreed capacities and capabilities otherwise Council will be continually faced with requests for building upgrades and extensions to expand program and user space. To keep up-to-date with usage and occupancies (as a guide to prioritising future development), it is recommended that each Centre be reviewed to confirm current capacities. A new reporting system should also be set up that:

- Details each activity space occupancy at the Centre for an agreed week in the month. This could be plotted on a pro forma sheet and all results summarised by Leisure Services staff.
- Details any other facilities (off site) hired for activities during the month.

Following the first year of the reporting system, consolidation of occupancies by room areas will identify Centres that are fully utilised or at capacity and identify areas under capacity. This information should be used to assist in prioritising each Centres' upgrade requests.

Council should allocate an ongoing (next five years) Community Centre/Neighbourhood House Improvement Fund to finance annual priority improvements.

A number of service support programs that are outside the facility strategy scope but are also suggested to be considered for Council assistance and co-ordinated through Leisure and Cultural Services, includes:

- (i) **Volunteer training support program:** Centralised volunteer training modules set up to specifically meet the needs of Community Centre/Neighborhood Centres as an introduction to new volunteers.
- (ii) **Instructor and Tutor Skills Register:** Centralised register regularly updated to provide a skills register to Centres.
- (iii) **Computerised booking systems:** Consideration and review needed into a range of current linked computer booking systems that could assist the Centres, take bookings for theirs and other Centres, refer people to other classes and keep centralised records for demand and new class ideas.

(c) **Recommendations**

The Leisure Facility Strategy recommendations in relation to Community Centres and Neighbourhood Houses is as follows:

COMMUNITY CENTRES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Leisure and Cultural Services, in conjunction with Infrastructure Services, complete an activity area capacity and infrastructure (services, carparking, etc) review on the Council-funded Centres to record existing buildings capacities and capabilities.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Leisure and Cultural Services introduce a new monthly usage review report for Council-funded Centres as detailed in Section 5.9.

COMMUNITY CENTRES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES	
<u>RECOMMENDATION THREE:</u>	That, at the completion of the first 12 months of the new occupancy review report that Leisure and Cultural Services and Infrastructure Services use summary report findings to assist with prioritising any future upgrade or extension requests for Centres.
<u>RECOMMENDATION FOUR:</u>	That Leisure and Cultural Services encourage and facilitate co-operation between Neighbourhood Centres to undertake training support, instructor and tutor skills registers and computerised booking systems as future operational service support initiatives.
<u>RECOMMENDATION FIVE:</u>	That Council allocate annual ongoing improvement funding for Centre upgrades (for the next five years) and a priority list be developed for annual funding consideration based on the findings of Recommendation Three and the Community support Strategic Plan.

5.10 FREE WAY GOLF COURSE

Council currently owns and controls this course which has on average attracted between 60,000 and 65,000 green fee attendances per year. The Centre has operated at an annual profit of around \$100,000 per year for the past three years.

(a) Key Study Findings

Key study findings in relation to the Freeway Golf Course are:

- The Course has continued to drop attendances from 79,000 in 1990 to between 60,000 and 65,000 green fee players in the mid-1990's. It has not been able to expand its user base greatly in the past four years.
- Revenue from green fees and secondary spending has decreased in recent years with peak sales of in excess of \$720,000 in 1994/95 dropping to \$535,000 in 1995/96. In 1996/97 it is expected to increase back to \$717,000.
- The annual course surplus has continued to decrease from a high of \$245,000 in 1990 to \$46,000 in 1993. Is estimated at \$100,000 in 1996/97.
- A major review of the Course in 1995 indicated that the decline in financial returns was attributed to reduced interest in golf, poor course maintenance, playing surface quality problems and a poor rating of standard perception by many golfers.

- A green and tee upgrade program commenced in 1992 but this has not been completed and therefore some areas are of high quality and some very poor quality.
- The rating of the course in difficulty and challenge through tree growth, length of holes, location of hazards, needs to be prioritised to enhance the course's attraction to potential new players.
- The Household Survey results indicated that 11.4% of people surveyed had used the course in the past 12 months, while 88.6% had not (1 in 10 people had used the course). The results also indicated very low use by females than males.
- Residents made use of regional golf courses as follows:
 - Freeway Golf Course 11.4%
 - Yarra Bend Golf Course 10.0%
 - Ivanhoe Public Golf Course 7.9%
 - Malvern Valley Golf Course 6.7%
- When considering use of local recreation facilities, the closest golf course was used by 23.8% of respondents in the past 12 months (2 out of 10 people), but more than three quarters of golfers were male.

(b) Strategy Directions

Council must recognise that to continue to attract the current green fee market to the course, while also expanding the customer base, will require completion of upgrading works including:

- Tee and green upgrade program to be completed.
- Irrigation and drainage works to be completed (part funded 1996/97)
- Ongoing high quality maintenance of playing areas and surrounds to build a reputation of quality playing environment.

The current course layout and size should be able to cater for a maximum player capacity of up to 75,000 18 hole rounds per year (maximum occupancy based on industry standards). This indicates a capacity to attract a further 10,000 to 20,000 more green fee players, than current business. To attract the new players, a target market approach should be set up that attracts the most likely type of golfer that matches the course facilities and that would be interested in using this type of course.

Previous market research indicates current users are:

- Inexperienced or low frequency golfers (less than once a month visitors).
- High handicap golfers (in the 20 to 30 stroke category).
- Mostly male (95%).
- Visit more frequently on weekends than weekdays.
- Use because it is the closest course to where they live.
- Many golfers were beginners or inexperienced having only played between 0 - 5 years (60% of users).

The likely highest potential target market segments will be:

- People living within a five kilometre radius.
- People that are inexperienced or irregular golfers.
- People who want to play their round quickly.
- People who are available weekdays to use the course at its quietest times.
- Females who want to take up golf or try the game in a relaxed setting.
- Social groups and friends playing for relaxation.

Currently there is not a detailed promotion or marketing strategy in place except for some traditional golf course advertising. A weekday promotion strategy that targets people who live within a five kilometre radius (distribution strategy), to come and enjoy a relaxing game of golf. This is at a course that encourages beginners, social and inexperienced golfers such promotion should be developed and commenced in the Spring/Summer period. This will require a dedicated marketing budget and support from professional marketing services.

The Consultant Team have reviewed the Freeway Golf Course Operational Review (1995) and confirm that Council needs to continue to provide annual upgrade funds (from course operating surpluses) to complete the priority works identified in this report. The ongoing strategy of funding improvements from surpluses will be further enhanced if more users can be attracted to the course.

(c) Recommendations

The following strategy recommendations are made in relation to the Freeway Golf Course:

FREEWAY GOLF COURSE RECOMMENDATIONS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Council continue to recognise that the Golf Course is a viable, well used and high quality public facility that will continue to require annual capital upgrades to maintain its attractiveness to users.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Council continue to fund and implement the Course improvement plan detailed in the 1995 Golf Course Review and that annual revenue surplus be reserved to fund these works.
<u>RECOMMENDATION THREE:</u>	That an annual budget allocation be made to fund six monthly (winter and summer) golfer profile surveys to be conducted at the Course to monitor player demographics and customer satisfaction levels and identify ongoing user target markets.

FREEWAY GOLF COURSE RECOMMENDATIONS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION FOUR:</u>	That the Course Contractor develop a joint promotion and marketing strategy aiming to increase Green Fee rounds to 62,000 over the next three years and aim in future, years for a maximum of up to 75,000 rounds. This strategy be funded as part of the management contract.

5.11 BOROONDARA TENNIS CENTRE

The Boroondara Tennis Centre incorporates a highly successful and well used regional outdoor tennis complex. The complex which was originally built in the mid 1980's was a joint project between the former City of Camberwell, Tennis Victoria and the State Government (Sport and Recreation funding).

The Centre is the largest public tennis facility in metropolitan Melbourne, with 23 courts, kiosk, pro shop, amenities and meeting areas.

(a) Key Study Findings

A review of the Tennis Centre's business and operations indicates:

- The Centre is run by a Joint committee of Council and Tennis Victoria.
- The Centre attendances have continued to increase each year with in excess of 150,000 users expected in 1996/97 compared with 120,000 recorded in 1994/95.
- The courts' usage capacity is high weekday evenings (Monday to Thursday 100% occupied) and Saturday/Sunday mornings (100%).
- In excess of 14 tournaments were held at the Centre in 1996.
- Council's current management agreement shares operational profits with Tennis Victoria (after costs and maintenance provision allowances are deducted). Annually the Centre has recorded recent operating surpluses of \$90,000 to \$115,000.
- Approximately \$400/month is set aside for asset replacement provision. This replacement fund is controlled by the Joint Committee.
- The Household Survey indicated low uses of the facility by Boroondara Residents with only 6% of respondents indicating they had used the Centre in the past 12 months. Public tennis court facility usage is also low (compared to other facilities usage) in other parts of the City, with only 27% of people indicating they had used a local tennis court in the past 12 months.
- The current management arrangement with Tennis Victoria is until the Year 2003.

(b) Strategy Directions

A review of Centre operations and business returns indicates the Centre is well managed and controlled with excellent financial performance. With this in mind, the Leisure Facility Strategy Directions should be to continue to maintain the high level of usage, while adding new services and facilities to increase profitability.

New business suggestions raised during the course of the Study include:

- Improvement and expansion of food and beverage services to increase secondary spending by users.
- Consideration of developing indoor courts at the site to cater for players requiring this setting. Such courts would receive high occupancy particularly during winter months, or for players wishing to be protected from the sun in summer.
- Expansion of on-site car parking.
- Expansion of amenities and general storage areas.
- If the Joint committee cannot fund indoor courts, considerations should be given to attracting a partnership investment company.

Although the above suggestions are not driven by immediate demand, it is essential that Council consolidate the site's long-term viability by adding new facilities and services to the site. A development and funding strategy for capital improvements should be completed by the Facility Committee over the next 12 months to address the suggested facility improvement opportunities. **See Section 5.13 for further information on general tennis courts.**

(c) Recommendations

The following strategy recommendations are made in relation to the Boroondara Tennis Centre:

BOROONDARA TENNIS CENTRE RECOMMENDATIONS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That council continue to recognise that the Tennis Centre is a viable, well-used and high quality public tennis facility that is able to continue to fund its operations and expansion from user fees and secondary site income.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Council request Tennis Victoria to complete an independent business and Facility Expansion Opportunity Report to identify viable and needed facility extensions at the complex during the course of the current agreement (1997 - 2003).

BOROONDARA TENNIS CENTRE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION THREE:

That the joint site committee and Council consider the findings of the Facility Opportunity Report and, in conjunction with Tennis Victoria, prioritise and develop funding strategies for future agreed improvements.

5.12 BOWLING CLUBS

The City currently has a very high provision of bowling clubs with 17 separate clubs. On a regional area basis, this is the highest provision of all Councils in the surrounding area.

In the past few years there has been a trend of bowling clubs recording reduced membership and with increasing maintenance and facility provision costs, four clubs have had to amalgamate with other clubs or have closed.

(a) Key Issues

- Bowling clubs have traditionally been single purpose closed membership facilities and, therefore, Council has provided limited capital and maintenance assistance (i.e. Category D facilities).
- The increased costs of services, high maintenance costs for playing surfaces, the growth in licensed clubs and gaming machine venues and increased rents for sites on public land, have all attributed to reducing some clubs' viability.
- The trend of clubs closing is probably greater in the City of Boroondara due to the high provision of bowling clubs.
- Most clubs are single purpose and, therefore, cannot easily share membership or operational costs.
- The age profile of the City indicates a large portion of people are aged in the older adult activity grouping and, therefore, potentially may be interested in taking up bowls as an activity. There is a need therefore to ensure viable clubs continue.
- Lawn Bowls is the sixth most popular activity for males in Australia, and fifth most popular female activity.

(b) Strategy Directions

The trend of Bowling Clubs merging or closing down in different parts of the Municipality is expected to continue. Council should support club mergers (as the first priority) as this will enable greater sharing of facilities and improve both clubs' long-term viability. This sport activity is therefore not lost to the area. In the long run merging of a range of different sporting codes, into combined sports clubs should be encouraged.

Where clubs do close down sites on recreation reserves that have other users, Council should seek comments from the Local Reserve Committee how best to use the facilities

and site area Council should also consider any gaps in neighbourhood facility provision i.e. playgrounds, public tennis areas, open space provision, etc.

Council should not directly get involved with clubs considering merger or closure but could assist by providing support and an independent viewpoint on future viability and future strategy options. Leisure and Cultural Services staff should provide this service.

(c) Recommendations

The Leisure Facility Strategy Recommendations in relation to Bowling Clubs are:

BOWLING CLUBS STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Leisure Facilities Strategy findings indicate more Bowling Clubs in the future will need to merge or close and Council should support sporting codes combining to form broad sports clubs to (assist them with long-term viability).
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Leisure and Cultural Services staff be made available to assist Clubs facing merger or closure to provide an independent viewpoint on future options.

5.13 TENNIS CLUBS

There are 31 tennis clubs in the City of Boroondara with most clubs on Council or Crown Land being regarded as closed or member only clubs. This indicates a major issue in relation to general public and casual use of tennis courts for residents.

Tennis Clubs are categorised as Category D Clubs as they are single purpose and restrict public access. The main public facility is provided at the Boroondara Tennis Centre but all users have to pay. Casual use is limited to the high daily uses of courts for competition and events.

(a) Key Issues

- Most tennis clubs are single purpose with restricted membership. Most courts are locked up outside of club use and public access is limited.
- Tennis participation trends have shown a major drop off in weekend pennant competition entries throughout metropolitan Melbourne on the other hand, growth in participation has occurred at clubs that have night lighting and have weeknight competition or casual hire.
- Although public access to tennis courts is limited, tennis showed up as a high participation sport for adults and children (fifth highest activity listed). Adults also indicated a high demand to participate in this activity. In the future activity choice tennis was the third highest preferred activity.
- Approximately 6% of respondents to the household survey had used the Boroondara Tennis Centre in the past 12 months, while 27% (1 in 3 people) had indicated they had used a local tennis court during this period.

- There are no indoor tennis courts in the Municipality and, in the future development of such courts at the Boroondara Tennis Centre (recognising high resident tennis participation) should be investigated as they appear highly viable.

(b) Strategy Direction

The high participation in tennis by residents using local facilities is surprising recognising most facilities are not accessible to the general public. In the future Council should consider a strategy of encouraging local area clubs to make the courts available at low use times for public use. This will encourage greater participation and may increase the number of people taking up the sport competitively.

Due to the changes in the traditional pennant competition, some clubs may find they are losing membership and may need to merge or close (similar to bowling Club viability issues). If this occurs, Council should consider opening up the vacant club facilities as public courts available for casual/social use. Subject to the management and operation of these being able to be linked to existing site committees or new facility committees formed. If there is no local interest in the facilities then the courts should be considered for use for other purposes.

Any courts that meet the high community use criteria and are to become access to all people should be reviewed to redevelop any high maintenance surface courts by resurfacing to a multipurpose hardcourt type finish.

The mix of local/accessible community courts, club courts and the regional tennis complex will provide residents with a very broad range of tennis facility and participation options.

The development of indoor tennis courts at the regional tennis complex could also improve public access and casual participation in tennis.

(c) Recommendations

The Leisure Facility Strategy Recommendations in relation to Tennis Courts are:

TENNIS COURT RECOMMENDATIONS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That council support local Tennis Clubs that make courts available for public and casual use and categorise such facilities as Category B (available for council capital assistance).
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Council be an advocate and support non-viable tennis clubs to merge with other tennis clubs and support vacant facilities, in strategic locations, being kept as public and casual use courts subject to local management support to oversee the courts being available.

5.14 HALLS

The strategy findings indicate Council has an extremely high provision of small halls used by single purpose groups such as Scouts, Guides, hobby clubs and social/community groups. Many of these facilities are old and in poor condition. Due to the small membership usage of many clubs, they do not have the funds to improve facilities and therefore usage will continue to remain low.

(a) Key Issues

- One in four respondents to the household survey had used a local hall in the past 12 months.
- There are 49 known community hall facilities in the City of Boroondara which is 40 more than any of the other surrounding municipalities.
- Most halls are small and have limited exclusive group use.
- Many halls are in poor condition but due to limited public access are not eligible for Council upgrade grants.

(b) Strategy Directions

Council should encourage single use groups to open up these facilities to other compatible users. This will increase the viability of the facility and allow the halls to be categorised as Category B. They therefore could be eligible to make application for Council upgrade assistance. Clubs that wish to remain single purpose and are located on Council land that are in poor condition, should be put on agreed time-frames to upgrade their facilities. This will encourage them to consider the viability of their facility.

(c) Recommendations

The Leisure Facility Strategy Recommendations in relation to Halls are:

HALLS STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Council actively encourage single purpose Hall controllers to open up facilities to compatible other users and such facilities be categorised as accessible facilities available for Council funding consideration.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That single purpose Hall facilities in poor condition on Council land be reviewed and an agreed facility upgrade schedule be required of the user group within a 12 to 24 month period.

5.15 OPEN SPACE/LINEAR TRAILS

A major Open Space Study was completed by Council in 1996 and is now being used to guide the provision, role, use, development, resource management of open space facilities in the City.

5.15.1 Key Study Findings

Key findings of the Study indicated:

- Total open space represents over 11% (670 hectares) of the Municipal area. Council owns 7.3% of these areas.
- Much of the open space is concentrated at the edges of the Municipality adjacent to waterways.
- Central areas of the municipality have less open space areas than perimeter areas and future additions to Central areas through land purchases or agreements with landowners was required.
- Connections to large scale open space are readily available in the north and north-west of the Municipality, but a large portion of this is controlled by other authorities (i.e. Parks Victoria).
- Development of more off-road bike trails was identified, particularly with regard to increased cross Municipality links.
- More than 80% of open space in the north-west accommodates informal use, with 66% in the central east.
- The Municipality has a low percentage of leisure facility open space use on Council-owned land only accounting for less than 2% of all open space.
- The central east district requires improvements in open space facility provision i.e. playgrounds, picnic facilities, barbecues, toilets, trails, etc.
- Open space maintenance is primarily the responsibility of Council with in excess of 75% of areas maintained by Councils' Parks and Gardens Unit, while a further 9% is maintained jointly with other bodies i.e. Parks Victoria, Clubs and lessees. In 1995 open space maintenance cost in excess of \$4M.

(a) Key Issues

The Leisure Facilities Strategy Plan Market Research and Consultation found:

- Of the top twelve activities that adult residents participated in, more than half of these were done outdoors using open space areas. The most popular outdoor activities were casual walking, golf, tennis, outdoor swimming, picnics, visiting gardens and bush walks.
- Higher than average outdoor activity participation was recorded by residents living in perimeter suburban areas than central suburban areas.
- Of the top twelve activities that adult residents wished to do in the future, more than half of these were outdoors using open space. The most popular (in priority order) were golf, tennis, bike riding, bush walking, visiting gardens and casual walking.

- Children were also high users of outdoor areas with using playgrounds, bike riding, tennis, cricket, casual walking, picnics and visiting gardens being some of the most popular activities.
- Childrens' future activity choices were similar to existing participation, indicating ongoing demand for outdoor activity.
- Residents rated parks and gardens in the Municipality as the highest rated service (75.6% rated good or excellent).
- Future priority service funding ratings indicated that parks and gardens were residents' second highest choice for funding, followed by walking paths and trails.
- Highest used regional facilities were Yarra Bend and surrounds (used by 57.1% of sample) followed by bike path networks. Local walking paths were the second highest used local facility.
- In relation to open space facilities, residents indicated:
 - Council should expand the network of cycle and walking paths in the City (74.4% agree, 8.2% disagree).
 - Sportsgrounds in my suburb do not need upgrading (48% uncertain).
- Club surveys indicated that a major number of open space sportsground areas were of low grade standard. For example, eleven cricket clubs responded with improvement needs such as drainage and ground resurfacing. Eighteen football clubs responded with improvements which included drainage, pavilion renovations and security.
- Of the twenty-one public submissions received, ten related to improving parks and sportsgrounds.
- Reserves Committee of Management forums strongly supported sporting space upgrades including playing surfaces, drainage and training lights.
- Residents in the household survey were asked to rate the main leisure features of the Municipality. Parks and gardens (No. 1), walking paths (No. 2) and bike paths (No. 4), accounted for in excess of 40% of responses.
- Public forum attendees supported the need for improved maintenance at sportsgrounds.
- There was a strong trend not to do any leisure facility development that would take up open space or cause neighbourhood disturbance.
- Leisure trends identified that increased public concern for conservation and environmental issues have lead to increased value placed on open space, parkland and natural areas. Higher use is being made of open space informal areas (i.e. 60 to 60% of people) and there has been a notable decrease in the percentage of people participating in clubs and competitive organised sport (i.e. estimated at 20-23% of people).
- Due to participation changes, Council is receiving greater funding requests for casual unstructured areas i.e. bike trails, parkland, open space, etc.

(b) Strategy Direction

The Study findings strongly support Council's role in open space provision, maintenance and care. Previous studies indicate that Council is responsible for maintaining in excess of 75% of open space areas directly and a further 9% in partnership with others in the City.

The market research indicates that residents are high users of open space for outdoor activities. In the future, this trend will continue, although formal use by clubs and organisations may reduce slightly.

Council already has a very detailed Open Space Strategy Plan it is following. The Leisure Facilities Strategy results indicate that Council should reinforce and prioritise the importance of the following service areas currently covered in the plan:

(i) Regional Integration

- Work closely with adjoining municipalities, Parks Victoria and the Yarra Bend Trust to ensure co-ordinated development to open space areas located along perimeters of the City.

(ii) Recreation Trails and Linkages

- Development of a linear trail adjoining the river through the Municipal area and linking to other Municipalities should be a major priority, in conjunction with other neighbouring Councils and Parks Victoria (i.e. land buybacks, trail).
- Make bike and trail pathways a high priority for future funding, particularly internal offroad road trail connections.
- Support masterplanning and increased signage of trails.
- Support detailed district area trail strategies as recommended in the Open Space Strategy.

(iii) Open Space Provision/Distribution

- Support use of school sites as open space areas.
- Increase central City open space areas confirming the opportunity to convert the Central Pool site back to open space.
- Support opportunities that will increase open space provision as they arise i.e. building/land developments.

(iv) Quality and Diversity of Open Space

- In line with financing playground priority development sites (as recommended in Section 5.7) also include upgrades for toilets, shelters, shade, picnic areas and active youth areas, such as rebound walls, backboards, etc.

(v) Sporting Use

- Implement standards of provision ratings for sportsgrounds/reserves to highlight priority areas for future upgrades. This to be done through a land information or inventory system to clearly document the sporting assets and areas.

(vi) Private Sector Involvement

- Support increased private sector recreation services at significant open space areas, such as entry points to open space areas, etc.

(vii) Alienation of Public Open Space

- Limit the amount of alienation of open space to no more than the current cumulative level and view future facility expansion applications in line with this principle (i.e. reuse or return areas).
- Consolidate new leisure facilities on open space to current active areas, ensuring improvements to existing usage areas.

(viii) Master Planning

Continue annual budget allocations for master planning of priority areas.

(c) Recommendations

The Leisure Facilities Strategy Recommendations in relation to open space and linear trails are:

OPEN SPACE AND LINEAR TRAILS RECOMMENDATIONS	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That this Study confirms the importance residents place on open space and parkland in the Municipality and that Council continue support and give priority to implement the District Strategies as presented in the 1996 Open Space Strategy.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Council adopt annual funding to complete Recreation Reserve Masterplans (as detailed in the Open Space Strategy) and complete facility inventories to identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level and standard of facility provision.• Potential improvement or upgrades at sportsgrounds/reserves.• Planned approach to improved facilities with no further alienation of public open space areas unless other new areas are available.

OPEN SPACE AND LINEAR TRAILS RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION THREE:

That Council prioritise funding to continue upgrading and expanding the linear trail network particularly concentrating on creating offroad cross municipality links and riverside trails and also link other community facilities such as picnic areas, playgrounds and amenities to high use public areas.

5.16 LEISURE FACILITIES INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

The consultation findings indicate that, although there is an extensive range of leisure facilities, Council is responsible for funding, maintaining and developing, there is a general lack of community recognition of Council input and level of resourcing.

This was particularly apparent when considering peoples' recognition to Council's major leisure centres (currently managed under contract to the YMCA). When the public forum participants were asked about these centres, the majority of people referred to them as the Ashburton YMCA or the Kew YMCA. There was limited recognition they were linked to Council, although most people did identify Council had built them.

During the course of visiting facilities throughout the Municipality, it was also apparent that areas such as sportsgrounds and park areas, although having some corporate signage do not clearly portray they are part of Council's Leisure Facility Network. Most clubs referred to the facilities as their own but still expected significant Council funding to upgrade and improve them.

A review of current publications indicates that residents have available a variety of leisure facility contact lists, community directories, open space and trail brochures, individual facility brochures and community information newsletters/journals.

Study research found that respondents to the household survey used their local newspaper (33% of sample) as the main leisure information source followed by telephoning Council Offices (15.7%), Boroondara Bulletin (13.0%), ask friends/relatives (11.2%) or use local telephone book (9.3%) or Community Directory (7.2%).

(a) **Key Issues**

The Study findings identified in relation to leisure facilities:

- General lack of resident recognition of Council ownership, resource support and role it plays in providing and maintaining broad range of leisure facilities.
- Lack of recognition of some sporting clubs of level of resourcing provided by Council to facilities they use.
- Lack of Council corporate branding on many facilities provided or maintained by Council.

- Broad array of information resources promoting and informing people of leisure facilities.
- High reliance on residents use of local papers and telephoning Council Offices to seek leisure services information.
- No annual reporting process to leisure facility clubs and organisations on what Council contributes to various sectors of this broad and diverse service area i.e. Clubs or Sports Ground Committees are not advised about the amount of money spent each year on particular areas i.e. \$4M a year spent on open space maintenance.
- Regular monitoring of major leisure centres' customers opinion on service and standard levels provided at the Centres but limited monitoring of opinions on other leisure facility service areas.

(b) **Strategy Directions**

The Study findings indicate that Council branding of its leisure facility assets and information systems to key user and provider groups could be improved. This should be aimed at providing recognition for the facilities and services Council resources through improved signposting, corporate logo identification and ongoing information reports to relevant organisations.

Effective information links also need to be made with local newspapers and media outlets, as these are prime sources of information for residents. Importantly, Council telephone systems for leisure service enquiries need to be reviewed to ensure callers can be directed to the relevant section (due to split of leisure service responsibilities across Council areas). The alternative is a central enquiry service (Leisure and Cultural Services) that has access to the broad range of information.

A telephone hotline for Leisure and Cultural Services enquiries would centralise calls and enquiries could be handed onto relevant areas.

(c) **Recommendations**

The Leisure Facilities Strategy recommendations for information and communication strategies are:

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Council ensure its logo and name is on all leisure facilities provided, maintained or supported by Council.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Leisure and Cultural Services, in conjunction with Strategic and Management support, develop ongoing financial report summaries that are forwarded to leisure facilities and groups highlighting the level of financial support provided to the facility. (Note: This to be done within existing CCT policies).

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES	
<u>RECOMMENDATION THREE:</u>	That Leisure and Cultural Services investigate with Council Communication Services ways that the print and telecommunication media can be provided with ongoing leisure facility information.
<u>RECOMMENDATION FOUR:</u>	That all sections of Council that receive leisure facility service enquiries, conduct a sample monitoring of call types (for an agreed period) and response outcomes. This is to investigate resident satisfaction with the current system and monitor need to set up a leisure facilities/services enquiry hotline. Leisure and Cultural Services should co-ordinate this review.
<u>RECOMMENDATION FIVE:</u>	That resident recognition of Council's role in providing and supporting leisure facilities be tested and monitored in any resident surveys or annual service rating systems.
<u>RECOMMENDATION SIX:</u>	That Council's name as facility provider/supported be prominent in any correspondence, publicity or information that is generated from leisure facilities including major leisure centres, community centres, etc.
<u>RECOMMENDATION SEVEN:</u>	That Council adopt a high profile signage strategy that assists people to locate and use facilities and recognise Council's involvement in facility provision and maintenance.
<u>RECOMMENDATION EIGHT:</u>	That Council allocate resources to continually upgrade data collected for this plan to ensure regular monitoring of community needs and review of The Strategic Plan.

5.17 ACCESS TO RECREATION FACILITIES

Though the market research showed residents have high participation in recreation and sport activities, there were a number of constraints affecting people's participation.

The main constraints to future participation for all people were:

- Work commitments
- Family commitments
- Activity not available
- No one to go with
- Health problem
- Cannot afford it
- Don't know what is available

A review of the key population types that were affected by participation constraints included special needs groups such as disabled, older adults, youth, pension recipients and low income earners. Such groups were nominated by residents as future priority groups to receive recreation assistance to enable them to participate.

Council currently has a range of access and support policies for such groups and these should be integrated into this strategy where appropriate. It is also suggested that as recreation facility service targets are developed, that Council support greater use and access to leisure/recreation facilities and services by those who are aged, disabled, young or other ways disadvantaged. This could also include ensuring:

- Pricing policies and concessions are available at Council recreation facilities.
- Support services such as child care, introduction classes etc are available at major recreation spaces.
- That access is provided at recreation facilities.

(a) Recommendations

The following strategy recommendations are made in relation to access to recreation facilities:

ACCESS TO RECREATION FACILITIES	
<u>RECOMMENDATION ONE:</u>	That Council recognise that a range of people are constrained to participate in use of recreation facilities and that concession and support services for such groups be considered to assist their participation.
<u>RECOMMENDATION TWO:</u>	That Council monitor user profile data at a range of recreation facilities to test disadvantaged or special needs groups use of such facilities on an ongoing basis and that future service targets support such groups use and access to recreation facilities.