

# SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION PLAN 2022-2033



**ALPINE**  
SHIRE COUNCIL







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# 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alpine Shire is blessed with an abundance of beautiful outdoor settings where both local residents and visitors enjoy cycling, hiking, kayaking, skiing, horse riding, swimming, paragliding, running, fishing, dragon boat racing and many other active recreational pursuits. It also features a diversity of sporting facilities and community spaces, providing opportunities for activities such as basketball, yoga, tennis, AFL football, netball, skate boarding, dancing, lawn bowls, croquet, cricket, gymnastics, bocce, soccer, golf and baseball.

Alpine Shire Council recognises the significant benefits that can be achieved through participation in sport and active recreation, including improved physical and mental wellbeing, the development of strong social connections, increased demand from local businesses to supply goods and services and greater appreciation of the natural environment. The provision of inclusive, accessible and diverse sport and active recreation pursuits also enhances liveability and has definitely played a role in attracting new residents to move to Alpine Shire to live.

This Sport and Active Recreation Plan provides a strategic framework to guide Council's investment in sport and active recreation over the next 12 years to ensure that its resources have the greatest impact on positively contributing to the health and wellbeing of the community and promoting liveability and social connections.

Alpine Shire Council is also mindful of some of the challenges that it is currently facing and may continue to experience over the next 12 years. These challenges include:

- a high percentage of people who are overweight or obese
- 45% of adults in Alpine Shire are insufficiently active to achieve health benefits
- growing mental health issues
- proximity to forests and potentially devastating bushfires
- the existing and ongoing impact of COVID-19.
- the impact of climate change
- high levels of tourism impacting the use of open space and recreation facilities.

In order to prepare the Sport and Active Recreation Plan, the following activities were undertaken:

assessed various plans and documents to understand the strategic directions of Alpine Shire Council and other key stakeholders such as Sport and Recreation Victoria

analysed demographic data and projections

undertook an audit of all facilities to assess condition and identify opportunities for improvement

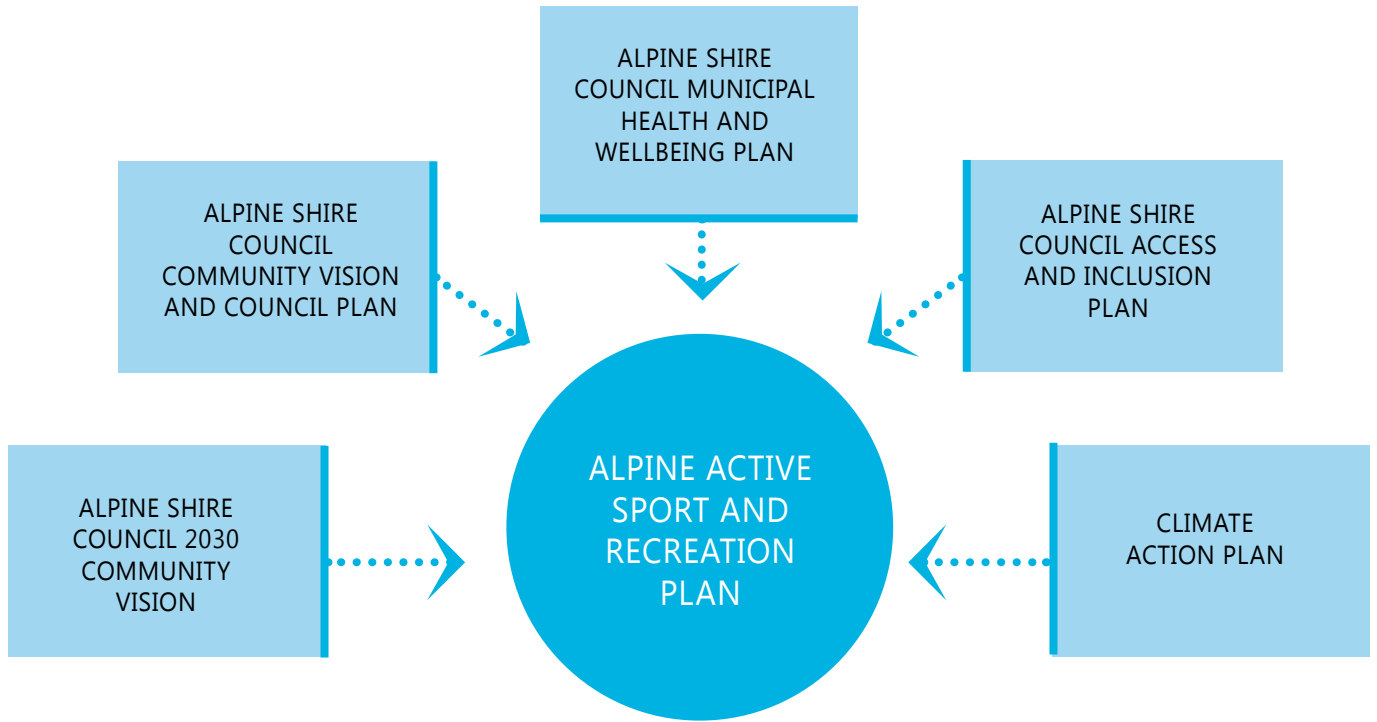
assessed physical activity trends and participation data

engaged with 757 members of the community through online engagement, surveys, listening posts and social media engagement

engaged with 90 stakeholders (e.g. sports club representatives, State Government representatives, school students, etc).

The Sport and Active Recreation Plan is supported by a strong evidence base and aligns closely with the strategic directions contained within Alpine Shire Council's plans and visions:





To guide Alpine Shire Council's work in the sport and active recreation sector, the following vision has been devised:

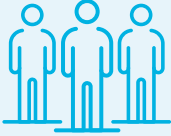



**"ACTIVE, CONNECTED AND LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES"**



Supporting the vision are eight planning principles. Everything Alpine Shire Council does in the sport and active recreation area will be guided by these principles:

PRINCIPLE	WHAT IT MEANS TO US
EVIDENCE-BASED	Any proposed facility developments / upgrades will be supported by demonstrated need (feasibility studies for large projects) and any programs or services will be implemented based on evidence of need or evidence of likely benefits to the community.
PROMOTES PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, LIVEABILITY AND CONNECTIONS	Any proposed facility developments / upgrades, programs or services will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• result in maintaining or increasing physical activity levels; <b>and / or</b></li> <li>• help to create a more liveable community; <b>and / or</b></li> <li>• encourage opportunities for social connections between people.</li> </ul>
SUSTAINABILITY	Any proposed facility developments / upgrades, programs and services will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider environmentally sustainable design principles and materials as part of their construction or development; <b>and / or</b></li> <li>• be financially sustainable to develop, operate and maintain wherever possible; <b>and / or</b></li> <li>• support Council's Climate Action commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through avoiding / reusing, improving efficiency, using onsite renewable energy, purchasing renewable energy or offsetting residual emission.</li> </ul>
EQUITY	Any facility developments / upgrades, programs or services are designed to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• equity of provision across Alpine Shire (based on the appropriate level of provision for towns and areas, i.e. larger towns with larger catchments are more likely to be able to support facilities, programs or services for more specialised or 'regional level' sport and active recreation activities); <b>and / or</b></li> <li>• equity for people who may be traditionally disadvantaged (e.g. First Nations people, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people, people with disabilities, females and older adults).</li> </ul> <p>Note that whilst equitable distribution of facilities and activities is a principle, sometimes it makes sense to have a larger facility in a town for other reasons, e.g. it already exists there, there is significant regional use of that facility in that location, there is a culture of the activities supported by that type of facility locally, etc.</p>
ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE	Any facility developments / upgrades, programs or services are designed to increase access for all abilities and be inclusive of everyone regardless of abilities, age, gender, cultural background and socio-economic status.
MULTI-PURPOSE AND ADAPTABLE	Facilities can be used in multiple ways by more than one group (unless a regional level single-purpose facility or a facility that has no option for sharing with others due to specialisation of infrastructure); <b>and / or</b> facilities, programs or services can be adapted to meet changing needs.
OPTIMISES USAGE OF EXISTING ASSETS	Any facility developments / upgrades, programs or services are designed to better use existing facilities, programs or services rather than necessarily developing new ones (unless need is clearly demonstrated).
PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS	Wherever possible, facility developments / upgrades, programs and services will be developed in partnership with other organisations to maximise the use of limited resources and to improve outcomes.

From the planning principles, four key pillars have been developed, each with a clear objective:

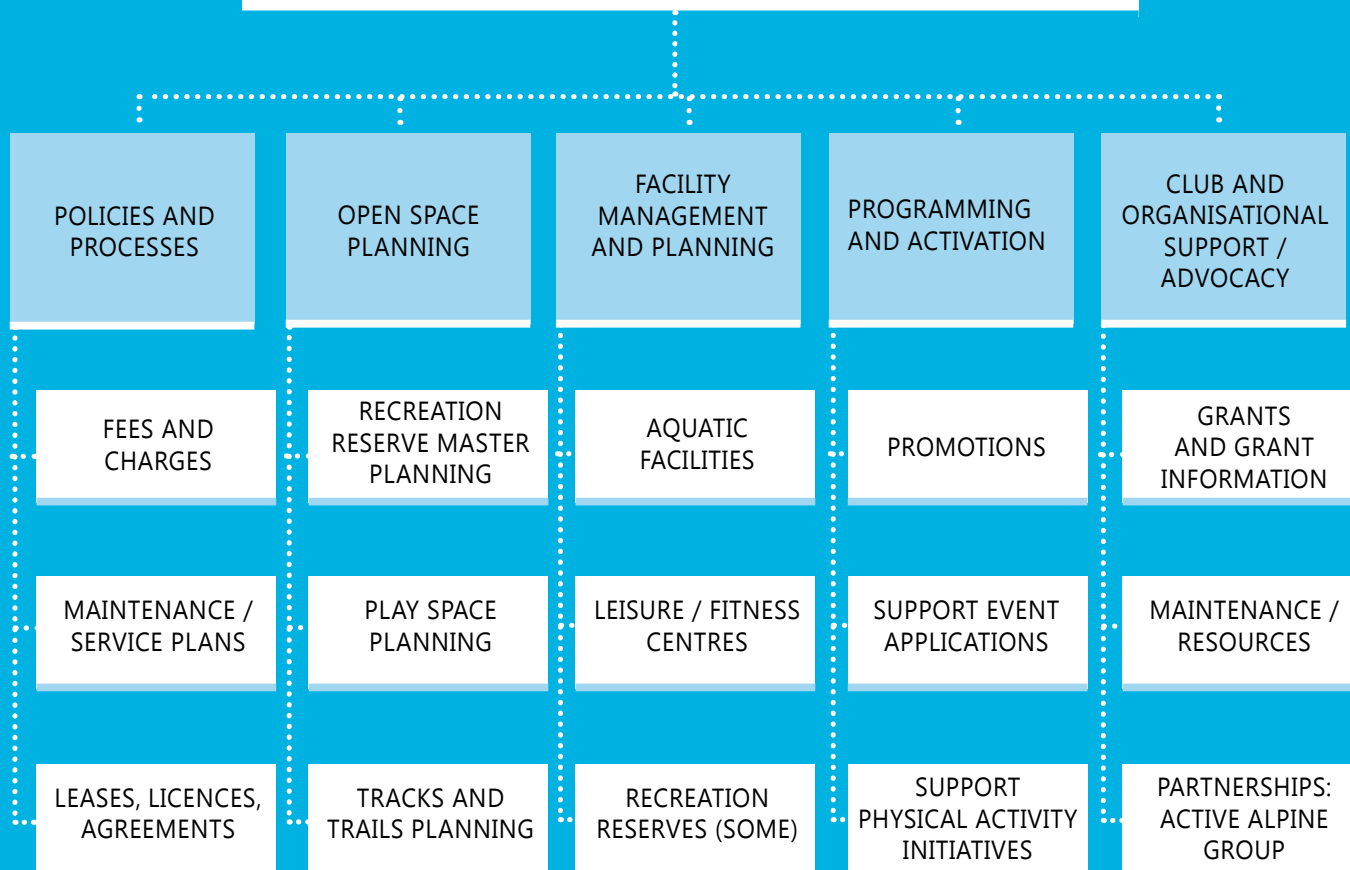
PEOPLE	PLACES	PARTNERS	PROCESSES
			
To encourage and support increased participation in physical activity by the community.	To provide a diversity of quality and accessible sport and active recreation places and spaces for the community.	To work in partnership with community organisations, government agencies and the private sector to facilitate sport and active recreation opportunities for the community.	To provide a strategic framework to guide Council's decision making and investment in relation to sport and active recreation.

Each objective features a number of actions which will be detailed in the action plan. These actions are likely to focus on projects such as the following:

<b>1.</b>	Undertaking an aquatics options analysis including determining the feasibility of developing aquatic facilities in Bright
<b>2.</b>	Assessing the feasibility of developing a second oval at Pioneer Park in Bright
<b>3.</b>	Developing accessible and intergenerational play spaces
<b>4.</b>	Undertaking master planning of recreation reserves in Bright, Mount Beauty and Myrtleford
<b>5.</b>	Improving active recreational opportunities such as installing outdoor fitness equipment in parks
<b>6.</b>	Supporting clubs and volunteers
<b>7.</b>	Considering emergency response plans when upgrading facilities
<b>8.</b>	Improving paths, tracks and trails for recreational purposes
<b>9.</b>	Developing planning tools and frameworks to assist Council to make sport and active recreation investment decisions.

Guided by the Sport and Active Recreation Plan, Alpine Shire Council will focus on the following areas over the next 12 years:

## SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION





# 2.0 INTRODUCTION

## 2.1 PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to establish an evidence base and to identify opportunities that will enable Alpine Shire Council to increase participation in physical activity levels, particularly by people who are currently not sufficiently active to achieve health benefits. It also aims to provide guidance to improve places and spaces where people take part in physical activity. However, Council cannot achieve increased participation and improved facilities on its own.

It is reliant on establishing and maintaining effective relationships with a broad array of partners including clubs / organisations, government agencies, the health sector and the private sector, and will require some external resources. Its strategies and actions will be clear with defined outcomes and will be guided by evidence of need and a variety of tools to ensure equity and transparency.



## 2.2 ALPINE SHIRE

Alpine Shire is situated in the north-east of Victoria, approximately 300 kilometres north-east of Melbourne and 50 kilometres south of Wangaratta. Its main towns are Bright, Myrtleford and Mount Beauty.

Alpine Shire covers 4,790 square kilometres. Only 8% of this land is made up of towns, villages and farms. The remaining 92% of land is public land, including parts of the Alpine National Park and all of Mount Buffalo National Park. Two of the state's major ski resorts (Falls Creek and Mt Hotham) are surrounded by Alpine Shire but managed by the Alpine Resorts Victoria. Alpine Shire is home to the alpine village of Dinner Plain.

Alpine Shire has a rich and diverse history. The Taungurung peoples have a Land Use Agreement that includes a part of Alpine Shire. A number of other Traditional Owner groups have an interest in Alpine Shire and a rich cultural connection with the alpine area.

Alpine Shire became a centre for gold mining in the 1850's and saw an increase in population and visitors to the area once roads were opened up to extract timber for the post-war housing boom in Melbourne.




The region has a strong agricultural focus and is known for its beef cattle farming, grape growing, hops, maize, nuts and fruit. It is also a popular tourist destination and attracts visitors for snow sports, cycling, hiking, camping, four-wheel driving, fishing, aerial sports, autumn leaves, festivals, markets, exhibitions, wineries, breweries and quality food. Tourist numbers expand the local population numbers significantly at key times of the year and also create greater demand on local sport and active recreation facilities.





## 2.3 METHODOLOGY

In order to gather the evidence base to determine priorities for community programs, services and facilities the following activities occurred:

ASSESSED THE CURRENT SITUATION	UNDERTOOK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH 757 PARTICIPANTS	UNDERTOOK STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT WITH 90 PARTICIPANTS
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identified participation levels and trends</li> <li>• Reviewed 12 relevant strategies</li> <li>• Prepared a demographic analysis</li> <li>• Audited and photographed all of the sport and active recreation facilities in Alpine Shire.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertook a community survey (199 responses)</li> <li>• Undertook online feedback with the community (504 unique site visitors – 100 comments from 60 unique stakeholders)</li> <li>• Held 2 community listening posts (20 attendees)</li> <li>• Received social media feedback (34 responses and 44 likes).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertook a club survey (42 responses)</li> <li>• Held 11 key stakeholder meetings with clubs, Government agencies, etc (36 attendees)</li> <li>• Surveyed State Sporting Associations, schools and neighbouring LGAs (8 responses)</li> <li>• Received written submissions and phone calls from stakeholders (4 participants).</li> </ul>

## 2.4 RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS AND WORKS UNDER-WAY

Alpine Shire Council undertakes a range of works annually to upgrade and maintain sport and active recreation assets. Some recent highlights include:

1.	Upgrade and expansion of the Myrtleford Indoor Stadium
2.	Upgrade of McNamara Recreation Reserve netball and tennis facilities
3.	Upgrade of Mount Beauty Skate Park
4.	Upgrade of pavilion at Pioneer Park in Bright
A selection of current projects include:	
1.	The Great Valley Trail between Bright and Harrietville
2.	Dinner Plain Activation (a portion of which is related to public sport and active recreation opportunities)
3.	The Alpine Better Places program in Harrietville and Tawonga (includes park upgrades, trail works, etc)
4.	Pioneer Park jumps track.



# 3.0 SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION BENEFITS

Whilst individuals benefit from sport and recreation from a health and wellbeing perspective and greater connections within their community, the whole community benefits from a greater sense of community cohesion, economic opportunities, improvement to the environment, reduction in crime and a more liveable and vibrant community. Some of the benefits that can occur through participation in sport and active recreation are:

SOCIAL BENEFITS	HEALTH BENEFITS
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater sense of community</li> <li>• Stronger, more self-reliant communities</li> <li>• Greater social and friendship networks</li> <li>• Improved liveability of an area</li> <li>• Reduction in anti-social behavior and vandalism</li> <li>• Helps to develop shared attitudes, values and codes of behavior in the community (cohesion)</li> <li>• Breaks down barriers between different sectors of the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Protects against cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, musculoskeletal impairments, obesity, some cancers and poor mental health.”<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Improved balance and coordination, resulting in fewer falls</li> <li>• Stronger muscles, joints and bones</li> <li>• Improved confidence and self-esteem</li> <li>• Improved body image</li> <li>• Improved motor skills</li> <li>• Less likely to suffer from depression and anxiety</li> <li>• Greater sense of achievement</li> <li>• Reduced stress levels</li> <li>• Higher energy and concentration levels</li> <li>• Reduction in incidence and severity of illness and disability</li> <li>• Increased life expectancy – physical inactivity causes an estimated 16,000 premature deaths a year.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS	ECONOMIC BENEFITS
	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages a greater appreciation and awareness of the natural environment (i.e. develops environmental stewardship)</li> <li>• Encourages the protection of areas of conservation or cultural heritage value</li> <li>• Reduces carbon emissions, air pollution and noise pollution (through activities such as active transport, e.g. walking and cycling in place of vehicular transportation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attracts visitors and generates tourism</li> <li>• Attracts businesses and creates employment</li> <li>• Creates higher market value of properties near public open space</li> <li>• Improvements to local business viability through sale of sport and recreation equipment, services and programs</li> <li>• Lower health care costs - physical inactivity costs the Australian economy \$805 million annually - \$640m in direct costs (healthcare expenditure) and \$165m in indirect costs (loss in productivity) (2013 figures)<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Fewer days off work - productivity loss due to physical inactivity is estimated at 1.8 working days per worker per year.<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> VicHealth (2015) Promoting equity in physical activity: An evidence summary

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Eoin Blackwell (2017) Physical Inactivity is Costing Australia Nearly \$1 Billion a Year: HuffPost 29 July 2017 [https://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/2016/07/28/physical-inactivity-is-costing-australia-nearly-1-billion-a-yea\\_a\\_21441164/](https://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/2016/07/28/physical-inactivity-is-costing-australia-nearly-1-billion-a-yea_a_21441164/)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

## 4.0 SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION TRENDS

The sport and recreation landscape is constantly changing. The table below describes some of the trends currently occurring in the industry which we need to be aware of when planning facilities, programs and services in the future:

TREND	DETAILS
LIVEABILITY	Quality sport, recreation and open spaces are seen as one of the key tools used by Local Government Authorities and property developers to attract new residents to come and live in a town and to improve the liveability of towns.
INDIVIDUAL LIFESTYLE ACTIVITIES	There has been a movement away from many traditional organised sports such as football, cricket, netball and tennis to more individual or small group non-organised activities, e.g. walking, gym workouts, fitness classes, cycling, swimming, running, skiing, rock climbing, white water rafting, stand up paddle boarding and personal training.
GROWTH OF FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN SPECIFIC SPORTS	There has been significant growth across sports by females in Victoria in AFL, soccer and cricket. This growth is accompanied by the need to find suitable sports grounds and change facilities for training and games.
EVENTS AND TOURISM	There has been greater demand on sporting facilities and public open spaces such as parks for special events, e.g. music festivals, sports tournaments, markets, festivals, weddings, fun runs and cycling events. These can create a positive economic impact for the municipality.
PROGRAMMING	There is a growing focus by Local Government on providing or facilitating programs in open spaces to attract greater levels of participation in physical activities, e.g. summer activities and Park Run.
DOG PARKS	There has been an emergence of off leash dog parks in response to the desire to connect with other dog walkers and the desire for dogs to socialise with one another.
PLAYGROUNDS	There has been greater investment in developing destination play spaces in open space areas, designed to attract people from both within and outside municipalities. Within these play spaces there may be a greater focus on providing quality landscaping and more natural spaces which utilise loose materials, rocks and logs.
WATER PLAY	Many municipalities are developing splash parks or water play areas for children (such as the water play area in Bright). These spaces can feature dry riverbeds, fountains, sprays, etc.
OUTDOOR FITNESS EQUIPMENT	There has been a growth in the installation of outdoor fitness equipment in public open spaces in recent years, either clustered together in one location or spread along a linear pathway.
ACTIVE TRANSPORT AND LINKAGES	There is a greater focus on ensuring that sport, recreation and open space areas are connected to existing walking / cycling networks.
ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION	There is greater awareness of the need to ensure that people of all ages and all abilities can safely and easily utilise areas of open space. Universal Design Principles and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements provide guidance in this area. Infrastructure to encourage participation by people of all abilities includes ramps, unisex toilets with change tables, single story buildings to allow for wheelchair access and Braille signs.

TREND	DETAILS
PLANNING	Master planning of recreation reserves and open spaces has occurred to ensure that needs of all existing and casual users are considered in the long term – including the linking of cycling / walking paths, development of play spaces, landscaping and BBQ / picnic facilities and formalised parking.
MULTI-PURPOSE DESIGN AND DIVERSITY	Parks and open spaces are being used for a variety of different purposes including sport, markets and festivals; hence spaces need to be as multi-purpose as possible to cater for community needs and may include the need for additional power outlets for food trucks or performances.
SAFETY	There is a greater awareness of safe design when it comes to sport and recreation facilities, parks and open spaces to ensure safety and perceived safety issues do not act as a barrier to usage. Clear sight lines, lighting, vegetation that can be seen through, passive surveillance and shade are all tools that can be used to improve safety.
SUSTAINABILITY	There has been a greater focus on the development of environmentally responsible practices such as solar hot water, recycled water systems, double glazed windows, wetlands, community gardens, synthetic surfaces, use of recycled materials and use of locally sourced materials to reduce the impact of facilities / spaces and their users on the environment and to potentially reduce operating costs of facilities.
CLIMATE CHANGE	There is a greater focus on climate-proofing areas of open space as much as possible to reduce water usage, provide shade and to retain some green space during periods of low rainfall.
COMMUNITY GARDENS	There has been an increase in the number of community gardens in towns in areas of public open space where people come together to garden together and increase their access to affordable fruit and vegetables.
FOOD AND COFFEE	There has been a growing trend for Local Government Authorities to develop a café or restaurant in some open spaces or encourage food trucks to visit these sites.
COMMUNITY HUBS	There has been a trend to co-locate several sporting facilities to form recreation precincts to maximise limited resources and to cross-market activities.
MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE	Local Government Authorities and clubs are focusing on more effective planning, management and maintenance, including understanding whole of life costs of infrastructure, i.e. construction, management, activation, maintenance and replacement. Asset renewal gaps are increasing across the State and sport and active recreation projects must be considered against all other service area priorities.
MODIFIED VERSIONS OF EXISTING SPORTS	A variety of traditional sports have developed a modified version (or several modified versions) of their game to keep older players playing longer, to involve children at an earlier age or to attract new participants, e.g. pickleball (a form of tennis played on a smaller court), cardio tennis, walking soccer, walking netball, AFL 9's, T20 cricket.
CREATING PANDEMIC-SAFE LOCATIONS	Parks, reserves and open space are viewed by many people as safer places to recreate than indoor sport and recreation facilities following the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure that these spaces continue to play an important role, it will be important to ensure that they are able to meet the requirements of a world where social distancing, hand washing, etc will become the new norm. This could impact the size and layout of social facilities in pavilions / hubs, the need for soap and hand sanitizer in toilets or near playgrounds, waiting spaces that can accommodate a line of people 1.5m apart, etc.



# 5.0 PLANNING FRAMEWORK

A workshop with Council staff reviewed information gathered in the research and consultation phase and identified eight key planning principles to guide the provision of sport and active recreation in Alpine Shire Council over the next 12 years. From these planning principles, a vision has been developed. This vision aligns with the direction of Alpine Shire's Council Plan and Community Vision, Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and Access and Inclusion Plan and is a summary of the goals inherent to these strategies, i.e. goals around liveable communities.

Four key focus areas have also been identified, each with an objective and numerous actions. Each of these aspects when combined, provides a framework to inform Council and the broader community of the types of facilities, programs and services Alpine Shire Council will invest in over the next 12 years to achieve an active, connected and liveable community.



## 5.1 VISION

Alpine Shire Council's vision for sport and active recreation is:

**"ACTIVE, CONNECTED AND  
LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES"**

## 5.2 PLANNING PRINCIPLES

The eight planning principles that support the vision and guide sport and active recreation provision in Alpine Shire are outlined in the executive summary. They include:

<b>1</b>	<b>Evidence based</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Promotes physical activity, liveability and connections</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Equity</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Accessible and inclusive</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Multi-purpose and adaptable</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Optimises usage of existing assets</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Partnerships and collaborations</b>

## 5.3 FOUR PILLARS AND OBJECTIVES

The four pillars that this plan focuses on, and their related objectives, are:

PEOPLE	PLACES	PARTNERS	PROCESSES
			
<p>To encourage and support increased participation in physical activity by the community.</p>	<p>To provide a diversity of quality and accessible sport and active recreation places and spaces for the community.</p>	<p>To work in partnership with community organisations, government agencies and the private sector to facilitate sport and active recreation opportunities for the community.</p>	<p>To provide a strategic framework to guide Council's decision making and investment in relation to sport and active recreation.</p>



# 6.0 PEOPLE

TO ENCOURAGE AND  
SUPPORT INCREASED  
PARTICIPATION IN  
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BY  
THE COMMUNITY








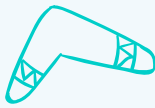












## 6.1 ALPINE SHIRE RESIDENTS

Anecdotal evidence indicates that the exodus of many families from Melbourne during and after COVID-19 in 2020 has resulted in an increase in young families moving to Alpine Shire for an improved lifestyle. This demographic shift may change the face of towns and the demand for certain sport and active recreation opportunities in the future; however, formal data is not yet available to fully support what is being observed.

The following table provides an overview of the Alpine Shire community based on the last available Australian Bureau of Statistics Census from 2016:

CURRENT POPULATION	FEMALES	MALES	PROJECTED POPULATION OF ALPINE SHIRE BY 2036
 <b>12,337</b>	 <b>49.2%</b>	 <b>50.8%</b>	 <b>13,510</b> (a growth rate of 0.3%) <sup>6</sup>
MEDIAN AGE	20-39 YEAR OLDS (AS A % OF POPULATION)	PEOPLE OVER 65 (AS A % OF POPULATION)	ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER (AS A % OF POPULATION)
 <b>49 years of age</b> (compared with 37 years of age for Victoria)	 <b>15.7%</b> (compared with 28.8% for Victoria)	 <b>24.4%</b> (compared with 15.6% for Victoria)	 <b>0.8%</b> (compared with 0.8% for Victoria)
PEOPLE BORN IN AUSTRALIA	TOP COUNTRIES OF BIRTH (OTHER THAN AUSTRALIA)	LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME OTHER THAN ENGLISH	MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD WEEKLY INCOME
 <b>76.5%</b> (compared with 64.9% for Victoria)	 England, Italy, New Zealand, Germany and Netherlands	 Italian, German, French, Mandarin and Greek	 <b>\$1,002</b> (compared with \$1,419 for Victoria)
THOSE WITH A BACHELOR DEGREE OR ABOVE	TOP 5 OCCUPATIONS	TOP 5 INDUSTRIES OF EMPLOYMENT	AVERAGE NUMBER OF MOTOR VEHICLES PER DWELLING
 <b>15.4%</b> (compared with 24.3% of Victorians)	 Managers, technicians and trades workers; professionals; labourers; and community and personal service workers	 Accommodation, hospitals (except psychiatric); cafes and restaurants; supermarket and grocery stores; and beef cattle farming (specialises)	 <b>1.9</b> (compared with 1.8% for Victoria)

<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census QuickStats (Alpine Shire): [https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census\\_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA20110?opendocument](https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/LGA20110?opendocument)

<sup>6</sup> DELWP (2019) Victoria in Future: [https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0032/332996/Victoria\\_in\\_Future\\_2019.pdf](https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0032/332996/Victoria_in_Future_2019.pdf)

Based on the 2016 Census, in comparison with Victoria, Alpine Shire has:

a higher proportion of older adults

a lower proportion of 20-39 years olds

a lower median household income.

Consequently, consideration needs to be given to:

Ensuring that provision is made to encourage participation in physical activity by the growing number of older adults through opportunities such as: walking and cycling (e.g. off road trails and dog parks), aquatic activities (swimming, aqua aerobics and hydrotherapy), softer playing surfaces (e.g. synthetic / cushioned hard courts as opposed to asphalt), modified activities (e.g. walking soccer), exercise programs in halls (e.g. yoga and pilates), specific fitness programs designed to maintain health and wellbeing (strength training and chair exercise classes) and gentle exercise classes outdoors (e.g. tai chi).

Acknowledging that it may be difficult to field sports teams requiring players in the 20-39-year age bracket in some areas due to low numbers in this age cohort, or conversely, providing improved sport and active recreational opportunities in Alpine Shire to attract greater numbers of people in this age cohort.

Keeping program / participation fees as affordable as possible in recognition of lower than state average income and the potential financial impact of COVID-19 on the community (especially for people who were reliant on industries hit hard by lockdowns, e.g. tourism related businesses).

## 6.2 HOW MUCH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DO PEOPLE NEED TO DO?

The Australian Government's Department of Health and Ageing has published National Physical Activity Guidelines<sup>7</sup> for Australians to provide an overview of the minimum amount of physical activity required to enhance health. Guidelines have been produced for a variety of age groups.

AGE	MINIMUM AMOUNT OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY REQUIRED TO ENHANCE HEALTH
0-1	Babies should be encouraged to take part in physical activity from birth, particularly supervised floor-based play in safe environments.
1-2	Toddlers should be physically active every day for at least three hours, spread throughout the day. Toddlers should include some energetic play in their day, e.g. running, twirling, jumping, dancing or skipping.
3-5	Pre-schoolers should be active for at least three hours each day, spread throughout the day. They should take part in one hour of energetic play (e.g. running, kicking, throwing, jumping, dancing or skipping).
5-17	Children and young people should do at least 60 minutes each day of moderate to vigorous physical activity that makes the heart beat faster (e.g. football, netball, swimming, dancing). At least 3 days per week, children and young people should incorporate vigorous activities and activities that strengthen muscle and bone in the 60 minutes (e.g. running, yoga, lifting weights, sit-ups). Children and young people should also do several hours of various light physical activities each day (e.g. walk to school, go to a park, help around the house).
ADULTS 18-64	Adults should be active most days, preferably every day. Each week, adults should do either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.5 to 5 hours of moderate intensity physical activity – such as a brisk walk, golf, mowing the lawn or swimming</li> <li>• 1.25 to 2.5 hours of vigorous intensity physical activity – such as jogging, aerobics, fast cycling, soccer or netball</li> <li>• an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous activities.</li> </ul>
ADULTS 65 AND OVER	People aged 65 years and over, should do at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days.

<sup>7</sup> Australian Government – Department of Health and Ageing website: [http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines#rec\\_0\\_5](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines#rec_0_5). Updated 6 May 2021.

## 6.3 VICTORIAN PARTICIPATION RATES IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

According to Ausplay data<sup>8</sup>, the top 10 participation activities for adults and the top 10 participation activities for children in Victoria in between July 2019 and June 2020 (partially during COVID-19 restrictions) were as follows:

ADULTS AGED 15+		CHILDREN 0-14 YEARS OF AGE	
ACTIVITY	%	ORGANISED OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES	%
Walking (recreational)	43.6%	Swimming	33.0%
Fitness/Gym	39.2%	Basketball	12.4%
Swimming	18.3%	Australian Rules Football	11.5%
Athletics, track and field (includes jogging and running)	17.1%	Dancing (recreational)	10.6%
Cycling	15.3%	Gymnastics	10.4%
Yoga	6.8%	Football/Soccer	9.7%
Bushwalking	5.8%	Netball	9.4%
Basketball	4.7%	Tennis	5.6%*
Football / soccer	4.4%	Cricket	4.2%*
Australian Football	4.3%	Athletics, track and field (includes jogging and running)	4.0%*

\*Estimate has relative margin of error between 50% and 100% and should be used with caution.

The emphasis for adults is far more on individual non-structured activities. The children's survey specifically focussed on organised sport outside of school hours, so it is not possible to ascertain the popularity of unstructured activities.

VicHealth<sup>9</sup> notes that in relation to physical activity in Victoria, there are some participation trends concerning children, young people and women that need to be addressed and turned around:

CHILDREN 5-12 YEARS OF AGE	YOUNG PEOPLE 12-17 YEARS OF AGE	WOMEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's lifestyles are becoming increasingly sedentary, with 4 out of 5 children (5–17 years) not meeting the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity every day.</li> <li>Globally, today's children may be the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.</li> <li>By 2025, it is estimated that one in three Australian children will be overweight or obese.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participation in physical activity halves during adolescence (down from an average of 120 minutes to just over 60 minutes a day).</li> <li>Sport participation levels drop suddenly at around age 15.</li> <li>Physically active children and youth are more socially active, have reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety, and perform better at school.</li> <li>The transitions to and from secondary school are key life stages at which to influence behaviours that establish lifelong healthy habits.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 out of 5 women aren't sufficiently active to gain health benefits from their activity.</li> <li>Females participate in sport at only half the rate of males.</li> <li>Barriers to participation in sport and physical activity are higher for women and girls.</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Sport Australia. Ausplay Survey 2019–2020: <https://www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/research/news/feed/smi/release-of-2019-20-ausplay-data>

<sup>9</sup> VicHealth (2018) Physical Activity Strategy 2018–2023



## 6.4 ADULT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION RATES IN ALPINE SHIRE

Data contained within the Victorian Population Health Survey (2017)<sup>10</sup> states that:

45% of adults in Alpine Shire are insufficiently active to achieve health benefits, compared with 44% of Victorians.

59% of local residents are overweight, compared with 51% of Victorians

26% of local residents are obese, compared with 19% of Victorians

Combined, 85% of local residents over 18 years of age or over are either overweight or obese, compared with 70% of Victorians.

Of those who filled out a community survey, more than half of the people who responded to the survey (53%) are active for more than 7 hours per week, with a further 9% stating that they are active for 7 hours per week. Only 2% of survey participants were active for less than 2 hours each week.

Through the community survey undertaken as part of the plan, Alpine Shire adults identified the following 10 most popular activities that they currently participate in (note that the survey respondents may not be a representative sample of the community as their participation in the survey was voluntary and not randomly selected). These figures are compared with a survey asking the same question in 2012 as part of the previous Recreation and Open Space Plan (2013).

RANK	ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS IN 2021 N = 199	% IN ALPINE SHIRE IN 2021	% IN ALPINE SHIRE IN 2012
1.	Bushwalking	148	74%	7%
2.	Walking	142	71%	63%
3.	Gardening	126	63%	Not recorded
4.	Cycling - recreational	108	54%	35%
5.	Skiing / snowboarding	94	47%	16%
6.	Swimming	90	45%	15%
7.	Mountain bike riding	82	41%	5%
8.	Canoeing / kayaking	73	37%	3%
9.	Exercise classes	64	32%	11%*
10.	Gym / weight training	63	32%	11%*

\*2012 survey combined gym / fitness

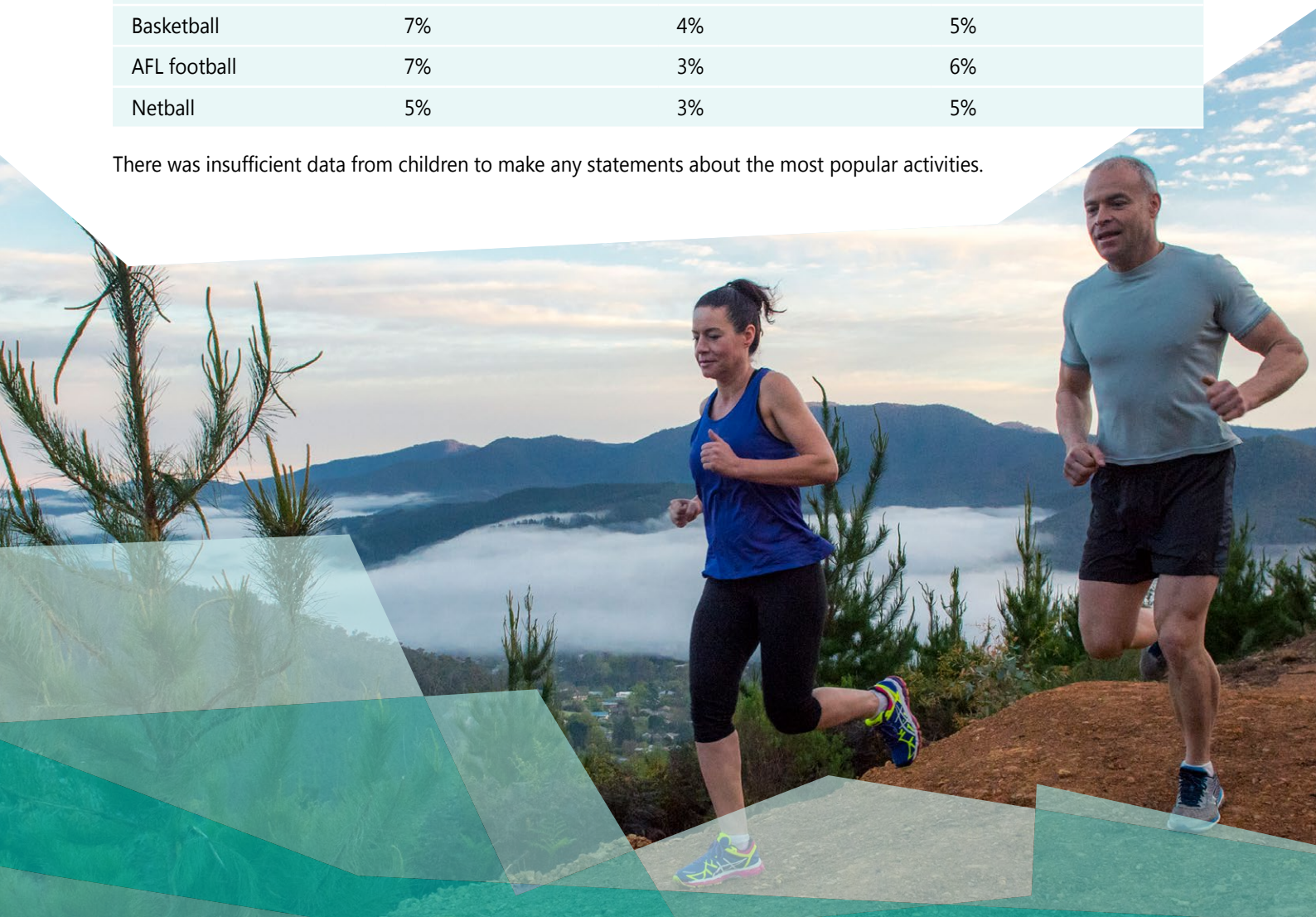
<sup>10</sup> Victorian Population Health Survey 2017: <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/population-health-systems/health-status-of-victorians/survey-data-and-reports/victorian-population-health-survey/victorian-population-health-survey-2017>

Alpine Shire survey respondents show a similar pattern to Victorian trend data in that they have an increased likelihood of engaging in informal, individual physical activities as opposed to organised sporting activities. This trend highlights the need to consider both active recreation activities alongside structured sporting opportunities.

A comparison of 2012 survey results, 2021 survey results and Victorian rates in 2020 around participation in traditional organised sports shows a significant increase in participation in most sports in 2021 (at least once during the previous 12 months) in Alpine Shire, but a fairly consistent participation rate in basketball, AFL and netball. Note that there were only 199 surveys completed in 2021 (much of the feedback received was from other online sources where current physical activity participation data was not requested), compared with 488 surveys in 2012, so results provide an indicator but may not be representative of the whole community.

SPORT	% OF PARTICIPANTS IN 2021 (N=199)	VICTORIAN PARTICIPATION RATE IN 2020	% OF PARTICIPANTS IN 2012 (N= 488)
Golf	14%	5%	6%
Lawn bowls	12%	2%	<2%
Cricket	12%	2%	2%
Tennis	11%	4%	7%
Soccer	10%	3%	3%
Athletics	9%	6%	<2%
Table tennis	9%	<1%	<2%
Basketball	7%	4%	5%
AFL football	7%	3%	6%
Netball	5%	3%	5%

There was insufficient data from children to make any statements about the most popular activities.



## 6.5 WHAT ACTIVITIES WOULD LOCAL RESIDENTS LIKE TO DO

According to the community survey, the most desired activities by survey respondents from Alpine Shire include:
Swimming (all year round preferably) (7%)
Gym / weight training / strength classes (6%)
Dancing – bush, rumba, older adults and children’s (4%)
Cycling – recreational (e.g. rail trail) (4%)
Mountain bike riding (3%)
Water exercise classes (3%)
Rock climbing (indoors and outdoors) (3%)
Exercise classes (3%)
Boxing / Muay Thai Kick Boxing (3%)
Lawn bowls (2%)
Martial arts / karate (2%)
Soccer (2%)
Tai chi (2%).

## 6.6 BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

The key to increasing physical activity levels amongst local residents is to address barriers to participation:	
Factors such as lack of time; cost of activities; poor health; lack of motivation; inability to access childcare; fear of being judged; and lack of confidence or self-esteem are key factors that limit participation in physical activity by <b>individuals</b> .	At an <b>organisational or club level</b> , factors that may limit participation include lack of inclusive and welcoming policies and practices; lack of information about opportunities available; inadequate facilities (e.g. for female participation); lack of opportunities that meet the desired level of participation (e.g. lack of social / informal sport opportunities); poor quality coaching / instruction; and clubs or organisations that do not respond to the cultural needs of certain groups.
At a <b>community level</b> , lack of suitable facilities; inadequate facilities, paths and areas of open space as a result of poor planning; and lack of activation can have a negative impact on physical activity. So too can communities that are based around cars as the major form of transport; lack of public transportation; and communities where people do not feel connected to each other.	At a <b>societal level</b> , participation can be limited if people don’t feel that facilities and areas of open space are safe; if they feel that spectators will make it unpleasant to participate; if it is more enjoyable to spend leisure time using technology; and if there is a concern that participation as a participant or support person may lead to litigation.



Through the community survey, local residents told us that they would be more likely to participate in sport and active recreation if:

Their desired activities were available locally or close to home (54%)

Facilities they want to use are available at times that suit their needs and if facilities are of a higher quality (11%)

They had more time (9%)

Their health and fitness levels were improved (3%)

They had the skills and confidence to participate in their desired activities (1%)

There was easy access to facilities and locations from their homes (1%)

More dogs were on leads in public spaces (1%).

Research undertaken by Active Alpine Group<sup>11</sup> adds several other barriers including seasons and weather; cost; lack of paths; lack of motivation; pain and safety. Additional barriers from VicHealth include history of being inactive, peer support, negative parental attitudes, stranger danger, ready access to electronic media and limited public transport<sup>12</sup>

In terms of trail use, community survey respondents stated that they would ride a bike or walk more often if:

**1.** Missing sections on paths / tracks / trails were eliminated (38%)

**2.** Verges on roads were widened for cyclists to use (26%)

**3.** There were more toilets along trails or at trail heads (23%)

**4.** Paths / tracks / trails were better maintained (22%)

**5.** There were more shared off-road paths / tracks / trails (22%)

**6.** Paths / tracks / trails were wider (22%)

**7.** There was more information / maps available (20%)

**8.** There were more marked on-road bike lanes (18%)

**9.** There was more shade (17%)

**10.** There was more signage / improved wayfinding (16%).

To ensure that we can increase participation in physical activity by local residents, we need to address key issues such as activation of spaces, improving accessibility, reducing barriers to participation, ensuring activities are affordable, supporting volunteers and providing more information about what is available.

<sup>11</sup> Active Alpine Group (2018) Alpine Active Living Mapping Project Findings Report

<sup>12</sup> VicHealth (2016) Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Evidence Summary

## 6.7 COUNCIL ROLE

Alpine Shire Council currently provides, manages, maintains and promotes sport and active recreation programs, services and facilities as a community benefit. It currently undertakes the following roles:

**STRATEGIC PLANNING** – undertake, facilitate or support strategic planning for sport and active recreation programs, services and facilities, e.g. assisting with recreation reserve master plans, developing policies and linking various tracks and trails to one another. This planning will help Council to achieve its health and wellbeing targets and will help to address community sport and active recreation needs both now and in the future.

**PROVISION OF FACILITIES** – provide a range of places and spaces where physical activity can occur in the community. These places and spaces include formal sports facilities such as ovals and hardcourts, through to shared trails, swimming pools and playgrounds.

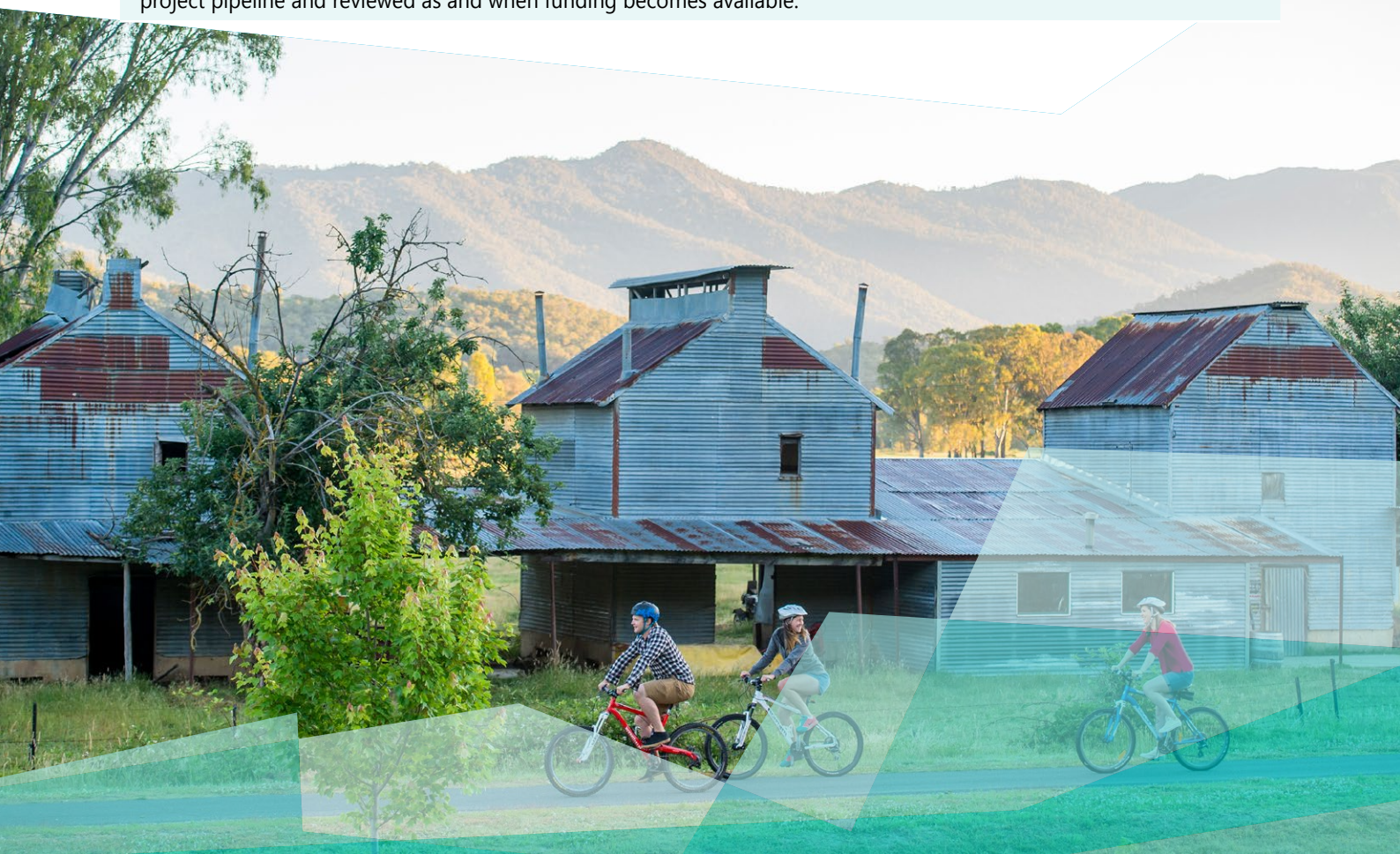
**MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF FACILITIES** – manage and maintain sport and active recreation assets owned by Alpine Shire Council, including swimming pools, parks, playgrounds, some shared trails and some sports facilities.

**PROMOTION OF SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES** – promote clubs / organisations and sport and active recreation programs and events via Council's promotional tools, e.g. website, social media, newsletter, new resident's kit, etc.

**CLUB / ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT** – provide support to clubs / organisations through mechanisms such as sports facility maintenance grants, community grants, information provision, advice, promotion of activities / events, etc to enable clubs / organisations to deliver a diversity of sport and active recreation opportunities in the community.

**PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT** – establish and maintain effective partnerships with relevant groups, organisations and government agencies to collaboratively deliver sport and active recreation opportunities for residents and visitors to the region, e.g. Active Alpine Group.

**ADVOCACY** – advocate to State and Federal Government and other relevant agencies on behalf of clubs / organisations and the community for improved sport and active recreation facilities, programs or services that can be added to the project pipeline and reviewed as and when funding becomes available.



Council performs its various roles (described on the previous page) in active recreation and sport across a range of existing business areas and initiatives. Some of the specific practices we want to continue to deliver, or to provide a greater focus on to support residents' participation in active recreation and sports, are identified in the table below. These practices demonstrate the philosophies that underpin Council's approach. The table below identifies existing actions. The sub-headings that follow on in this section highlight actions that Council will seek resourcing to put in place to further develop the activities highlighted in this table.

<b>POLICIES AND PROCESSES</b>
Investigate allocating resources to sport and active recreation planning, facility management, promotion, club support, partnership development and advocacy.
Continue to update existing tools, policies, strategies and processes as required
Participate in formal and informal regional sport and recreation networks to share information with neighbouring Local Government Authorities.
Support the implementation of existing plans with a sport and active recreation focus, e.g. the Dinner Plain Village Detailed Designs plan.
Continue to update the Asset Database as new information becomes available or conditions change.
<b>OPEN SPACE PLANNING</b>
Continue to provide several free public places and spaces such as parks, playgrounds, shared trails, outdoor fitness equipment, pump tracks, etc for sport and active recreation participation by local residents.
<b>FACILITY MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING</b>
Promote universal design and compliance to Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements in facilities.
Ensure that all sport and active recreation facility developments, upgrades and renewals incorporate Environmentally Sustainable Design principles (playing surface, clubrooms / change rooms and surrounds).
Design any facility developments or upgrades to include consideration of needs to respond to potential climate change impacts.
Ensure that consideration is given to the development of female change facilities in pavilions.
<b>PROGRAMMING AND ACTIVATION</b>
Promote female participation in sport and active recreation.
Continue to promote clubs / organisations through Council's Community Directory and expand the level of information available about each club / organisation.
Promote private sector sport and active recreation organisations that deliver physical activities for local residents in Council's Community Directory.
Seek opportunities to work with private sector providers of sport and active recreation to deliver physical activities at events and activities as appropriate.
Promote initiatives and programs from partner organisations that are designed to improve accessibility by people (particularly under-represented communities) to sport and active recreation.
Monitor the impact of potential participation barriers and implement measures to improve accessibility as required.



**CLUB / ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT**

Encourage multi-use of facilities and the delivery of additional activities by clubs / organisations (e.g. social / modified activities) as an add-on to their traditional offerings.

Continue to support clubs / organisations to purchase small items of equipment, develop new programs, train volunteers, etc. through the Community Grants program.

Work in partnership with Sport North East and relevant State Sporting Associations to bring additional resources to Alpine Shire to support clubs / organisations and local residents to deliver physical activity opportunities and to be more active.

Establish or enhance working relationships with schools throughout the municipality to enable discussions about shared facility planning to help reduce duplication and to maximise asset usage.

Explore opportunities to better support clubs and their volunteers in relation to issues such as governance, planning, policy development, programming, information and advice regarding grant applications.

Continue to support Alpine Shire Council's economic and community development team to implement the Active Alpine Group initiative in partnership with Alpine Health, Gateway Health and Sport North East.

Promote any government initiative that provides funding or training for potential coaches / sports administrators locally.

Commit to nominating sport and active recreation volunteers to awards programs in the region to recognise and reward them for their service.

Continue to liaise with clubs and organisations to understand their specific issues and needs and provide support or advocacy as appropriate.

The following key directions have been identified in order to help increase participation in physical activity by residents of the Alpine Shire.

**6.7.1 ACTIVATE PLACES AND SPACES**

In order to increase usage of places and spaces such as parks, playgrounds or sporting facilities, it is important to provide infrastructure to support comfort and enjoyment for users. Such infrastructure may include:

shade in parks, playgrounds and along shared trails to enable people to visit more frequently and for longer periods, without the risk of exposure to the sun's damaging rays

seats and picnic tables in parks, playgrounds, along shared trails and at recreation reserves to enable people to rest, watch children play and meet up with family and friends

lighting on well-used shared trails (or on sections of well-used trails) to enable people to walk or cycle in the early morning or just after sunset more safely

lighting at key sports facilities, e.g. some tennis courts, to enable people to play twilight sport or to train for certain sports

wayfinding signage to enable people to better find their way to key locations within or between towns – potentially including information about the time it would take to walk or cycle to a particular location to encourage this form of active travel (rather than using a car)

informal equipment such as outdoor fitness equipment or a basketball / netball ring to provide an additional opportunity within a park to encourage more people to use that space

public art in parks to create a sense of community place and pride and to reflect community history, culture or artistic expressions.

courts be used for sports such as netball and tennis, but also for a learn to ride area for children or a space to race model cars. Even within the sport itself, it is important to provide a diversity of activities or levels that will attract people to use a facility outside its traditional hours, e.g. rock up netball or cardio tennis or pickleball on a weeknight in addition to traditional competition based netball or tennis.

### 6.7.2 IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility can mean many things. It can refer to the improvement of physical access to a building and the user's experience whilst there through ramps, hearing loops, change facilities for people with disabilities and Braille signage. Or it may include greater access to spaces such as sports fields or pavilions that organisations were previously not permitted to use, or not permitted to use at certain times. It may also mean reducing some of the barriers to participation such as lowering the cost of activities, providing transportation to the activity, providing equipment free of charge for the activity or providing childcare, for example.

A current priority of the Victorian State Government and VicHealth is to increase access to people from under-represented communities to sport and active recreation, e.g. females; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; people with a disability; LGBTIQ+ community; culturally and linguistically diverse people; people from low on low incomes or experiencing socio-economic disadvantage; and disengaged youth.<sup>13</sup>

To ensure that under-represented communities have equitable access to sport and active recreation opportunities in Alpine Shire, accessibility issues need to be addressed.

### 6.7.3 PROVIDE AND PROMOTE FREE / LOW-COST SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

One of the key barriers to participation in physical activity is cost. The weekly income of Alpine Shire households is lower than the Victorian average and the impact of COVID-19 on many of the tourism businesses in Alpine Shire has been significant. Feedback from clubs indicates that post-COVID, there are less people returning to organised sport. This in part may be due to cost. It is therefore important that a variety of free or low-cost sport and active recreation opportunities are provided for or promoted to residents of Alpine Shire.

Active Alpine Group supported the community behind the scenes in establishing parkrun in Myrtleford, which is a volunteer led free weekly 5km walk/run. Initiatives like parkrun and the State Government's Get Active Victoria and This Girl Can are all examples of free programs aimed at increasing people's access to sport and recreation activities. The State Government has also recently launched a Get Active Kids Voucher Program<sup>14</sup> which provides up to \$200 towards the cost of membership, sports equipment or uniforms for under-represented groups experiencing barriers to participation in sport and recreation. Sport North East has a sports library<sup>15</sup> in Wangaratta from which local residents can borrow equipment such as Nordic walking poles, yoga mats and bocce sets.

Similarly, the provision of outdoor fitness equipment, the Bright Water Park, pump tracks, skate parks, playgrounds, fishing platforms, boat ramps and shared trails are all examples of free facilities that encourage participation in physical activity.

### 6.7.4 INCREASE FEMALE PARTICIPATION

Statewide there has been a trend for greater participation by girls and women in sports such as cricket and football. Data provided by Cricket Victoria indicates that there are a small number of girls involved in cricket blast at Mount Beauty Cricket Club and Ovens Valley United Cricket Club, but no junior girls or women's teams in Alpine Shire. Similarly, data provided by AFL Victoria indicates that girls are involved in Auskick, but as yet there are no junior or youth girls' teams and no women's teams. Girls and women who wish to play cricket and AFL football travel to Wangaratta or Wodonga to do so. However, in order to encourage more female participation and the establishment of female teams, there need to be people championing the establishment of such teams; facilities need to be accommodating for female participation (i.e. no open showers and urinals in change facilities); and female teams need to be given equitable access to sports facilities for training and matches.

<sup>13</sup> Victorian State Government (2017) Active Victoria. A strategic framework for sport and recreation in Victoria 2017-2021: [https://sport.vic.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/55602/download.pdf](https://sport.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/55602/download.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Victorian State Government (2020) Get Active Victoria – Kids Voucher Program: <https://www.getactive.vic.gov.au/vouchers/>

### 6.7.5 SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

The delivery of community-based sport and active recreation opportunities in Alpine Shire is heavily reliant on the use of volunteers. A number of clubs and organisations have indicated that they are struggling to recruit and retain enough volunteers, especially coaches and people willing to serve on a committee of management. This is particularly the case following COVID-19 restrictions.

Some clubs stated that it is difficult for coaches to retain their accreditation as they are required to travel significant distances to attend training sessions to upgrade their skills. Others have stated that it is difficult to attract and retain volunteers due to the complexities of the work volunteers are required to undertake, e.g. maintaining a fleet of gliders or understanding and adhering to all of the regulations of Racing Victoria.

To ensure that community-based sport and active recreation continues to be available to local residents, the attraction, retention and rewarding of volunteers in the future will be crucial. New ways of attracting people to assist, e.g. short-term project based volunteering is one option that needs to be considered, as should new ways of operating from a governance perspective. There may be opportunities to hold training for coaches in the Hume region, as opposed to all coaches travelling to Melbourne for training. Key partners in this space include local leagues / associations, schools, Sport North East and State Sporting Associations. Alpine Shire Council may also be able to provide a volunteer portal on its website to match potential volunteers to volunteering positions. School students and retired people could be targeted through volunteer campaigns, the former to gain new experiences and skills, and the latter to share experiences and skills gathered over many years.

### 6.7.6 IMPROVE INFORMATION

To increase awareness of existing sport and active recreation opportunities in Alpine Shire by local residents, a diversity of communication tools (both online and hard copy) should be employed by Council, clubs and organisations, such as:

- Active use of the community directory which lists the names of sport and active recreation clubs and organisations in Alpine Shire, including venue, contact details and some information about competitions / programs, with a direct link to club / organisation websites. This needs to be regularly updated and be provided online via Council's website as well as in hard copy format at Council service centres and libraries.
- Information on Council's website and in its social media pages to promote events and activities (text and / or video).
- Information on club / organisation websites, newsletters and social media pages.
- Posters in shop windows to promote events and activities.
- Banners or signage in the street or in front of the venue.
- Letterbox drops by clubs / organisations.
- Presentations to specific target markets.
- Emails to various established networks including schools.





# 7.0 PLACES

TO PROVIDE A DIVERSITY OF QUALITY AND ACCESSIBLE SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION PLACES AND SPACES FOR THE COMMUNITY.

## 7.1 EXISTING PLACES AND SPACES

Alpine Shire Council, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Parks Victoria, Alpine Resorts Victoria, AGL Hydro, HVP Plantations, North East Water, Goulburn-Murray Water, North East Catchment Management Authority, schools and the private sector provide a diverse range of places and spaces where physical activity occurs within the Alpine Shire region.

Alpine Shire Council primarily provides sports fields / courts / greens, parks, playgrounds and shared trails, as well as some indoor sports facilities and swimming facilities.

The following table provides an overview of the facilities that are currently available.



TOWN	BRIGHT	DERERANG	DINNER PLAIN	EUROBIN	FREEBURGH	GAPSTED	GUNDOWRING	HARRIETVILLE	MOUNT BEAUTY	MUDGEONGA	MYRTLEFORD	OVENS	POREPUNKAH	ROSEWHITE	RUNNING CREEK	SMOKO	TAWONGA	TAWONGA SOUTH	UPPER GUNDOWRING	WANDILGONG
AERIAL / FLYING SPORTS	X								X				X							
ATHLETICS	X																			
BASEBALL													X							
BOCCE / PETANQUE									X				X							
BOWLING GREEN	X	X									X						X			
CRICKET NETS	X	X				X	X				X		X							
CROQUET GREEN	X																			
DANCE STUDIO	X								X											
DISK GOLF			X																	
EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES	X	X									X									
FIRE RUNNING TRACK									X											
GOLF COURSE	X	X							X		X									
GUN CLUB																	X			
GYM / FITNESS CENTRE	X										X									
HALL	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
MOTOR SPORTS											X						X			
MOUNTAIN BIKE FACILITIES	X								X											
NETBALL COURTS	X	X							X		X									
INDOOR SPORTS COURT	X								X		X									
OUTDOOR FITNESS EQUIPMENT									X		X						X			
OVAL	X	X				X	X	X	X		X		X							X
PATH / TRAIL	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X		X		X
PLAYGROUND	X	X	X					X	X		X	X	X				X	X		X
PUMP TRACK / BMX	X		X						X											
RACECOURSE		X																		
RIVER POOL	X												X							
ROWING / DRAGON BOAT									X											
SKATE PARK	X								X		X									
SNOW SPORTS			X																	
SOCCER FIELDS									X		X									
SPLASH PARK	X																			
SQUASH	X										X									
SWIMMING POOL	X								X		X									
TENNIS COURTS	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X		X							

In addition to the facilities listed on the previous page, there are a variety of recreational programs and activities undertaken in Alpine Shire by community organisations, health organisations and the private sector including gym, yoga, strength classes, swimming lessons, personal training, dance, martial arts and Nordic Pole Walking, in halls, indoor stadiums and parks. There is an opportunity for Alpine Shire to further support these organisations to value add to their existing offerings to help achieve positive health and wellbeing outcomes within the community.

Facilities such as ovals can also provide for a range of sport and active recreation activities such as AFL football, soccer and athletics.

Some local residents visit facilities in other municipalities, e.g. indoor aquatic centres, soccer fields, hockey fields and basketball stadiums in other locations such as Wodonga and Wangaratta. In some instances, people who live in other municipalities utilise facilities within Alpine Shire, e.g. the rail trail and mountain bike facilities.

A review of existing facility provision against industry standards<sup>16</sup> indicates that Alpine Shire is well serviced in regard to the number of facilities provided, although there is shortfall of designated soccer fields. It is important to note that industry standards are often developed for metropolitan centres or growth areas and don't necessarily take into consideration the condition of existing facilities, their location, their distance from population centres, their layout (i.e. stand-alone facility or several facilities located together), and the geography of the surrounding area, etc. As a very basic guide, the following table provides an indication of provision in growth areas of metropolitan Melbourne:

SPORTS FACILITY	RATIO OF PROVISION PLANNED IN GROWTH COUNCILS (E.G. CITY OF CASEY)	NO. OF FACILITIES IN ALPINE SHIRE	RATIO OF PROVISION IN ALPINE SHIRE
Athletics	1 grass track: 75,000	No dedicated facilities	None
Australian Rules Football	1 oval: 4,250	8	1 oval: 1,542
Baseball	1 field: 50,000	1	1 field: 12,337
Basketball	1 facility: 8,000	3	1 court: 4,112
Cricket	1 oval: 3,000	9	1 oval: 1,371
Hockey	1 pitch: 100,000	0	None
Lawn bowls	1 facility: 15,000	4	1 facility: 3,084
Soccer	1 field: 4,500	2	1 field: 6,169
Netball outdoor)	1 court: 5,000	9	1 courts: 1,371
Netball (indoor)	1 court: 5,000	3	1 courts: 4,112
Tennis	1 court: 2,300	28 (some in very poor condition)	1 court: 441

<sup>16</sup> City of Casey (2014) Leisure Facilities Development Plan Policy: <https://www.casey.vic.gov.au/policies-strategies/leisure-facilities-development-plan-policy>



## 7.2 ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### 7.2.1 FACILITY AUDIT OBSERVATIONS

Observations from the facility audit undertaken as part of the development of this plan identify a range of issues and opportunities, including:

- Varying level of standards from brand new facilities to **ageing facilities**, i.e. from Pioneer Park in Bright (excellent) to Gapsted Recreation Reserve (poor)
- **Lack of change facilities and toilets** at some sites, e.g. no female change facilities at Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve, no toilets at Bright Croquet Club and no change facilities at Les Peart Oval (home of junior soccer)
- **Gaps in the trail network** and opportunities to better connect towns with one another (e.g. Kiewa River Trail in Mount Beauty to Tawonga along the river) and complete the gap in the trail network from Bright to Harrietville
- Inability for some sports to grow due to **lack of access to stadium / facility space and times**, e.g. gymnastics and table tennis
- **Potential safety issues**, e.g. landing area for paragliding on both sides of the road; poor condition of rodeo grandstand in Myrtleford; road safety issues for cyclists along the Tawonga Gap Road; lack of potable water at Dederang Recreation Reserve
- **Poor wayfinding signage** to some facilities (e.g. McNamara Reserve in Myrtleford) and on some trails
- Facilities that will require an **upgrade in the near future (and considerable expenditure)**, e.g. Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve Pavilion and Myrtleford Swimming Pool
- **Various levels of accessibility** in relation to DDA compliant toilets, paths, ramps, play equipment, etc.
- **Lack of storage space** for clubs at Pioneer Park in Bright and in Mount Beauty (Dragon Boat Club, soccer and Little Athletics)
- **Lack of infrastructure that could help to further activate sites**, e.g. paths, seats, shade, picnic tables, water bubblers and play equipment



## 7.2.2 COMMUNITY DEMAND FOR PLACES AND SPACES

Many of the issues identified through the audit were also identified through the community survey, online engagement and key stakeholder engagement.

The top sport and active recreation facility and trail upgrades desired by the community (from community surveys and online responses combined) are outlined in the table below. It is important to note that some of the facilities and trails identified lie outside of Council's responsibilities as a land manager.

SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITY UPGRADES DESIRED	TRAIL UPGRADES DESIRED
Improve aquatic facilities in Myrtleford, Mount Beauty and Bright (indoors and outdoors)	Develop a pedestrian bridge at Nimmo Bridge in Myrtleford and trails to connect to Myrtleford and beyond
Upgrade Mount Beauty Skate Park - lights, shade and mini ramp	Improve walking / cycling opportunities throughout Alpine Shire (connections, loops, etc)
Upgrade and seal Mount Beauty BMX pump track	Construct a trail from Pebble Beach on the Kiewa River Trail to Damms Rd in Mount Beauty
Develop a junior sports oval on 2nd oval at Pioneer Park in Bright for soccer, Little Athletics, junior AFL and cricket	Upgrade sections of the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail, e.g. widening trail between Bright and Porepunkah
Increase number of exercise classes at Bright Sports Centre	Create mountain bike tracks on Reform Hill in Myrtleford
Develop a splash park / water play facility in Myrtleford	Construct a footpath in Mummery Road, Myrtleford
Replace swing bridge in Rotary Park in Myrtleford with an accessible bridge	Improve trail connections in the township of Bright
Review the need for a facility at Porepunkah Oval	Improve trail maintenance in Bright
	Undertake works on the Back Porepunkah Road to improve safety for road cyclists
	Complete the gap in the trail between Bright and Harrierville
	Undertake on-road cycling improvements in Bright
	Develop an epic mountain bike trail between Bright and Mount Beauty
	Review the tracks and trails network around Harrierville

The process for a preliminary prioritising of projects identified is discussed in further detail in the Processes section of this plan.

Note that as identified above, some of the projects listed, e.g. the development of mountain bike trails on Reform Hill falls within the responsibility of DELWP. In instances where the proposed project is the responsibility of another organisation, Alpine Shire Council will inform the relevant organisation of the community's desires.

Where the project may require external funding, but then become the management, maintenance and renewal responsibility of Council, it will be listed as a potential Council project, subject to funding availability.

## 7.3 KEY DIRECTIONS

### 7.3.1 AQUATICS

One of the greatest demands identified by the community through engagement activities was for improved aquatic facilities in Alpine Shire. Ideas ranged from indoor heated pools in each of the three largest towns, to an outdoor pool in Bright, a water park in Myrtleford and a range of other aquatic improvements such as more inflatable equipment.

While the benefits of participation in aquatic activities are recognised, e.g. improved water safety skills; improved health and fitness; and enjoyment, it can be challenging from an economic perspective to provide aquatic facilities in areas with a low population. Industry research, for example, indicates that 25m-50m indoor aquatic facilities are generally not economically viable in towns with a catchment of less than 30,000-40,000 people.

Further research therefore needs to be undertaken to determine the type of aquatic opportunities desired by the community, e.g. learn to swim, lap swimming, hydrotherapy, water aerobics or water play and to really understand what is the optimum and achievable scenario for pool allocation around Alpine Shire. As part of this research consideration should also be given to the upgrade of both Mount Beauty and Myrtleford Pools, including possible relocation if warranted.

### 7.3.2 FOOTPATHS AND SHARED TRAILS

Walking and cycling are two of the most popular physical activities in Alpine Shire, and one of the most effective ways of encouraging more people to become more active.

Alpine Shire is renowned throughout Australia for its many high-quality walking and cycling options, including some of the most iconic bushwalks in Australia; the best rail trail in Australia; excellent mountain biking and gravel bike riding opportunities and a vast array of recreational tracks and trails of all levels for walking, cycling, trail running and horse riding. Visitors flock to the region for walking and cycling opportunities, and without a doubt, local walking and cycling opportunities will have been a key attraction for many new residents to Alpine Shire.

A wide range of suggestions were received from local residents to further upgrade footpaths, trails and on-road bike lanes in Alpine Shire, e.g. completion of missing links between Bright and Harrietville; development of new trails around Nimmo Bridge in Myrtleford and between Mount Beauty and Tawonga; widening of existing trails such as the Murray to Mountains Trail between Bright and Porepunkah; improved connections within towns (particularly between residential areas and trails), and improved safety for road cyclists along the Tawonga Gap Road.

Whilst Council used the engagement process for this Sport and Active Recreation Plan to gather some information on community needs for trails and paths, the breadth of scope of optimisation of the trail and path network for developments, upgrades and renewals of cycling and walking infrastructure needs to be focussed into a tracks, trails and footpath strategy.

### 7.3.3 MURRAY TO MOUNTAINS TRAIL

The Murray to Mountains Rail Trail is the premier recreational trail in Alpine Shire. It connects Bright, Porepunkah, Eurobin, Ovens, Myrtleford and Gapsted to one another before travelling outside the municipality to connect to Wangaratta and Beechworth. New trails south of Bright will enable a connection to Harrietville and Wandiligong, once better town connections are developed within Bright.

Due to the immense popularity of the Murray to Mountains Rail Trail by local residents and visitors, it can become crowded during holiday periods and on weekends. The narrow trail between Bright and Porepunkah needs to be widened to reduce potential trail conflict and to allow people to ride or walk side by side. Similarly, consideration needs to be made to further activating the site and providing for a safer, more comfortable experience by reviewing wayfinding, safety and amenities.



### 7.3.4 PLAY SPACES

Play spaces provide an important place for children and families to develop physically and socially and enjoy the experience of free play. Council does not currently have a formal play strategy to guide its provision of play across the municipality. Ideally a review of the location of all play spaces needs to occur, along with an assessment of the remaining life span; size of play space; condition of play spaces; the type and diversity of play opportunities provided; the catchment of play spaces; the age range for each play space; supporting infrastructure such as paths, seats and shade; areas of over- or under-supply; accessibility; the value of play opportunities provided; and some principles to guide the provision of play. Budgets should also be established for capital works, upgrades, renewals and maintenance.

### 7.3.5 PUBLIC TOILETS

The provision of public toilets can greatly enhance usage of public open spaces and people's ability to participate in community life, particularly for families with young children or for people who may need to access toilets quickly due to ageing or health issues. Demand for additional public toilets in locations such as at the start of Kiewa River Trail was identified through consultation and demand for upgrades, improved maintenance or opening hours was also noted, particularly in some of the smaller towns in Alpine Shire such as Dederang.

Baby change facilities enable families to more easily enjoy parks and recreation reserves, knowing that safe and comfortable facilities are available for their usage. At present there are no Changing Places fully accessible public toilet facilities in Alpine Shire. These facilities incorporate change tables and hoists for people with severe or profound disabilities. The provision of one Changing Places venue in a central location in Alpine Shire would significantly improve access for people with disabilities to recreational and community spaces and would enable people with disabilities from other areas to enjoy outings in Alpine Shire. It is suggested that if such a toilet is constructed, Bright, because of its access to a range of physical activity opportunities and its high visitor numbers, would be a logical location to install the first Changing Places facility. Potentially other facilities could be established in Myrtleford and Mount Beauty in the future.

### 7.3.6 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

A number of clubs and organisations in Alpine Shire are embracing initiatives to reduce their impact on the environment, including solar panels on the roof of the

Myrtleford Bowls Club, inground irrigation systems and water tanks at various recreation reserves, passive heating and cooking in buildings, low use shower heads in change rooms, use of recycled materials in building construction, etc. Funding bodies such as Sport and Recreation Victoria require projects to incorporate Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) features. By designing facilities according to ESD principles, significant benefits can be achieved including:

- Reduction in energy and therefore cheaper operating costs
- Protection and conservation of water
- Less materials going to landfill due to re-use
- Less waste
- Less pollution
- Less transportation costs and impacts by buying locally.

Council will continue to ensure that environmental sustainability options are included in design projects and funding applications for facility renewals and upgrades.

### 7.3.7 IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Alpine Shire, like the rest of the world, is being impacted by climate change. Warming temperatures and an increase in the number, duration and severity of heatwaves increases the number of extreme fire risk days and the length of the bushfire season. High temperatures can result in an increased need for cooling in sport and recreation facilities. An increase in fire risk requires the need to design facilities to withstand fire as much as possible.

High temperatures also have an impact on participation, as many activities are called off once the temperature hits 35 degrees or above to reduce the likelihood of people suffering from heat stress while playing sport. Some people are likely to stop participating in summer sports as a result of potential heat stroke and sunburn. High temperatures can also contribute to blue-green algae outbreaks, therefore impacting water sports.

Lower rainfall levels may impact the condition of playing fields and the availability of water to irrigate playing fields. Intense rainfall events may result in flooding of playing fields and buildings and the cancellation of games.

Alpine Shire Council's Climate Action Plan (2021) describes Council's commitment to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by July 2023 through avoiding / reusing, improving efficiency, using onsite renewable energy, purchasing renewable energy and offsetting residual emissions.

### 7.3.8 SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES INCORPORATING MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

A number of sporting groups were keen to ensure that their venues are upgraded to a standard suitable to be used as Places of Last Resort (POLR) or Community Fire Refuges.

**Fire refuges** - according to Alpine Shire Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP), there are no designated fire refuges currently.

**Place of Last Resort** - these facilities are not part of shelter in place or evacuation strategies; they are places of last resort; (where other plans have failed or cannot be followed) where a person's prospects of survival may be better than other places but cannot be guaranteed. They are places, or buildings, designated and signposted by Alpine Shire Council that meet guidelines issued by the CFA<sup>17</sup> and the criteria in the Municipal Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan. As of May 2021, Alpine Shire's Neighbourhood Safer Places are signposted as Bushfire Places of Last Resort at the following locations:

ALPINE SHIRE NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER PLACES - NSPS		
TOWN(S)	PLACE OF LAST RESORT	COORDINATES (DD)
BRIGHT AND WANDILIGONG	Pioneer Park Oval	-36.737131
	64/72 Coronation Avenue, Bright	146.970934
HARRIETVILLE	Harrietteville Hall	-36.891763
	Great Alpine Road, Harrietteville	147.063336
POREPUNKAH	Porepukah Hall and oval	-36.698301
		146.911356
DEDERANG	Memorial Hall	-36.475587
	Kiewa Valley Highway, Dederang	147.021267
MYRTLEFORD	Ablett Pavilion	-36.566896
	Lewis Avenue, Myrtleford	146.722146
	RC McNamara Reserve oval	-36.567486
	Lewis Avenue, Myrtleford	146.723026
MOUNT BEAUTY	Mount Beauty Sports Stadium	-36.741793
	Pool Road, Mt Beauty	147.168774
TAWONGA	Tawonga Memorial Hall	-36.686769
	Kiewa Valley Highway, Tawonga	147.141023

**Emergency Relief Centres (ERC)** - are locations such as halls where relief services, food, water, accommodation and support with counselling and finances are provided. These centres will only be activated and publicised once consideration has been given by the Incident Controller (in consultation with the Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator (MERC) and Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) to the prevailing circumstances and number of people needing assistance.

**Community Based Relief Support Centres** - are facilities where the community may gather during the watch and act phase of an emergency until people put their evacuation plan into place or move to an ERC when / if one is opened. These spaces are community-led.

<sup>17</sup> CFA website: <https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/your-local-area-info-and-advice/neighbourhood-safer-places>

### **7.3.9 PIONEER PARK (BRIGHT) MASTER PLAN**

Numerous sporting groups identified the need to develop a second oval or grassed playing field at Pioneer Park in the open space area adjacent to the equestrian area, along with storage space for user groups. Potential user groups of this second oval or grassed playing field include junior football, junior cricket, junior soccer, Little Athletics and senior athletics. Should this open space area be developed, consideration needs to be given to creating a multi-purpose space that is able to cater for a variety of different sports. Consideration also needs to be given to the position of the pony club arena located next to the open space area, as junior sport and pony club immediately next to each may not be compatible.

Other suggestions received for Pioneer Park include the development of additional tennis courts onsite; an additional hardcourt suitable for netball or basketball; as well as a new clubhouse for Alpine Cycling Club (it currently shares the Scout Hall at Pioneer Park). There may be opportunities to create a shared facility with storage for users of the second oval / grassed playing field and the Alpine Cycling Club.

### **7.3.10 DINNER PLAIN VILLAGE MASTER PLAN**

Dinner Plain Village Detailed Designs (2020) recommends the development of a recreation reserve and adventure trail at Dinner Plain featuring mini pump park and skate features, frisbee golf, multi court, expansion to the existing play space, pedestrian access upgrade, park infrastructure and increased amenity and infrastructure at Peashooters Run and Trail Junction (Mountain Bike Hub).

### **7.3.11 MOUNT BEAUTY EDUCATION AND RECREATION PRECINCT MASTER PLAN**

A variety of suggestions were received to improve the Mount Beauty Education and Recreation Precinct, including:

- An upgrade to the Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve pavilion to improve kitchen, social and change facilities (including for female players – netball and AFL football - and umpires)
- Improvements to the drainage on the Mount Beauty sports oval to enable sports to be played over winter
- Basic clubhouse / storage facilities on Les Peart Oval to cater for junior soccer, junior cricket and Little Athletics
- Storage space for Mount Beauty Dragon Boat Club's boat and equipment

- Sealing of the Mount Beauty BMX pump track
- Installation of shade sail, lights and a mini ramp for beginners at Mount Beauty Skate Park
- Provide an improved launch ramp into The Pondage for watercraft
- Upgrade to tennis club pavilion

### **7.3.12 MCNAMARA RECREATION RESERVE (MYRTLEFORD) MASTER PLAN**

McNamara Reserve in Myrtleford is the home of high-level football, cricket and netball in the municipality. In order to continue to provide high-level sport and to attract skilled / elite players it is important to provide quality facilities.

The Recreation Reserve Committee of Management has undertaken some initial planning to develop a wellbeing and recovery centre on site. It also wishes to establish a second oval on land next to the reserve (which is currently privately owned).

The development of a second oval would enable all grades of football and cricket to be based at the one site (instead of operating partially at McNamara Reserve and partially at Memorial Park). Should Memorial Park become surplus to football and cricket needs, it could be repurposed for additional sport and recreation opportunities, or the land could potentially be sold to help fund the purchase of land for the second oval. There may also be an opportunity to develop an athletics running track around the perimeter of the second oval, thereby creating an opportunity for senior or junior athletics on site, particularly if additional athletic infrastructure is constructed.

It is likely that the committee will progress the planning further for the recovery and wellbeing centre and a second oval. Therefore, it is important that Alpine Shire Council stays informed of the planning works and vision created by the committee as it may impact decisions about future use of Memorial Park.



### 7.3.13 SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Some of the key suggestions emanating from the community engagement activities undertaken include:

improvements at some of the larger recreation reserves – Pioneer Park in Bright, Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve in Mount Beauty and McNamara Reserve in Myrtleford (which will be identified through master plans)

aquatic improvements (which will be included in the Aquatics Option Analysis)

play space improvements (which will be included in the play space review); and

track / trail / path improvements (which will be included in the Footpath Strategy)

projects that are the responsibility of another body, e.g. DELWP.

There are not sufficient resources available to undertake all of these works, and a process of justification needs to be undertaken to determine the feasibility of such developments. To assist with this prioritisation process, assessment tools will be developed as part of the implementation phase of the Sport and Recreation Plan.

Further, given that Alpine Shire is well serviced with sport and active recreation facilities, and much of Alpine Shire is within reasonably close proximity to the major centres of Wangaratta and Wodonga where regional single-purpose facilities are more likely to be developed due to their potential catchments in these centres, the focus for Alpine Shire Council should be on improving existing assets wherever possible, rather than the development of new facilities





# 8.0 PARTNERS

TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO FACILITATE SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY.

Sport and active recreation opportunities are delivered or facilitated by a diverse range of partners in Alpine Shire including Council; sport and active recreation clubs and organisations; Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning; Parks Victoria; Alpine Health; Gateway Health; Sport North East; State Sporting Associations; schools and the private sector. Collaborations between these different groups can ensure better health, social, economic and environmental outcomes are achieved and ensure that limited resources are maximised. These organisations can also help Alpine Shire achieve its health and wellbeing targets identified in the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan.



## 8.1 SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION CLUBS

Sport and recreation clubs and organisations in Alpine Shire are typically run by volunteers (although some sports such as bowls, golf and football clubs may have paid administrators or maintenance staff) and provide opportunities for local residents to take part in competitions or activities. There are over 100 clubs and organisations in Alpine Shire. Of the 42 clubs and organisations who completed a survey or attended one of the workshops held, more than half (57%) believe that their membership levels will grow over the next five years. Just over one-third of clubs (36%) believe that their membership levels will remain the same and 7% believe that they will have a drop in numbers.

Clubs and organisations in Alpine Shire were significantly impacted by the bushfires and COVID-19 restrictions in 2020. During the bushfire period, many clubs ceased to offer their activities due to perceived personal safety risks; potential for property damage; poor air quality impacting people's health and ability to participate safely; and lack of people able to participate due to evacuations or fire-fighting duties.

COVID-19 restrictions also resulted in senior and junior sport being cancelled; loss of potential club revenue from membership fees, canteen fees, bar takings, gate takings, events and sponsorship (one club stated that it lost \$21,000); a slow or diminished return to activities (one organisation stated that it has lost half of its membership); the need for even more volunteers to ensure COVID-safe practices are implemented and adhered to; difficulties in attracting coaches; additional costs to ensure COVID-safe practices (e.g. hand sanitizer and extra cleaning) as well as ongoing costs (e.g. insurance) even though activities were not occurring; a decline in physical and mental health of regular participants due to activity being in recess; lack of community social connectedness activities as a result of games and social events not being held. As organised sport was essentially unavailable during COVID-19 restrictions, participation in active recreation pursuits such as walking and cycling soared and has continued to remain relatively high (although not at the peaks experienced). Some sports, such as golf, also experienced an increase in participation once some COVID physical activity restrictions were lifted and while other sports were still restricted.

Clubs and organisations are likely to feel the impact of bushfires and COVID-19 for some time and need to be supported as much as possible into the future to provide sport and active recreational opportunities for residents, who in turn, may be anxious about returning to activities which might be subjected to continued shut downs and potentially pose a health risk if other participants attract COVID.

Clubs and organisations identified their top 10 challenges as:	
1. 	FACILITIES / SPORTS GROUNDS - ageing facilities, facilities not meeting needs, regulations, standards or expectations (57%)
2. 	VOLUNTEERS - attracting and retaining volunteers for Committee of Management, working bees and running events / activities (43%)
3. 	INCOME GENERATION - hard to access enough money through grants, sponsorship, fundraising, player fees (39%)
4. 	PARTICIPANTS - accessing enough players / participants to make up a team or to make a club or activity viable (32%)
5. 	FINANCES - cost of utilities, maintenance, insurance, affiliation, transport (32%)
6. 	COMPETITION - competition from other sports or from other non-formal activities (e.g. cycling, weekend / shift work, electronic devices) (30%)
7. 	The cost of participating in our activity may be a barrier in terms of attracting more people (27%)
8. 	EVENTS - running events / competitions / tournaments due to the time commitment required, costs to do so and COVID-19 restrictions / uncertainty (25%)
9. 	TIME AND DISTANCE - distances required by our club / organisation to travel to take part in competitions / events (25%)
10. 	POPULATION CHANGES - catering for an ageing community (23%).



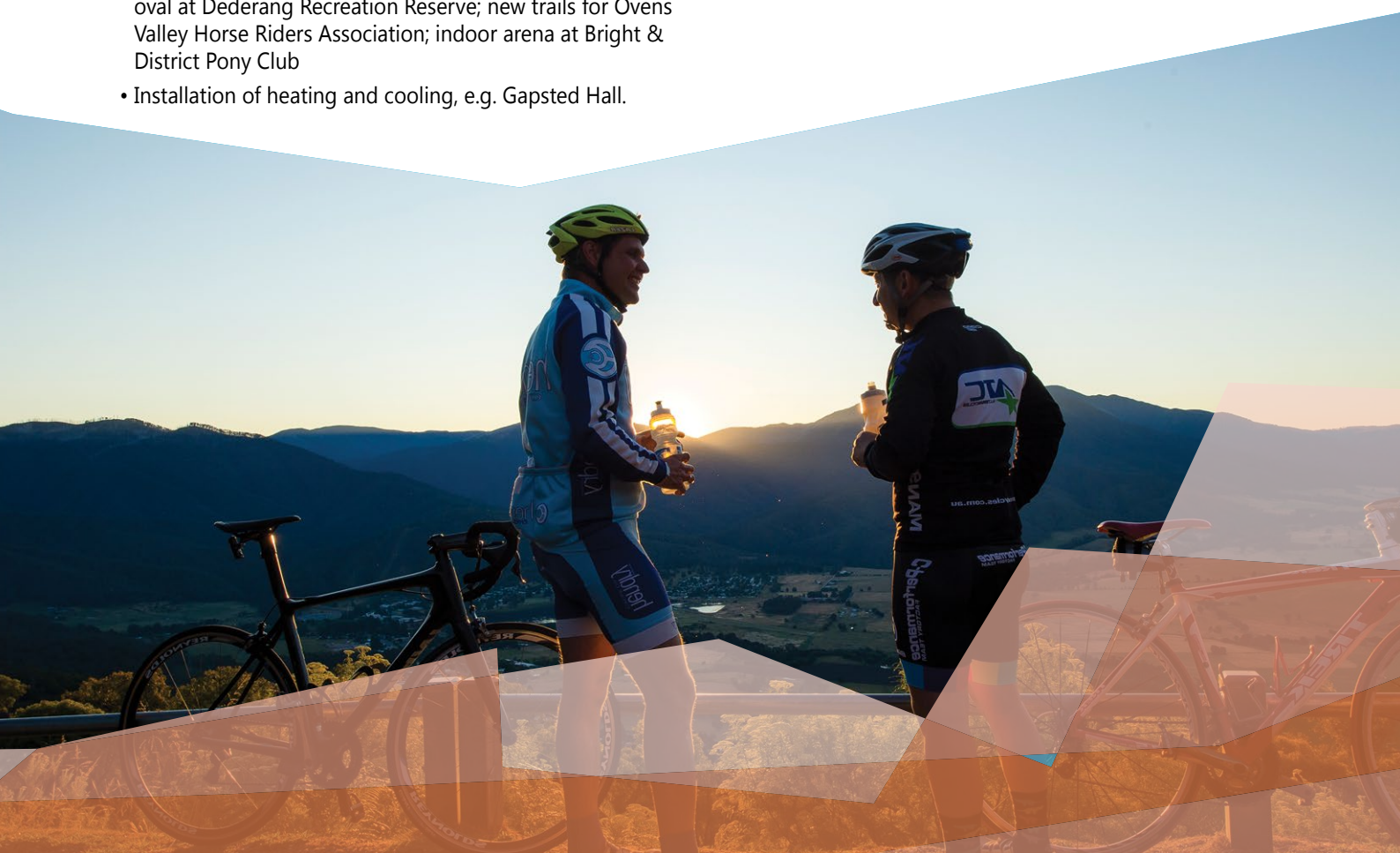
The majority of clubs and organisations in Alpine Shire have plans to further develop their facilities (note that these plans may not have been endorsed by Alpine Shire and may be in the early stage of development by clubs). Some clubs and organisations operate facilities that are not within any management responsibility of Council and therefore do not require Council endorsement). These plans are included in the Background Report, however in summary their plans include:

- Improvement to club rooms / social facilities, e.g. McNamara Reserve in Myrtleford; Mount Beauty Golf Club; and Dederang Bowls Club.
- Additional storage, e.g. Mount Beauty Soccer Club, Mount Beauty Dragon Boat Club,
- Introduction of new competitions, e.g. softball at Porepunkah Panthers Baseball Club, women's horse riding clinics and competitions offered by Alpine Regional Horseman's Association, under 10's cricket competition at Ovens Valley United Cricket Club, school programs with Myrtleford Lawn Tennis Club; free self-defence classes for women from Takahashi-ha no Ryukyu - Shuri-Te Traditional Karate Do
- Installation of lighting, e.g. Myrtleford Savoy Soccer Club
- Safety improvements, e.g. North East Victorian Hang Gliding Club landing zone
- Additional shade, e.g. Mount Beauty Tennis Club
- Construction of new sport and recreation facilities, e.g. new tennis courts at Bright Tennis Club; C grade cricket oval at Dederang Recreation Reserve; new trails for Ovens Valley Horse Riders Association; indoor arena at Bright & District Pony Club
- Installation of heating and cooling, e.g. Gapsted Hall.

Clubs and organisations have also expressed their desire for more support from Alpine Shire Council and other relevant organisations such as Sport North East and State Sporting Associations. The type of support requested includes:

1.	Information about grants that are available (79%)
2.	Small grants for equipment or events (71%)
3.	Assistance in preparing grants (62%)
4.	Assistance with maintenance of facilities / sports grounds (57%)
5.	Assistance with promotions through Shire publications and website (45%).

Some clubs and organisations also noted the need for the employment of a designated sport and recreation officer to work proactively with clubs, as well as regular meetings with Council staff.



## 8.2 DELWP AND PARKS VICTORIA

From a trails perspective, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is responsible for the management of trails on State Government land and Parks Victoria is responsible for trails on Crown Land, e.g. Mount Buffalo and Alpine National Park. Alpine Shire Council has been appointed by DELWP as the manager for some trails located close to towns.

DELWP is also the landowner of a number of recreation reserves in Alpine Shire that are used by local sport and active recreation clubs and organisations.

Alpine Shire Council, as the owner of a number of sport and active recreation reserves in the municipality, has an obligation to clubs and organisations that occupy these sites around issues such as safety and general maintenance of specific areas in accordance with agreements (e.g. fixing potholes on internal roads).

In the past Council has committed funds or staff resources to facilities that are not under any management responsibility of Council where there has been a clear community benefit and need, and where there are no other funding avenues available. Requests for support for asset upgrade by clubs and organisations outside of Council's responsibilities will continue to be assessed on a case-by-case basis where community benefit is clearly demonstrated.

Section 8.1, above, outlines some of the ways that Council can support clubs and organisations with information. These support activities can be extended to all clubs and organisations regardless of their facility land-status.

## 8.3 ALPINE HEALTH AND GATEWAY HEALTH

Alpine Health provides integrated Acute Health, Community Health and Community and Aged Residential Services for residents and visitors of the Alpine Shire, and has sites based in Bright, Mount Beauty and Myrtleford. Similarly, Gateway Health, with a site in Myrtleford, focuses on the provision of primary health and welfare services to people at highest risk of poor health outcomes. These organisations have offered community fitness programs such as tai chi, Nordic pole walking; and weight and strength training classes.

Each of these health organisations, along with Alpine Shire Council and Sport North East, has formed a health promotion collective called Active Alpine Group. This group has undertaken research in the region and as a result, focuses on creating supportive environments in the community to make physical activity an easier choice. Some of the barriers to participation identified through local research include cost, accessibility, lack of flexibility of clubs / organisations and lack of activation of spaces (e.g. pathways, shade, lighting, water bubblers).

Key priorities of this group are:

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | Promote existing events, free, family-oriented activities and facilities            |
| 2. | Support development of a physical activity policy / strategy                        |
| 3. | Support walking and cycling path connections / improvements                         |
| 4. | Map existing informal recreation opportunities and multiple-use sporting facilities |
| 5. | Support sports clubs and workplaces to build healthy environments.                  |

Recent achievements of the collective include supporting the community to establish parkrun in Myrtleford; the promotion of Active April; and the development of a calendar of events. Active Alpine Group was successful in receiving two grants which will fund free exercise classes at Outdoor Fitness Equipment Stations in Alpine Shire. It plans to seek funding for further installation of equipment across more sites. The achievements of Active Alpine Group have come about due to a collaborative approach and the commitment of agencies to fund staff to work in the active living space.

## 8.4 SPORT NORTH EAST AND STATE SPORTING ASSOCIATIONS

Sport North East (SNE) is a regional sports assembly funded by Sport and Recreation Victoria to support sport and recreation clubs in north east Victoria. The type of support available includes: information, workshops, resources and policies around issues such as governance, grants, volunteer recruitment, programming and anti-social behaviours. The Sports Library offered by Sport North East from its base in Wangaratta could potentially be replicated (at a smaller level) in a town such as Mount Beauty in Alpine Shire. This would enable local residents to hire sports equipment such as yoga mats, netballs, hula hoops, boxercise equipment, cricket bats, tennis racquets, bocce sets, volleyball nets, etc for free.

State Sporting Associations (SSAs) are the pre-eminent governing bodies for specific sports in Victoria (e.g. Tennis Victoria). SSAs are funded by Sport and Recreation Victoria and fees from affiliated clubs in areas such as Alpine Shire. Their role is to establish the strategic direction of their sport and to assist clubs and leagues / associations to grow the sport through the provision of various resources. Both SNE and SSAs have resources and knowledge to assist local clubs / organisations to grow participation; to improve their facilities; to be more sustainable; and to lead effectively through quality governance.

## 8.5 SCHOOLS

From a sport and active recreation perspective, schools have a role in the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles to young people through the provision of physical education classes; organised sporting events (e.g. athletic events or inter-school sports); promotion of healthy eating via food sold in school canteens; providing opportunities for informal play during recess and lunch; and through participation in programs such as Walk to School Day. From a facility perspective, schools tend to provide grassed playing field(s); hard courts suitable for netball, basketball, tennis and other activities such as downball; and playgrounds. Some will also provide extra facilities such as indoor sports courts.

Community access to school facilities, whilst encouraged by the State Government, is often decided upon by school councils and permission may change as council members change. Many schools also use community facilities managed by Alpine Shire Council such as ovals, courts, swimming pools and walking / cycling paths as part of their curriculum or events.

Feedback from consultations revealed that where shared school and community facilities are located on Department of Education and Training land, there is sometimes a lack

of clarity around maintenance responsibilities, access, etc. Council currently has a MOU with Bright P-12 and has previously held one with Mount Beauty P-12 too.

Given the limited resources available by both Council and schools, greater access to school facilities by the community and to community facilities by schools can reduce duplication of facilities and maximise usage of existing assets.

## 8.6 PRIVATE SECTOR

The private sector is increasingly becoming involved in the sport and active recreation sector in Alpine Shire, particularly in the area of health and wellbeing classes, e.g. yoga, pilates, dance, martial arts, personal training and boot camps. These organisations are generally not financially supported by Alpine Shire (as they are for-profit businesses), although like traditional sports clubs, they also help Alpine Shire Council to achieve its health and wellbeing targets and improve liveability.

Other private sector organisations such as HVP Plantations and AGL Hydro or Alpine Resorts Victoria provide spaces where physical activity occurs. HVP Plantations, for example, has provided land within its plantation for mountain bike riding and various water sports are carried out on The Pondage in Mount Beauty, which is part of AGL's suite of hydroelectric power stations throughout Victoria and NSW. A small section of the alpine region, which is managed by the Alpine Resorts Victoria, is also home to a variety of activities enjoyed by local residents, including snow skiing, snowboarding, snowshoe walking, hiking, mountain bike riding, fishing and other related activities.

## 8.7 NEIGHBOURING LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

It is important to understand priorities and projects of neighbouring Local Government Authorities as what they may be developing could potentially impact works within Alpine Shire. The Rural City of Wangaratta, for example, has recently upgraded the Wangaratta Sports and Aquatic Centre. Works in neighbouring LGAs may negate the need to undertake certain works in towns within Alpine Shire. Conversely, works in Alpine Shire may have a broader catchment than just local residents, which in turn could help local facilities or activities become more sustainable. Partnership opportunities should be explored, particularly when considering the development of regional level facilities or activities / events that may appeal to a regional audience.



# 9.0 PROCESSES

TO PROVIDE A STRATEGIC  
FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE  
COUNCIL'S DECISION  
MAKING AND INVESTMENT  
IN RELATION TO SPORT AND  
ACTIVE RECREATION.



## 9.1 TOOLS, POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND PROCEDURES

Tools, policies, strategies and procedures can help to guide decision making, based on equitable and transparent principles. Currently Alpine Shire Council is guided by a variety of plans, strategies, policies and laws, including, but not limited to the following:

Council Plan

2030 Community vision

Asset management policy, strategy and plans, e.g. Open Space Maintenance Management Plan (2013-2017)

Building and Facility Maintenance Policy

Municipal road management plan

Community engagement policy

Community grants guidelines

Event funding guidelines

Local laws

Various place-based reports, e.g. resilience plans, better places reports

Strategies, e.g. Alpine Cycle Safety Strategy, Mount Beauty Footpath Strategy

Master plans, e.g. Pioneer Park.

Through the preparation of this plan, some process gaps or process improvements have been identified. To improve future planning and investment decisions, several tools will be developed as part of the implementation phase of the plan.

### 9.1.1 COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

Whilst there is already a community directory on Alpine Shire's website, this directory needs to be updated to ensure that information is accurate. Many of the sport and active recreation contacts in the directory were updated as part of this project. Similarly, there needs to be more information provided about each organisation such as the venue they operate from, the type of programs / competitions they run and a link to their website and social media pages.

### 9.1.2 ASSET DATABASE

Whilst Council has a list of its assets, the information provided is limited. As part of the development of this plan, a more comprehensive database of activities has been produced, incorporating information such as location, facilities, management, user groups, contact information, etc, as well as photos of each site. This has been produced in Excel format and will be able to be adapted for a variety of uses by Council staff.

### 9.1.3 OTHER TOOLS

Other tools that may need to be developed or reviewed in order to guide Alpine Shire in its fair and equitable provision and facilitation of sport and active recreation opportunities include:

- Developer Contributions Policy – a policy to guide developers in terms of sport and active recreation provision in new residential areas, e.g. shared paths, play spaces, parks, etc., or a designated percentage of development cost to the provision of such facilities.
- Club contributions to capital works policy – a policy which details the expected degree of contribution required from user groups for any major capital works or facility developments.
- Club subsidisation review – a review of subsidies provided to sport and active recreation organisations to assist with maintenance costs to ensure that this amount provides an adequate level of subsidisation and is tied into club efforts to increase participation.
- Agreements – formalised agreements or Memorandums of Understanding with partner bodies detailing roles and responsibilities in the delivery of sport and active recreation opportunities and a review of any existing agreements to ensure equitable access to facilities by sport and active recreation clubs / organisations.
- Master plans – plans to guide the future development of sport and active recreation sites in terms of facility developments, connections, roadways, landscaping, signage, etc.

### 9.1.4 ACTION PLAN

Each of the suggestions identified from community engagement will be assessed against weighted criteria aligned to the vision and planning principles contained within the plan, to develop a prioritised listing of actions.





## 9.2 IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

As responsibility for sport and active recreation crosses many areas within Alpine Shire Council it is important that a multi-disciplinary team is established to oversee and implement this plan. It is suggested that this group meets at least twice per year to monitor actions and that once per year all actions are reviewed and modified if needed. Ideally one officer will be given the responsibility of coordinating meetings. A new sport and active recreation plan should be developed in 2033.





**ALPINE**  
SHIRE COUNCIL

