



AFL CENTRAL VICTORIA REGIONAL STRATEGY

SEPTEMBER 2017



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PROJECT PARTNERS

The preparation of the AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy has been a collaborative effort by a number of partner organisations including AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria and the nine Local Government Authorities comprising the AFL Central Victoria Region.

Input and advice from the AFL Central Victoria regional football and netball communities has also assisted the development of this document.

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THE AFL CENTRAL VICTORIA REGIONAL STRATEGY IS DELIVERED IN TWO SEPARATE VOLUMES.

**AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy
(This Document)**

The **AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy** provides the principles and strategic framework to support the future development, governance and growth of football and netball throughout the Central Victoria Region. It also provides key regional strategic directions and recommendations, as well as identifying critical priorities and actions for AFL Central Victoria, AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria, AFL Central Victoria Leagues, Clubs and Netball Associations and project partner LGAs.

Key Findings Report

The **Key Findings Report** completed in December 2016 provided an overview of issues and focus areas that were identified through extensive research, analysis, facility investigation and consultation. The **Key Findings Report** included an overview of team statistics and demographics for the Region, commentary on the state of local clubs and netball associations, future directions and capital investment into football and netball facilities. It also provided analysis on the issues, opportunities and challenges impacting football and netball across the Central Victoria Region, highlighting potential opportunities for facility improvement based on facility audit outcomes. Sports development opportunities, club structure, volunteer capacity, sport governance and competition structure were also considered in the **Key Findings Report**.

Relevant information from the **Key Findings Report** have been incorporated into the **AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy** where required.

DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following definitions and abbreviated terms are used within this document.

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
AAA	Access All Abilities - AAA is a Victorian Government initiative coordinated by Sport and Recreation Victoria. The program supports and develops inclusive sport and recreation opportunities for people with a disability throughout Victoria.
AFL	Australian Football League
AFL Victoria	AFL Victoria is the State Sporting Association that governs Australian football in Victoria
AFLW	Australian Football League Women's Competition
Bendigo FNL	Bendigo Football Netball League
Bendigo Junior FL	Bendigo Junior Football League
Bendigo UA	Bendigo Umpires Association
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities
FIDA	Football Integration Development Association
Heartland Strategy	AFL Victoria <i>Growing the Heartland Football Facilities Development Strategy 2017-2022</i> sets the strategic direction for future investment in facility development in Victoria.
Heathcote District FNL	Heathcote and District Football Netball League
LGA	Local Government Authority
Loddon Valley FNL	Loddon Valley Football Netball League
Netball Victoria	Netball Victoria is the State Sporting Association that governs netball in Victoria
NV State-wide Strategy	Netball Victoria State-wide Facilities Strategy sets the strategic direction for future investment in netball facility development in Victoria.
North Central FL	North Central Football League
Rochester EFUA	Rochester and Echuca Football Umpires Association affiliated with the AFL Central Victoria Commission
SRV	Sport and Recreation Victoria which is located in the Department of Health and Human Services
Strategy	References throughout this the document are made to the 'Strategy'. The term 'Strategy' refers to the project as a whole.
Synthetic turf	Also referred to as artificial grass made from synthetic fibres that can withstand significantly more use than natural grass .
TAC Cup	State League U18 Australian Football pathway competition for youth boys and girls. The competition is based on geographic regions throughout country Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne and provides an avenue for young Victorian under-18 players to transition to the AFL.
VFL	Victorian Football League men's competition governing league
VFL Women's	Victorian Football League women's competition governing league



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy aims to prioritise, identify and plan for the development of football and netball facilities to better address the future needs of the Central Victoria Region. The Strategy identifies gaps in current facility provision and opportunities to upgrade facilities based on current and projected participation requirements.

The recommendations made within the AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy have been based on extensive research and consultation with local, regional and state level stakeholders that represent government, football, netball, community clubs and associations, as well as individuals involved in the support and provision of both sports at the community level.

The Region is experiencing rapid population growth, particularly in the municipalities of Greater Bendigo and Macedon Ranges. However, in some of the other project partner municipalities there are declining or ageing populations. This has the potential to impact football and netball participation into the future and associated facility demand.

The commitment of the regions LGAs to supporting football and netball in their municipalities, combined with their strong understanding of and appreciation for the social value sport brings to their communities beyond participation, is evident. This is shown through their continued and sustained facility investment and renewal programs and their commitment to supporting participation growth and sport development opportunities wherever possible.

A key outcome of the AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy will be to further build on collaboration between project partners. Local government is the major provider of football and netball facilities in Victoria and their support of local clubs, administrators and volunteers is vital to the development of the sport.

The financial pressures of rate capping and ageing facilities, combined with planned development of new facilities in growth areas, requires all partners to approach sport infrastructure investment collaboratively to ensure best outcomes for communities.

The Central Victorian Region enjoys a high participation base, notably with senior player and female participation categories sitting well above Victorian country average penetration rates. Combined football and netball player numbers exceed 23,000.

26% of the Central Victoria Regions' population aged over 18 participate in football (well above the Victorian country average penetration rate of 10%). Similarly junior and youth participation averages sit well above the State country penetration averages for these two age cohorts.

The Region's average for female football participation of 0.8% of the female population aged 5-39 is double the State regional female penetration average of 0.4%.

For netball, 4.8% of the Central Victorian Region population participate in netball with participation well above the rural and regional Victorian average penetration rate of 3.2%. The Netball Victoria Loddon Mallee North Region, which includes Buloke and Gannawarra LGAs, has the highest netball penetration rate in both rural and regional Victoria.

The estimated Central Victoria Region population aged 5-39 (typically the key football and netball playing age) is forecast to increase by 11% to 116,600 by 2026. The majority of this growth is limited to the municipalities of Greater Bendigo and Macedon Ranges.

Based on maintaining current penetration rates it is anticipated this population growth will result in an additional 524 football players and 535 netballers in the Region requiring access to facilities to play their chosen sport by 2026. Participation increases are centred around the municipalities of Greater Bendigo and Macedon Ranges, with most other project partner LGAs projected to have some football and netball participation decline.

An increase of individual LGA football penetration rates of just 1% however, would result in an additional 114 players in the Region with all project partner LGAs seeing some growth in participation. This could possibly be achieved through female football which is erupting across the State with 40% growth in female team numbers in Season 2016 alone.

If female participation in the Region increased by 1% to 5% of total player numbers, by 2026 an estimated 572 female players would require access to female friendly facilities. Facility provision should aim to reflect current needs and catering for female participation will become a critical challenge for the Region into the future.

Participation projections also need to consider participation that crosses municipal boundaries with players often travelling from large regional centres such as Bendigo to play football in rural areas. Annual analysis of participation in the Region is required to ensure a continued strategic approach to facility investment based on participation growth and identified need.

Formal auditing of 56 facilities across the Region identified most facilities had some level of improvement required to meet preferred football and netball local level facility provision. Player and umpire amenities need to cater for female participation, gaps exist in minimum level lighting provision for both ovals and netball courts and netball player amenities are lacking.



Over 80% of the Region's player and umpire change rooms do not cater for female participants. Whilst substantial investment has been made in the Region to address netball court surfaces, 17% of venues with a main netball court have no netball player amenities and of those that do, 20% are reaching end of life.

Investment into essential player and official change room amenities is critical to support the increasing need to cater for female participation, continue to attract participants to both football and netball and recognise netball as a major sport in the Region.

Over 50% of the Region's facilities have no lighting or lighting below the minimum training standard. This is similarly the case for netball court lighting with 46% of venues providing no court lighting or lighting below the standard for outdoor training, which is 100 lux.

Lack of playing field lighting to the minimum training level can lead to lost opportunity for participation growth, overuse of ovals that are well lit and premature wearing of grounds due to players being restricted to training in certain areas of the ground.

Having a select range of venues with match quality lighting is important for scheduling flexibility and can be a mechanism to improve integration of teams into the traditional club environment.

Night competition football capable lighting is generally well catered for across the Region with all project partner LGAs, except Buloke, Gannawarra and Northern Grampians Shires having at least one venue with lighting to this level (150 lux).

Formal assessment of current lighting provision and prioritisation of lighting upgrades to match participation needs, including continued consideration of night competition football capable lighting, is essential to support alternate competition structures whilst ensuring player safety needs are met.

Pre-season creep and increased demands on venues can contribute to overuse of ovals and lead to conflict with tenant sports. Due to poor ground condition, limited available open space and/or over use of existing grounds, Bendigo and Macedon Ranges municipalities are investigating options for a designated training venue for all clubs to access, once existing facility provision and development of new facilities in growth corridors have been addressed.

It is preferable that this venue be non-club aligned, possibly synthetic to maximise usage opportunities and accessed by clubs that have a number of players not based within their own local township, including Bendigo residents who play in outer district teams. This would support club sustainability and provide options for struggling clubs to recruit players from a wider catchment area where training travel requirements are not so prohibitive.

Consideration of appropriately developed school venues, co-planning and investment of school facility upgrades and new developments that are fit for football and netball provides further opportunity to address potential facility gaps, particularly in land locked municipalities or where ground shortages exist due to rapid participation growth.

Current school and sport shared venue access arrangements provides opportunity to also develop a suitable elite player facility in the region. The Bendigo Pioneers are in the process of relocating training requirements to La Trobe University, accessing a lit soccer pitch, pool and gymnasium. There is a master plan to develop a football oval at the site, however no timeframe has been set for this.

This relationship with La Trobe University presents an ideal opportunity to establish a sports precinct between the Bendigo Pioneers and AFL Central Victoria. This could be further capitalised on through partnering with Netball Victoria who have an existing arrangement with the University for the delivery of netball through the Bendigo Academy of Sport. Collaboration between football and netball's elite stakeholders is essential if this opportunity is to be harnessed.

The recent alliance of Richmond Football Club with the Bendigo Women's Football Club (Bendigo Thunder) also provides an unexpected opportunity to justify facility investment at the Queen Elizabeth Oval, the only recognised State level venue in the region. This investment could ultimately support AFL and AFL Women's matches whilst also addressing netball player amenity provision at the venue. In missing out on the inaugural year of AFL Women's, Richmond have set up an automatic pathway system to create an AFL Women's team when given the opportunity by the AFL. Being venue ready to cater for this talent takes this vision a little closer to reality and concurrently supports netball participation.

Since 2010 Central Victorian Region LGAs have prioritised facility investment by directly funding more than \$31.1M into \$52M worth of community football and netball related capital projects. This investment is indicative of the importance LGAs place on maintaining pivotal infrastructure and facilities to ensure club sustainability into the future.

Whilst significant population growth is not projected across all municipalities within the Region, this investment is set to continue, with all project partner LGAs planning some level of football and netball infrastructure works into the future to improve current provision and support club development.

Pending developer and funding contributions, new oval and amenity developments are being planned by Greater Bendigo, Macedon Ranges and Mount Alexander LGAs. Larger facility upgrade projects have also been confirmed for the municipalities of Macedon Ranges, Loddon, Bendigo, Mount Alexander and Central Goldfields.

These capital renewal programs and their continuation are essential. Ongoing investment supports the sustainability of smaller clubs where participation increases are not necessarily prevalent but club retention is essential for continued community connectedness.

Achieving club cultural change so they consider co-tenancy arrangements to maximise usage opportunities and readily access non traditional venues such as school facilities, pools and indoor courts for pre-season training, needs to be a priority to further reduce pressure on facilities and overlap with summer sports. This is particularly important in areas of decline.

Competing needs for new facilities, replacement and major refurbishment of existing facilities, funding gaps and balancing club and community expectations places LGAs under increasing financial pressure in a new era of rate capping in Victoria.

Funding provision does not currently match ongoing facility renewal and new development costs. Sourcing multiple funding partners or more innovative approaches to funding will be essential if project partners are to meet funding shortfalls in facility renewal and investment, particularly to cater for the growth in female participation.

The Strategy identifies 4 key priorities for the Region to guide future facility provision:

PRIORITY 1 - EXISTING FACILITIES

Objective: Increase the quality and functionality and maximise the use and carrying capacity of existing facilities.

PRIORITY 2 – NEW FACILITIES AND TALENT PATHWAYS

Objective: Plan and develop new facilities in key growth areas across the Region, considering regional needs and talent pathways, program and competitions at key locations.

PRIORITY 3 – BUILD CAPACITY

Objective: Support the capacity building of clubs and their people and their culture.

PRIORITY 4 – ENHANCE RELATIONSHIPS

Objective: Continue to enhance the relationship between football, netball and government in the planning, provision and funding of facilities and programs.

Core local differences across the Central Victoria Region make it difficult to align all elements of the AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy. However, clear directions are provided that focus on improving competition models, ensuring that facility improvements are implemented to support regional level and local priorities and accommodate the widest audience and to support investment in new development.

Six actions are considered critical to the improvement of football and netball across the Region and will require immediate planning to commence. These six critical actions also set the foundation for the remainder of regional and local actions and will require a cohesive and coordinated regional approach to implement them.

Achieving aligned thinking, commitment to the regional vision and a football and netball network that is delivering consistently and collaboratively will have the single greatest influence on regional improvement for both sports, their clubs and participation levels.



1. CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy provides a strategic planning approach to guide the future direction, support and resourcing of existing and new football and netball facilities across the Central Victoria Region. The Strategy provides a framework for the integrated planning, development and funding of facilities that addresses current and future projected demand for football and netball.

For the purposes of this Strategy, the AFL Central Victoria Region incorporates nine Local Government Authorities (LGAs):

- Buloke Shire Council
- City of Greater Bendigo
- Campaspe Shire Council
- Central Goldfields Shire Council
- Gannawarra Shire Council
- Loddon Shire Council
- Macedon Ranges Shire Council**
- Mount Alexander Shire Council**
- Northern Grampians Shire Council

The study area has included all 58 AFL Central Victoria affiliated football-netball community clubs and venues accessed by AFL Central Victoria teams across the Region.

Funding for the project has been provided by AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria and project partner LGAs.

AFL Victoria has delivered and plans to continue to deliver regional strategic planning across Victoria. Two LGAs have already been involved in a regional strategy, Macedon Ranges Shire Council and Mount Alexander Shire Council who partnered for the development of the AFL Goldfields Regional Strategy.

As Netball Victoria is a project partner to this Strategy, analysis has been completed on Association based netball participation and facilities within the Central Victoria Region. The Association Netball competition structure however is not overseen by the AFL Central Victoria Commission.

Clubs affiliated with the AFL Central Victoria Commission are spread between nine municipalities referred to in this Report as the Central Victoria Region. However, not all clubs within those nine municipalities are associated with the AFL Central Victoria Commission and may belong to other AFL Victoria Commissions or Regions.

Analysis within this Strategy identified as AFL Central Victoria Commission Based Clubs is limited to those clubs who are directly affiliated with the AFL Central Victoria Commission and does not include all participation within the Central Victoria Region.

Similarly analysis identified as the Central Victoria Region includes all nine project partner LGAs. Football participation in the Central Victoria Region is overseen by a number of AFL Victoria Commissions or Regions such as AFL Goldfields or AFL Central Murray.

The purpose of the AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy is to:

- undertake a strategic planning approach to guide the future direction, support and resourcing of existing and new football and netball facilities across the Region
- develop a strategic framework for the integrated planning and development of facilities across the Central Victoria Region that addresses the current and future projected demand for football and netball
- provide a communication and decision making tool for government, AFL Central Victoria, AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria that clearly identifies the regional and local priorities for football and netball facility provision, club and sport development and associated investment

** Funding partners to this Regional Strategy and neighbouring Regional Strategies.



ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The **AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy** investigates the issues and opportunities facing football and netball and recommends strategies to address these regionally.

Using the knowledge and resources from each of the nine represented LGAs, AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria, local leagues, netball associations and clubs, the Strategy will assist these project partners to advocate for and attract additional funding for community football and netball facilities.

Key deliverables for the development of this Strategy included the

- auditing of all facilities within the Region,
- a participation snapshot of netball and football in the Region with future participation projections,
- identification of the need and indicative location for new facilities,
- known future facility investment,
- identification of key issues relating to access to suitable facilities to support club sustainability,
- identification of facilities that enhance talent pathways, and
- opportunities to increase the use of existing facilities including non traditional football or netball venues.

The Strategy builds on the information provided within the Key Findings Report and provides clear direction on the recommended actions required to better provide for and support football and netball in the Central Victoria Region.

The Strategy does not provide individual club/venue master plans, costing structures or proposed capital works programs. These will continue to be developed at the discretion of LGAs, in consultation with users, pending analysis of identified facility gaps and venue usage requirements.

This Strategy acts as a guide for all stakeholders. Key actions recommend in the Strategy will continue to be subject to consideration via future budget processes and analysis of various priorities by project partner LGAs.



PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The following diagram represents the project methodology and steps that will be undertaken to prepare the AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy.

STAGE 1 (DECEMBER 2015 TO FEBRUARY 2016)

- Project establishment

STAGE 2 (FEBRUARY TO MAY 2016)

- Facility audits and situational analysis

STAGE 3 (MAY TO DECEMBER 2016)

- Analysis of all club facilities in the Central Victoria region and delivery of key findings report

STAGE 4 (JANUARY TO APRIL 2017)

- Feedback from key stakeholders on key findings report and strategy development (this document)

STAGE 5 (MAY TO SEPTEMBER 2017)

- Presentation and final reporting

QUICK FACTS

9 Local Government Authorities
 5 Leagues
 2 Umpire Association
 4 Netball Associations
 58 Clubs
 56 Venues
 580+ Football / netball teams
 10,916 Registered football participants
 11,352 Registered netball participants including NetSetGO
 409 Registered female football participants

PROJECT GOVERNANCE

The following project governance structure was established for the delivery of this project.

PROJECT CONTROL GROUP (PCG)

- To provide high level strategic direction on key issues, opportunities and approve draft and final reports – includes representatives from City of Greater Bendigo, Campaspe Shire Council, Loddon Shire Council, Buloke Shire Council, AFL Central Victoria, AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria.

PROJECT REFERENCE GROUPS (PRG)

- PRGs were split between sport and government representation to provide technical advice and input into the project from a local perspective.

Project partner LGAs supported the **Government Reference Group**.

The **Sport Reference Group** included representatives from AFL Central Victoria, AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria, Bendigo Football Netball League, Loddon Valley Football Netball League, Heathcote District Football Netball League, North Central Football League, Bendigo Junior Football League, Bendigo Umpires Association, Sports Focus, Mallee Sports Assembly, North Central Hockey Association, La Trobe University and Bendigo Pioneers.

FIGURE 01 | AFL CENTRAL VICTORIA REGION STUDY AREA MUNICIPALITIES



AFL CENTRAL VICTORIA STRUCTURE

The AFL Central Victoria Commission is one of 13 designated AFL Victoria Regional Commissions that are responsible for the promotion, growth and sustainability of community football and netball in regional Victoria.

The 2011 review of country football by AFL Victoria Chairman, Peter Jackson, recognised the need to invest resources into regional areas to strengthen and grow the game. Recommendations from the review included the need to employ additional staff to support leagues and clubs in country football, create efficiencies across resources, eliminate duplication and ensure greater stakeholder collaboration in each region. Following the review, AFL Regional Commissions were established.

The purpose of the Regional Commissions is to make independent and local decisions, minimise the cost of participation by increasing revenue locally and ensure football is adequately resourced through the employment of additional locally based resources operating out of Regional Administration Centres (RAC).

Region Commissions are also charged with the responsibility of enhancing competition structures to meet the growth demands of the local area, promotion of competition equalisation, improving pathway effectiveness and better considering geographic and economic factors currently restricting and burdening some country football-netball clubs.

The AFL Central Victoria Commission supports 5 football and netball leagues, 2 umpire associations and a total of 58 clubs with over 580 football / netball teams across all player categories; introductory, junior, youth and senior football and netball. Elite pathways are supported through premier division women’s football team, the only regional female team competing in the Northern Football League, male and female TAC cup teams and male and female Football Academies.

FIGURE 02 | AFL CENTRAL VICTORIA COMMISSION CLUB NUMBERS BY LEAGUE (2016)

LEAGUES WITHIN THE AFL CENTRAL VICTORIA REGION	Number of Clubs
Bendigo Football Netball League	10
Bendigo Junior Football League	22
Loddon Valley Football Netball League	9
Heathcote District Football Netball League	9
North Central Football League	8
GRAND TOTAL	58

Note: Base club numbers overseen by the AFL Central Victoria Commission is 58 clubs. However, a number of senior clubs also have teams participating in the BJFL.

NETBALL VICTORIA STRUCTURE



Netball Victoria applies different parameters to AFL Victoria when determining regions for their sport. Project partner LGAs are spread across a variety of Netball Victoria regions as identified through the Netball Victoria *State-wide Facilities Strategy*. The regions relevant to Central Victoria are:

- **Hume Goulburn Valley Region:** municipalities of Campaspe, Greater Shepparton, Moira and Strathbogie
- **Loddon Mallee North Region:** municipalities of Buloke, Gannawarra, Mildura and Swan Hill
- **Loddon Mallee South Region:** municipalities of Central Goldfields, Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Macedon Ranges and Mount Alexander

Whilst not overseen by the AFL Central Victoria Commission, the Central Victoria Region hosts 4 netball associations with players often participating in both AFL Central Victoria club based netball and association based netball competitions.

Elite pathways are supported by:

- the Central Victoria Netball Academy, organised through AFL Central Victoria and offered to players aged 12-14;
- the Netball Victoria Northern Zone Academy for players aged 15 and 16; and
- the Bendigo Academy of Sport (part of the Victorian Regional Sports Academy), also for players aged under 15 who are not successful in gaining entry into the Netball Victoria Zone Academy or are Talent Identified and invited to participate.

FIGURE 03 | CENTRAL VICTORIA REGION NETBALL PARTICIPANT NUMBERS BY ASSOCIATION (2015)

NETBALL ASSOCIATIONS WITHIN THE CENTRAL VICTORIA REGION	Number of Participants
Bendigo Strathdale Netball Association	925
Golden City Netball Association	1,227
Castlemaine & District Netball Association	430
Kyneton Netball Association	146
Macedon Ranges Netball Association	853
Grand Total	3,581

FIGURE 04 | CENTRAL VICTORIA REGION CLUB BASED NETBALL PARTICIPANT NUMBERS BY LEAGUE (2015)

CLUB BASED NETBALL IN CENTRAL VICTORIA REGION	Number of Participants
Bendigo Football Netball League	743
Golden Rivers Netball League Inc	62
Heathcote District Football Netball League	691
Loddon Valley Football Netball League	736
North Central Netball Association	484
GRAND TOTAL	2,716

Note: the Golden Rivers Netball League Inc is not aligned to the AFL Central Victoria Commission. However, participation data has been included in the study as a number of Clubs within this League are based in project partner LGAs.

THE VALUE OF FOOTBALL BEYOND SPORT

The benefits of investing in football extend beyond sports participation to providing economic and social outcomes that positively impact the communities that clubs support through inclusiveness, diversity programs, female participation and commitment to participant welfare and wellbeing.

The *Value of a Community Football Club* study undertaken by La Trobe University in 2015 (see Appendix 7) found that for every \$1 spent to run a community football club, there is at least a \$4.40 return in social value.

This “social value” is measured in terms of increased social connectedness, wellbeing and mental health status, employment outcomes, personal development, physical health, civic pride and support of other community groups. The study identified that the reach of a football club is significant and extends beyond club players and volunteers within the club; *“for every 1 player, football clubs reach 10 people in their community.”*

The economic impact of football is well known. AFL Victoria’s *Heartland Strategy* estimates that football participation is worth \$3.1 billion per annum across Victoria, with Community Football estimated to make up about 45% of the total.

This highlights the significant impact the sport has on local communities.

Each project partner LGA has their own strategic commitment as to why investing in sport and recreation and associated facility improvement is important.

The Regions LGAs have strongly expressed their continued commitment to supporting football and netball in their municipalities, placing particular importance on the social value these sports bring to their communities beyond participation.

These LGAs have commissioned and are seeking to continue to commission, investment into sport and recreation infrastructure that addresses facility gaps and provides new development, so football and netball opportunities will carry on being offered to their local and regional communities.



WHY A REGIONAL APPROACH?

Addressing the issues and gaps in football and netball facility provision on a regional scale provides many benefits to project partners. Participation or competition / league structures are not constrained to municipal boundaries. Similarly, every municipality may not be required to cater for all levels of football and netball and regional level facilities (those that service a broad catchment area) do not need to be duplicated in every municipality.

Regional planning provides opportunity to coordinate and align future facility provision that optimise planning policies and resource allocation, facility usage levels, improves financial viability and sustainability of facilities while at the same time ensuring greater access to higher quality facilities is achieved for current and future residential populations.

AFL Victoria's *Heartland Strategy*, guides the development and improvement of football facilities across the State and identified the need to undertake more detailed regional plans to strategically address facility requirements.

This is being achieved with AFL Victoria partnering with over a third of Victorian LGAs and Netball Victoria to develop Regional Strategies since the *Heartland Strategy* was introduced in 2014.

Regional planning is further supported by Netball Victoria's *State-wide Facilities Strategy* (due for release mid 2017). This *Strategy* which aims to provide a framework for facility development across the six Netball Victoria zones, including the Netball Victoria Loddon Mallee South, Hume Goulburn Valley and Loddon Mallee North Regions which are the Regions relevant to this Strategy.

A WHOLE OF REGION APPROACH

- ▶ Improve collaboration
- ▶ Avoid facility duplication
- ▶ Align policy
- ▶ Provide better community outcomes
- ▶ Target investment into prioritised facilities
- ▶ Optimise resources

HEARTLAND STRATEGY REVIEW

The changing face of football across Australia led to a review of the *Heartland Strategy* in 2016, ensuring that strategic directions evolved to best assist all partners and meet the needs of communities where football is played.

The *Heartland Strategy* has a responsibility to reflect these changes in football, which include:

- It took 8 years to grow 100 new female teams in Victoria. That was achieved in season 2016 alone. AFL Victoria estimates 250+ new female teams were created in Season 2017;
- A new cycle of planning from 2017- 2022 is in train for the football industry including a review of AFL Victoria's Strategic Plan;
- Strategic directions from the *Heartland Strategy* needed to align with strategic priorities from the AFL Football Development Reserve to ensure facility investment opportunities were clearly defined and supported at the highest level of the AFL;
- Government directions have altered, with a larger focus on areas such as female participation, unisex design and access for all abilities;
- Local government is facing increased financial pressure with reduced funding combined with addressing the new challenge of rate capping;
- Demographic change is occurring, quite rapidly in some areas of the state, which requires planning now for future communities;
- Alternate facility options such as school venues and use of synthetic grounds need to be further explored to ensure participation growth opportunities are capitalised on.

This highlights the significant impact the sport has on local communities.

Each project partner LGA has their own strategic commitment as to why investing in sport and recreation and associated facility improvement is important.

The Regions LGAs have strongly expressed their continued commitment to supporting football and netball in their municipalities, placing particular importance on the social value these sports bring to their communities beyond participation.

These LGAs have commissioned and are seeking to continue to commission investment into sport and recreation infrastructure that addresses facility gaps and provides new development, ensuring football and netball participation opportunities are sustainable in their local and regional communities.



IMPROVED INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

As the focus of the Strategy is at a regional level, State and Local Governments have the opportunity to implement actions in a planned, prioritised and coordinated manner. The commitment of Government and peak sporting bodies allows for greater collaboration. This assists the targeted provision and future investment in facilities and services, directly impacting a larger portion of the Victorian community.

The Strategy will also assist project partners to advocate for and attract additional funding for community football and netball facilities and support attraction of investment from alternate providers such as commercial and sponsorship partners.

Attraction of funding is evidenced by the impact of the first Regional Strategy developed, the *G21 and AFL Barwon Regional Strategy*, which has addressed 90% of facility gap recommendations within the first two years of its adoption by G21 local government partners. Similarly the Western Metropolitan Region attracted government funding for lighting upgrades, a critical priority from the *Western Metropolitan Football Facilities Strategy* in the first year of Strategy implementation. Whilst still in *Draft Strategy* stage, the AFL Goldfields Region also attracted funding support for lighting upgrades based on key strategic priorities.

COLLABORATION WITH PROJECT PARTNERS

Through regional planning, project partners have sought to achieve a collaborative approach to future facility provision that enhances investment, increases facility usage levels and supports sustainability. In addition, regional planning ensures higher quality facilities for communities now and into the future, critical as the population changes.

A regional approach supports AFL Victoria's strategic drive to adopt region based governance structures that better reflect local football needs. Similarly, Netball Victoria's *State-wide Facilities Strategy* will aim to identify the priorities for netball facility provision and sports development initiatives for each Netball Victoria zone to better guide future stakeholder investment, resourcing and commitment.

Regional planning provides a communication and decision making process for government and sport that clearly identifies the regional and local priorities for football and netball facility provision, sport development and associated investment.

The collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders through this project and the ongoing relationship building as a result, will ensure that community sport remains resilient and sustainable and the infrastructure is in place to facilitate the development and growth of football and netball, whilst also benefiting partner sports such as cricket.



CONSULTATION

In developing the AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy, the following stakeholder consultation activities have been undertaken:

- Ongoing project meetings with the Project Control Group (PCG).
- Project Reference Group workshops with representation from AFL Central Victoria Leagues, AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria and project partner LGAs (July 2016).
- Infield Facilities Audit completed by AFL Central Victoria staff (February to May 2016) utilising purpose build audit tool for football and netball facility provision.
- Review of a Draft Key Findings Report by the Project Control Group (September to November 2016).
- Review of Final Key Findings Report by Project Reference Group members (December 2016 to April 2017).
- Review of Draft Regional Strategy by Project Control Group members (April to June 2017)
- Review of Draft Regional Strategy by Project Reference Group members (June to August 2017)
- Review of project partner LGA, AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria, AFL Central Victoria and League strategies, capital works programs, historical funding outcomes and planned future works.
- Project newsletter distributed to all clubs, leagues and key stakeholders.

FACILITY AUDITS

The location, provision and condition of 56 football / netball facilities across the AFL Central Victoria Region were assessed by AFL Central Victoria Commission staff and project partner LGAs between February and May 2016. Audits were carried out using the AFL National Sports Facility Auditor tool.

As a sport, the AFL has made a six year commitment to the AFL National Sports Facility Auditor database and audit program to collect, update and monitor facility provision (and geographic location) and its quality and compliance with guidelines. This resource has been made available to AFL Victoria staff, regional commissions and community football leagues to assist in providing empirical evidence to effectively plan and support the delivery of facility improvement and development projects.

The audit program assesses provision and conditions and analyses compliance with Australian Standards, *AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines*, *Netball Victoria Facilities Manual* and criteria identified during extensive consultation with AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria staff. Audit data was then used to provide a rating for each facility, identifying gaps in provision (what amenities a facility has) and standards (condition, size and general provision).

Facility Conditions Ratings (refer to Appendices 4 and 5) are a guide to identify strengths and gaps in football and netball facility and amenity provision. They will also support prioritisation of investment into facility renewal and development at a regional level.

Ratings range from 0 to 15. Ratings used to determine the condition of club facilities are detailed in *Criteria for Rating Facility Infrastructure and Amenities* also provided in Appendix 5. Where a club has access to multiple facilities, such as two ovals, the rating is based on the primary facility (the main oval).

When reviewing ratings it is important to note that the audits do not consider “functional issues” and that condition ratings should be used as a guide only, referencing cosmetic not structural issues. Finally, lux level readings for lighting are estimates only, as night time light meter readings were not completed.

Priority weighting has been given to amenities and infrastructure that have the greatest influence and directly impact on football and netball participation, competition requirements and growth. These are:

- home and away and umpire change rooms and the capability of change rooms to cater for female participants;
- ground surface condition;
- pavilion size and condition;
- provision of netball player amenities;
- condition of the main netball court; and
- lighting lux levels.



JUNIOR AND SCHOOL VENUES RATINGS

Venues classified as junior or school venues are only partially rated. As these venues are used for NAB AFL Auskick, junior or school competitions, facility provision expectations are limited to oval and surrounding amenity provision and condition. Ratings for player change room, umpire facilities, social room, netball facility and court provision are not included in overall ratings for junior and school venues.

UPGRADES TO EXISTING VENUES

Upgrades to existing club facilities should aim to address preferred key criteria from the *AFL Preferred Facility Guidelines* and the *Netball Victoria Facilities Manual*, with collective investment from the sport, government, clubs and other funding partners.

Improvements in these areas are likely to have a positive effect on increasing venue capacity, encouraging growth in participation, maximising facility usage and accommodating diversity in the game.

FACILITY COSTING ESTIMATES

Based on the audit outcomes of 56 football / netball facilities and LGA advice regarding proposed new oval and netball court developments across Central Victoria, it is estimated that the region is likely to require \$21.9M worth of investment to address existing facility gaps and ensure new facility provision to cater for projected growth.

Facility upgrade estimates relate only to identified facility gaps that directly support participation growth. These gaps are:

- home and away and umpire change rooms and the capability of change rooms to cater for female participants;
- ground surface condition;
- pavilion size and condition;
- provision of netball player amenities;
- condition of the main netball court; and
- lighting lux levels.

These estimates do not account for unknown factors such as required power upgrades to meet new lighting installations, additional facility or amenity requirements to meet community provision beyond football and netball, site clearing or master plan development.

Consideration also needs to be given price point variances when using alternate materials such as LED lighting or synthetic surfaces and additional costs associated with new amenity development over facility upgrade / retrofit costs.

The basis for costings are known average project costs as developed by AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria in consultation with architects working directly with these sports and LGAs to design and cost facility upgrades and improvements.

Project investment will vary between individual facilities and will only be fully known through final master plan development, scoping, soil testing and detailed design.

The region estimate of \$21.9M to meet known and projected facility gaps does however provide an understanding of base level investment required to meet preferred football and netball facility provision.

AMENITY	ESTIMATE
Oval Lighting	\$3,360,000
Unisex Player Change Rooms	\$5,550,000
Unisex Umpire Change Rooms	\$4,080,000
Pavilion	\$960,000
Netball Player Amenities	\$3,060,000
Netball Court Surface	\$200,000
Netball Lighting	\$900,000
New Oval Development	\$2,525,000
New Netball Court Development	\$1,350,000
TOTAL	\$21,985,000



PROJECTED PARTICIPATION FOOTBALL

- The estimated Central Victoria Region population aged 5–39 (typically the key football playing age) in 2016 was 104,688. By 2026 the Region's population within this age cohort is forecast to increase by 11% to 116,600 people.
- The majority of this growth is limited to Greater Bendigo and Macedon Ranges LGAs. Greater Bendigo's 5-39 year old population forecast is expected to increase by approximately 9,000 people and Macedon Ranges by 3,000 by 2026.
- Excluding some minor growth in Central Goldfields, all other project partner LGAs are projected to have some population decline in the 5-39 year age cohort ranging from -0.3% in Campaspe Shire to -12% in Buloke.
- Based on maintaining current (2016) individual LGA penetration rates, it is anticipated that by 2026 there will be a 4.8% increase to the number of football participants, taking participant numbers to 11,440.
- Football participation increase estimates to 2026 are centred in the municipalities of Greater Bendigo (+593 participants projected) and Macedon Ranges (315 participants projected).
- Football participation increase estimates to 2026 in Greater Bendigo and Macedon Ranges municipalities are across all age cohorts with the greatest increase anticipated in the 10-14 age cohort for both Greater Bendigo (+240 participants) and Macedon Ranges (+147 participants).
- Similarly, Central Goldfields is projected to have some minor participation increase in the 10-14 age cohort of +20 participants.
- All other project partner LGAs are projected to have some football participation decline ranging from -19 participants in Mount Alexander to -136 participants in Gannawarra Shire.
- These projections are based on population growth against current penetration rates and do not take into consideration cross municipality participation with players often travelling from large regional centres to rural townships to play football.
- During 2017, the AFL is rolling out participation mapping systems to their state bodies. Participation data will be overlayed with football facility audit information to better support tracking of participation and identify facility investment need that extends beyond municipal boundaries.
- AFL Central Victoria are expanding participation opportunities in junior, youth and senior female competitions, schools programs and coaching accreditation. Should these participation offerings be successful and result in an increase of individual LGA penetration rates of just 1%, an additional 114 players would be playing football in the Region by 2026. A 1% increase would also see participation growth across all project partner LGAs. This may be achieved through the growth in female football participation



PROJECTED PARTICIPATION NETBALL

- Based on maintaining current (2015) individual LGA penetration rates, it is anticipated that the number of netball participants will increase by 4.7% to 11,887 in the Central Victoria Region by 2026.
- Like football, netball participation increase estimates to 2026 are centred in the municipalities of Greater Bendigo (+709 participants projected) and Macedon Ranges (+347 participants projected).
- For these two LGAs, participation growth is anticipated across all age cohorts. For Greater Bendigo the most significant growth will be in senior participant numbers with 22% growth (192 participants) followed by 19% growth in the 10-14 age cohort (273 participants).
- Macedon Ranges is projected to see 20% growth in introductory (+79 participants) and junior players (+109 participants).
- Excluding Central Goldfields which is projected to have +16 participants in the 10-14 age cohort, all other project partner LGAs are projected to have some netball participation decline ranging from -27 participants in Northern Grampians to -196 participants in Gannawarra Shire.
- Netball Victoria will need to monitor participation in these LGAs and work closely with clubs to support sustainability, reduce the impact on small communities and ensure competition structures enable participation opportunities. These opportunities are being expanded by Netball Victoria in the Region through delivery of the Rock Up Netball and Fast 5 programs.





INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

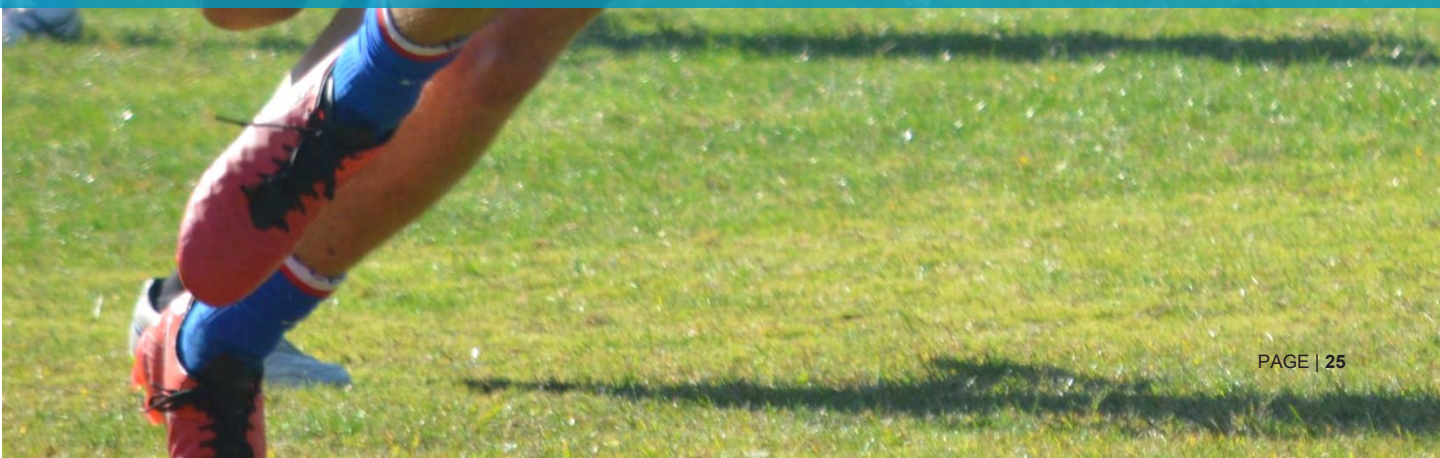
- Significant facility investment has occurred historically across the Central Victoria Region with \$52 million worth of community football and netball related capital works projects invested in since 2010. As the main investor into football and netball facilities, 60% of this investment has been sourced through project partner LGAs.
- This investment is indicative of the importance the Regions' LGAs place on maintaining pivotal infrastructure and facilities to ensure club sustainability into the future.
- The range of projects has included essential facility renewal and development such as floodlighting, umpire rooms, pavilions, oval and irrigation system reconstruction, kitchen upgrades, fencing, venue road works, netball court resurfacing and netball player change amenities.
- The Region has also seen investment in new facility development at some level across all project partner LGAs. This investment has included football ovals, sports lighting, multipurpose pavilions, netball courts, female friendly change amenities and netball player change amenities.
- \$11.9M worth of football and netball related infrastructure projects are in train across the Region. Project range includes new netball courts and lighting at Marong, Wesley Hill and Harry Trott (Kennington) Recreation Reserves, netball court upgrades at Lalbert Recreation Reserve, installation of lighting at Newstead Recreation Reserve and Camp Reserve, social room upgrades at Boort Park, social room and change room upgrades at Canterbury Park and the continued roll out of the Marist College site development.
- The economic benefits of football are known. However, League finals are significant events in their own right and provide additional net economic benefit estimated at almost \$250,000 to a host municipality.
- Generally amenities required to enable hosting of finals include site fencing, four change rooms, two umpire change rooms, two netball courts with associated player amenities, scoreboard provision, both ground surface and netball court surface in excellent condition, spectator amenities such as toilets and hard stand viewing areas and car parking availability.
- The current rotation of finals and grand final venue allocation by the Heathcote District FNL, Loddon Valley FNL, North Central FL and Bendigo Junior FL further justifies investment into local club venues to reach minimum provision guidelines and support Clubs to better cater for finals.
- The Region's growth LGAs have a strong understanding of sports participation in their municipalities and are actively planning to address projected participation growth and associated facility provision need.
- Similarly the Region's LGAs predicted to have population decline, with subsequent participation decreases are committed to continuing to support sport to meet club sustainability challenges. This includes investigating opportunities to rationalise community assets and instead provide multi-purpose facilities that cater for a number of sports.
- Rate capping, renewal gaps and investment competition from other sports will combine to impact on the capacity of project partner LGAs to fund improvements identified in this Strategy. However, the Strategy shows a commitment to improve collaboration on facility renewal and development whilst balancing stakeholder priorities and expectations. This improved collaboration supports opportunities for facility upgrades that ensure club sustainability, provide capacity to host finals into the future and leads to a greater understanding of facility needs for growth programs, female participation, shared usage and community access.

SPORT DEVELOPMENT

- A situational analysis completed by the AFL Central Victoria Commission identified key club concerns related to increasing difficulties in attracting and retaining volunteers and player payments to the detriment of infrastructure and junior development that is essential for club sustainability.
- The AFL Central Victoria Commission is implementing remedial work to support volunteers including utilising past administrators to provide mentoring and support, encouraging partnerships between junior and senior clubs to relieve volunteer burden and providing extensive leadership and social change programs.
- AFL Victoria's *Community Club Sustainability Program* provides tools to educate administrators, and players about the impact that match-payments and player demands have on the viability of grassroots clubs. This program is being actively implemented by AFL Central Victoria through the introduction of a salary cap and player points system.
- Supporting diversity initiatives, AFL Central Victoria will be establishing a multicultural reference group to ensure that people from multicultural backgrounds can learn about and become involved in sport. This is both important from the perspective of football and netball but also in terms of assimilating people into the Region's sporting community.
- From a player welfare perspective, AFL Central Victoria have actively promoted the Sports Chaplaincy and Headspace programs as well as promoting Responsible Gambling. Education programs on illicit drug use is also offered in partnership with Victoria Police and Sports Focus.
- Junior pathways are being developed through expansion of AFL Central Victoria's school programs, directly linking schools to clubs to support entry into formal participation and providing formal junior coaching accreditation programs.
- Recognising the value of umpires to football, AFL Central Victoria has committed to initiating a regional approach to recruitment, retention and development of umpires and will investigate options to develop one umpiring body for the Central Victoria Commission over the next 2 years.
- Netball sports development programs in the Region will continue to expand on existing Coach Accreditation and Coaching NetSetGO Workshops, Netball Victoria and Melbourne Vixens Community Clinics, Rock Up Netball, Net4Kids, Fast 5 and School Clinics supported by SEDA.
- The Netball Victoria School Clinics program provides an essential link for new participants from schools into local club or association netball and ensures participants are connected to structured netball competition options during program delivery.
- Netball Victoria will continue to offer leadership programs including an annual Association Development Day and the Netball Victoria Emerging Leaders Program. This program aims to empower women in community sport through developing leadership skills and knowledge, providing opportunities for people seeking leadership roles within the sport and recreation industry and equipping participants to tackle challenges within an association, league or club environment.
- Participation diversity is also being supported through the delivery of All Abilities Carnivals, football and netball Multicultural Days and Reconciliation Days which include coaching clinics and netball matches between primary school indigenous teams.



2. THE STRATEGY





VISION

Through strong partnerships, plan facilities that build the capacity of the Region, fostering a sustainable, innovative and viable Central Victorian football and netball community



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The following presents the recommended strategic framework and structure required to achieve the vision for football and netball facilities in the AFL Central Victorian Region. The PCG have worked together to develop the Strategy based on this framework. Four priorities have been identified to guide future facility provision and will be underpinned by regional strategies and actions that can be implemented at the local level. These are consistent with AFL Victoria’s *Growing the Heartland Strategy*.

VISION FOR THE CENTRAL VICTORIA REGION

“Through strong partnerships, plan facilities that build the capacity of the region, fostering a sustainable, innovative and viable Central Victorian football and netball community”

PRIORITY 1 EXISTING FACILITIES

Objective: Increase the quality and functionality and maximise the use and carrying capacity of existing facilities.

PRIORITY 2 NEW FACILITIES & TALENT PATHWAYS

Objective: Plan and develop new facilities in key growth areas across the Region, considering regional needs and talent pathways, programs and competitions at key locations.

PRIORITY 3 BUILD CAPACITY

Objective: Support the capacity building of clubs, their people and their culture.

PRIORITY 4 ENHANCE RELATIONSHIPS

Objective: Continue to enhance the relationship between football, netball and government in the planning, provision and funding of facilities and programs.

► **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**
(Defined for each Objective)



PRIORITY 1

Increase the quality and functionality and maximise the use and carrying capacity of existing facilities

Significant facility investment has historically occurred across the Central Victoria Region. All project partner LGAs are planning further upgrades to football and netball infrastructure pending capital works budget processes. Current funding programs however, may not adequately meet infrastructure investment needs whilst LGAs face reduced financial capacity to address facility renewal costs.

This Priority identifies opportunities to strategically sustain and grow netball and football through improved lighting provision, access to alternate venues, supporting female participation, grounds management and continued collaboration between project partners. This will ensure facility upgrade needs are prioritised and investment is targeted.

AFL Victoria has expressed a desire for existing facilities to meet preferred minimum provision as outlined in the *AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines*. This includes lighting fields to minimum training standards (50 lux level).

The *Netball Victoria Facilities Manual* details preferred netball facility provision, including minimum court run off expectations, court conditions and player facilities and amenities to a level that ensure a safe and playable environment for players, umpires and spectators.

Gaps in lighting provision create lost opportunity for remodelling competition structures to build on current participation and leads to overuse of ovals that are well lit, with premature wearing of grounds where players are restricted to training in certain areas.

Prioritisation of lighting upgrades to the minimum lux level is essential.

Upgrades should consider facility usage levels based on current player / team numbers, prioritising those venues with high facility usage, those that are recognised finals venues and those that cater for junior and / or female participation.

Lighting to match competition level should also be considered for lighting renewal projects, balanced against current and projected participation growth and competition expansion opportunities.

In order to better determine lighting upgrade priorities for the Region, AFL Victoria will work with project partner LGAs to implement formal lux level testing of ovals and netball courts as a key strategic direction from this Strategy.

Planning for lighting upgrades should also extend beyond core infrastructure to include additional power requirements and associated installation and permit costs. AFL Victoria have a process to assist clubs and LGAs in planning and costing lighting projects that considers these additional requirements.

Oval conditions across the Region are excellent with all grounds meeting preferred minimum playing standards. The differing climates across the Central Victoria Region, from semi arid to relatively high rainfall throughout winter, do however present challenges in managing ground conditions to a high level.

Providing guidance to clubs and LGA parks and grounds staff and considering alternate options to oval surface provision such as sand based surfaces, synthetic surfaces and hybrid turf to further extend carrying capacity would address some of these challenges.

Some LGAs in the Region are experiencing a high saturation of vulnerable facilities. These LGAs may have to consider asset rationalisation of public infrastructure if maintenance needs are to be met. Through consultation, the Region's LGAs expressed their strong understanding of the value of football-netball clubs beyond participation to local communities. However, financial pressures faced by LGAs limits infrastructure investment and ultimately capacity to support club infrastructure renewal beyond preferred minimum provision.

Clubs and communities will need to consider venue amalgamation and venue sharing in multi-purpose facilities that accommodate a number of sports and community groups.

Critical to this will be achieving cultural change at the club level to consider shared facilities (amongst competing clubs and sports) into the future to maximise usage and investment opportunities

Asset rationalisation extends to merged clubs who currently expect LGAs to support facility renewal at more than one venue. Moving forward, clubs may need to determine which facility has investment priority based on participation trends and future need.

Upgrades of existing pavilions to multipurpose venues to accommodate a wider range of users, ground and lighting improvements to increase carrying capacity, and provision of change room amenities that cater for female participation all provide increased participation opportunities and support club sustainability.

With no facilities currently classified as 'regional' across Central Victoria, prioritisation of facility upgrades should also consider venue provision to this level that supports finals and other regional and community events.

The current rotation of finals venue allocation by the Heathcote District FNL, Loddon Valley FNL, North Central FL and Bendigo Junior FL justifies investment into local club venues to reach the preferred minimum level provision.

This is particularly relevant when considering available and quality finals facilities for both football and netball where netball player and umpire amenities, spectator facilities and at times, court playing surfaces do not meet minimum preferred provision.

As facility upgrades are planned, consideration should be given to meeting regional level classification in key locations. This would better support clubs to cater for finals and provide opportunity to secure regional level events providing economic and social benefits.

NETBALL

Significant investment has been made by the Regions' LGAs to improve netball court conditions with 95% of courts meeting minimum playing standards. The gap in netball player facility provision continues to widen however, with 7 venues offering no amenities and a further 8 venues providing amenities that are in poor condition and reaching end of life. Association netball fares no better with only 1 (Bendigo Stadium) of the 4 association venues within the Region offering dedicated netball player amenities with showers.

Netball amenity gaps highlight the need to recognise the high participation numbers for netball and the value of the sport to the Region through providing facilities appropriate to current expectations and future need.

In the short term this may possibly be addressed through a proposed new AFL Victoria program to provide temporary and portable change rooms to support immediate female participation need.

Temporary structures would be utilised until more permanent amenities could be constructed. Game scheduling between netball and female football rarely overlap so temporary facilities could be utilised by both sports on competition days.

Netball Victoria will also continue to advocate for finals venues allocations that ensure netball player, official and spectator access to quality amenities and courts.

Further analysis needs to be done on projected netball court and amenity requirements in the Region. Maximising facility access at Bendigo Stadium through improved netball association collaboration and partnerships will also, in the short term, support anticipated netball facility shortages.

SCHOOL AND ALTERNATE VENUE ACCESS

Limitations in LGA capacity to meet facility renewal gaps and resourcing participation growth will increase the need to access alternative venues such as schools. Schools are also continuing to expand in some areas and require access to existing municipal community assets to support school activities and initiatives.

The establishment in 2016 of the School Building Authority by State Government provides opportunity for sport and local government to collaboratively plan and invest in school facilities and it is hoped that the Authority will provide facility funding to support this.

Partnerships with schools at the local level to improve access and identify mutually beneficial facility projects will be a key focus for AFL Victoria moving forward.

AFL Victoria have strategically committed to pilot projects that demonstrate the benefit of joint facility investment. This investment opportunity should be harnessed by project partners who are currently accessing school venues to support netball and football participation.

AFL Victoria also intends to include school venues accessed for football as part of a national facility audit currently being rolled out nationally by the AFL. Site audits and understanding current provision at schools will support co-planning and investment of school facility upgrades to ensure they are accessible and fit for football and netball.

Pre-season creep also places increased demands on venues and contributes to overuse and potential conflict with tenant sports.

This can be addressed through encouraging club acceptance of non traditional venues for pre-season training such as gyms, trails and pools and the continued promotion of the AFL Victoria's *Pre-season Training Guidelines for Community Football*.

Funding the development of facility upgrades is becoming increasingly difficult for Councils in the current financial climate. The broad range of services that Councils provide and their limited financial capacity will mean they will continue to rely heavily on state, federal and commercial partnerships to deliver Regional level projects. This is particularly relevant for smaller LGAs that require State/Federal Government financial support to address even minor facility upgrades, impacting on their community clubs who are often required to financially contribute to projects to ensure they are delivered.

The financial impact of implementing proposed actions for facility upgrades has not been determined. However, it is critical that key stakeholders and potential funding providers adopt a coordinated approach to the scoping and delivery of actions and recognise the need for joint funding and resourcing.

Continued collaboration across key sport, government and community stakeholder groups will enable project partner LGAs to secure funding for facility renewal and upgrades identified through this Strategy.





FEMALE PARTICIPATION AND FACILITY PROVISION

Female participation across the Central Victorian Region continues to grow with an 11% increase in female player numbers based at AFL Central Victoria clubs between Seasons 2015 and 2016.

Across the Region, 409 females participated in football in Season 2016. Central Victoria has successfully assimilated female football players into mainstream competition structures and clubs with all project partner LGAs having female football players in Season 2016.

Female umpire numbers have increased by 65% since 2014 with 14 female umpires now representing the Bendigo Umpires Association.

Growth in female participation is being further accelerated by the success and promotion of the AFLW and strengthening of national pathways. These factors, combined with AFL Central Victoria targeted female participation programs, will continue to promote interest in the game.

A new senior women's competition was launched in Season 2017 with the combined support of the AFL Central Victoria, AFL Central Murray and AFL Goulburn Murray Commissions. This new competition sees 8 new teams draw on players throughout Northern Victoria. AFL Central Victoria plans to expand this offering within 2 years by developing a stand alone senior women's competition based in its Commission area. This will be supported by a strategy to grow women's football in the Region, due for release by AFL Central Victoria late 2017.

Providing suitable facilities to accommodate these teams will be critical to their sustained success.

From a national survey of clubs, participants and volunteers in 2015, the top three barriers to female participation are (in priority order); insufficient numbers to form full teams, **lack of female friendly change rooms and amenities** and on equal third, lack of female player role models and not enough promotion of female football.

As female participation continues to grow, competition structures will need to accommodate additional games. Innovative fixturing including mid week hosting of games should be considered for junior, youth girls and senior women's competitions where ground usage capacity and night competition lighting is available.

Should female participation increase from 4% to 5% of total player numbers by 2026, an estimated 572 female players would require access to female friendly facilities if they are to be actively supported to participate in football.

With significant gaps in change room and umpire room provision, catering for female participation is a key priority for the Region if participation opportunities are to be harnessed. Provision of unisex facilities also benefits alternate sports where female participation is on the increase, such as cricket.

Female friendly infrastructure grants available through AFL Victoria and Sport and Recreation Victoria provide an opportunity for the Region to target change room upgrades based on existing and projected female participation on a facility by facility basis.



Strategic directions to increase the quality and functionality and maximise the use and carrying capacity of existing facilities:

- 1.1 **Critical: Project partners prioritise change room upgrades for application to SRV Grants Programs to cater for unisex use.**
- 1.2 **Critical: Project partners identify options for temporary change room structures with supporting funding models for key locations that will, in the short term, address player amenity provision for female football and netball.**
- 1.3 Project partners work collaboratively to bring facilities with no or low lighting up to minimum standards and where possible to 100 lux to support alternate fixturing.
- 1.4 AFL Victoria support identification of lighting priorities across the Region through implementation of a structured lux level testing program of oval and netball court lighting.
- 1.5 Project partners investigate shared procurement opportunities as they arise to support facility upgrade investment requirements.
- 1.6 AFL Central Victoria investigate options for innovative fixturing to support ground capacity planning and participation growth.
- 1.7 Project partners explore all opportunities to advocate for access to schools facilities and developing ongoing partnerships with schools.
- 1.8 AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria continue to foster a working partnership with the School Building Authority to identify opportunities for school facility access and joint investment.
- 1.9 AFL Central Victoria encourage cultural change at the Club level to support acceptance of non traditional venues for pre-season training and co-tenancy of facilities.
- 1.10 AFL Victoria provide education to clubs and LGA parks and grounds staff to support improved grounds management and capacity.
- 1.11 Project partners reference Universal Design Principles as outlined in SRV's *Design for Everyone Guide* for all new and existing facility upgrades.



PRIORITY 2

Plan and develop new facilities in key growth areas across the Region, considering regional needs and talent pathways, programs and competitions at key locations.

The Central Victorian Region is experiencing rapid population growth in some municipalities while others face declining or ageing populations. This has the potential to impact football and netball into the future and associated facility demand. Project partner LGAs have expressed their commitment to supporting football and netball in their municipalities and have a strong understanding of and appreciation for the social value sport brings to their communities beyond participation.

This Priority outlines planning and development opportunities to ensure facility provision aligns to community need and considers design options that encourages broad use, multi-purpose provision and inclusion.

Anticipated population growth will see the establishment of new clubs in growth areas. New infrastructure has been planned for and will be created to service these new / emerging clubs. Pending developer and funding partner contributions, the Region's growth LGAs Bendigo, Macedon Ranges and Mount Alexander have 5 new ovals and associated amenities planned to address projected participation growth.

AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria will play key strategic roles in the establishment of these new clubs through providing seed funding, guiding governance and financial management processes and identifying potential facility user partners such as cricket and tennis.

Of regional significance and supporting both the AFL Goldfields and AFL Central Victoria Commission areas, is the planned new development of New Gisborne Regional Sports Fields in Macedon Ranges Shire. This project is strategically recognised as a priority in the *Loddon Mallee Region 2016 Investment Prospectus* and will provide additional sporting fields to address current and projected demand, supporting the fast growing southern area of the Shire.

Valued at \$7.8M for Stage1, the New Gisborne Regional Sports Fields project will see the installation of a multi-sport facility with two new full size AFL ovals, two netball courts and associated amenities to accommodate an additional 30 teams (football and cricket). Land for the complex has been purchased that is close to Gisborne but is also convenient to Riddells Creek, Macedon and Woodend as well as further afield. The first stage is estimated to cost \$7.8M and funding is currently being sought by the Shire to support the project.

Also of regional importance is the Donaldson Park upgrade, the major sport and recreation precinct within Loddon Shire. The facility currently services football, netball, hockey, harness racing, local schools and community organisations and will accommodate new users and regional events through the redevelopment.

The Donaldson Park development is supported by a Feasibility Study which identified a justified need and the capacity for renewal of the facilities, which are reaching end of life and attract extensive maintenance costs. At an estimated cost of \$1.5M, the facility will be upgraded to a multi-purpose, accessible venue that includes unisex player and umpire change-rooms to AFL minimum guidelines, meeting rooms, first aid, storage, social rooms, commercial kitchen, improved spectator amenities and other venue features such as landscaping.

Loddon Shire has recently delivered facility upgrades at Janiember Park in Serpentine. Upgrades are planned for Inglewood Recreation Reserve and the Shire has prioritised at a strategic level provision of unisex player and umpire change rooms and disability access at Bridgewater and Mitiamo Recreation Reserves.

Bendigo Growth Corridors (Huntly, Maiden Gully, Marong and Strathfieldsaye) will see significant investment in sport and recreation infrastructure in future years to cater for future population growth for the City of Greater Bendigo.

Planning and design for a new recreation reserve in Mannes Lane (Strathfieldsaye) will commence shortly to better support the expected growth of 2,000+ new residents by 2026.

With its surrounding area expected to experience 60% population growth by 2026 (3,700+ additional residents), Catholic College Bendigo (La Valla Campus) in Junortoun has planned redevelopment to an open space multi-oval hub with upgraded facilities and 6 grounds at the site.

With the recent opening of two ovals at Marist College, further development options in Maiden Gully on land adjacent to the site will be considered on an as needs basis and in line with community growth.

Buloke Shire Council has community, local and federal government commitments toward a \$4.2M change room and function centre facility upgrade at Charlton Park. The new facility will cater for netball, hockey, umpires and male and female football competitions. The community has committed \$1.3M toward the project, with a further \$1.275M from local and federal government. Applications are being made for the balance of project costs from State Government with construction expected to commence 2017.

The Donald Community Precinct project is also being delivered by the Buloke Shire Council. This significant community project will see a \$2.8M upgrade of the stadium and function centre at the Donald Recreation Reserve, creating indoor match quality facilities for netball and basketball and a community hub for 30 different user groups.

Delivery of a \$3.9M junior sports hub in Castlemaine by Mount Alexander Shire is another significant project for the region which includes outdoor netball courts, netball floodlighting to training standards, landscape, car park and path works and a multi-purpose pavilion for netball, junior football and cycling. Stage 1 is due for completion end 2017. Stage 2 is currently in the design phase with construction works anticipated for 2018.

Other facility investment planned by Mount Alexander Shire are improvements to netball court and pavilion provision, and change room upgrades that accommodate female participation.

Central Goldfields Shire has also prioritised the provision of unisex change rooms at a strategic level and is currently seeking funding to support the upgrade of all existing change rooms to AFL's preferred minimum guidelines.

With steady growth in umpires numbers and a series of training venues spread across the catchment area, the Bendigo Umpires Association is currently well catered for in regards to facility access that meets its wide distribution of participants. The potential creation of one umpires association will see the continued expansion of umpire numbers.

Over a third of umpire facilities in the Region are in poor condition which directly impacts on umpire attraction and retention. Planning of new facilities, particularly in growth areas, should consider umpire needs such as unisex rooms to recommended size and lighting to minimum standards. This would ensure suitable provision across the Region for the anticipated growth in umpire numbers.

The focus for project partner LGAs with potential population decline and accordingly reduced need for new developments, is to maximise facility usage opportunities through investment into oval surface and irrigation upgrades, lighting provision and improvements to existing pavilions and change rooms to cater for participant diversity.

All project partner LGAs have planned football and netball infrastructure works into the future, pending capital works budget processes and access to external funding. These works include renewal of existing pavilions to multipurpose venues, oval surface and irrigation system upgrades, lighting improvements, provision of change room amenities to cater for female participation, netball facility provision and power upgrades.

Dependent on budget restrictions and competing sport needs, Greater Bendigo has also indicated potential support for investment into supporting infrastructure including spectator seating, storage, player shelters, electronic scoreboards and behind goal netting.

NETBALL PROVISION

Anticipated growth in netball participation is being addressed with 9 new netball courts planned by the Region's LGAs. This includes a new netball stadium in Macedon Ranges and six courts across Greater Bendigo, with two courts located in Kangaroo Flat, one court in Heathcote, two in Strathdale Park and a potential new netball stadium in Macedon Ranges with up to 4 netball courts. Two courts have already been delivered in the South Bendigo area.

The Netball Victoria *State-wide Facilities Strategy* recognises that one of the most significant netball facility projects for the Region is the redevelopment of twelve outdoor courts and construction of three new indoor courts, including a show court with 4000 seats, at Bendigo Stadium. This \$22M project will deliver a major indoor high ball court in Bendigo, the largest in regional Australia, with capacity to host State and National netball events and support elite talent pathways.

Netball Victoria is also currently working with Greater Bendigo to support the development of a new netball facility in Strathfieldsaye in the next 10 years.

The *State-wide Facilities Strategy* will further clarify current outdoor and indoor netball court provision and projected need. The *Strategy* also suggests a need for additional planning and consultation with project partner LGAs to better understand future court and amenity requirements and ensure the Regions' needs are adequately planned for to accommodate netball participation into the future.

TALENT PATHWAY VENUES

The issues surrounding the provision of appropriate facilities to support talent pathways is two pronged. There are the operational challenges of balancing needs for elite pathway teams against facility provision and then harnessing investment and access opportunities that benefit the widest audience. Currently these challenges are not being met with talent bodies often working alone to identify opportunities for the talent pool they represent. Better facility and pathway outcomes may be realised where partnerships are truly developed.

Talent bodies in the Region include the Bendigo Pioneers (male and female TAC Cup teams), Central Victoria Football Academies and Netball Victoria Academies. New opportunities are also being presented in the female football area through the partnership between Bendigo Thunder Women's Football Club (Bendigo Thunder) and Richmond Football Club.

Currently none of these talent bodies are based at facilities that are fit for purpose and address all player development requirements.

These requirements include access to two or more grounds, a pool, gym and allied health professionals. The co-location of regional personnel across partner sports, site capacity for growth and consideration of player catchment areas, accommodation and education opportunities are also key factors when identifying suitable locations for elite level facilities.

If funding opportunities and purpose built facilities are to become a reality, collaboration between player talent governing bodies is critical. Two facility opportunities are present in the Region that would support elite pathways and provide economic and social benefits for the wider community, La Trobe University and the Queen Elizabeth Oval. Both options are investigated further in this Strategy.

LA TROBE UNIVERSITY

Project partners considered a number of venues for elite pathway facilities including Catholic College Bendigo (Junorton), Tannery Lane Recreation Reserve (Strathfieldsaye), a greenfield site at Maiden Gully, the Queen Elizabeth Oval and La Trobe University.

Catholic College Bendigo and Maiden Gully have no set timeframes for redevelopment and are dependent on master plan works and population growth. Tannery Lane Recreation Reserve is already over utilised and has no capacity to house additional teams. With limited space, the Queen Elizabeth Oval does not provide the required level of green space or access to the broad range of services required of a sporting precinct.

La Trobe University and Bendigo Pioneers (Pioneers) have entered into a 12 month trial agreement for the Pioneers to access university facilities. The La Trobe site presents an opportunity to create a elite pathway sporting hub for both football and netball.

Through the Bendigo Academy of Sport, netball has an existing relationship with the university. The Pioneers have opened the door for football development pathways to be based at the university and this should be investigated further in partnership with AFL Central Victoria.

The potential development of a sports hub at La Trobe University provides opportunity to co-locate regional sports staff, essential for the AFL Central Victoria Regional Administration Centre which is investigating relocation options due to current office space limitations.

This co-location would bring shared knowledge, understanding and experience that would ultimately benefit player development outcomes. This may also lead to alignment of governance processes between AFL Central Victoria and the Bendigo Pioneers that would better support the transitioning of players between the two bodies.

A sports hub at La Trobe University could also potentially provide education and boarding house options to development players, lessening the travel and cost burden to families. A hub would also expand funding pool access through the delivery of an elite multi-sport facility on a university owned site.

The potential for a sports hub at La Trobe University is strategically supported by AFL Victoria's *Heartland Strategy*. AFL Victoria have committed to identifying key locations and developing partnerships with facility providers, such as universities, to support club academies and regional hubs. The sport is also investigating options to invest in elite venues that are built fit for purpose and include access to the full suite of player facility needs such as gymnasiums and recovery amenities with consideration for access to accommodation and education programs.

The development of a sports hub based at La Trobe University would potentially meet all key requirements for elite pathway facility provision, clearly define pathways from Academy to TAC Cup level for male and female players and foster partnerships between key sport and education stakeholders. This will bring learnings and opportunities beyond facility provision.

The current location of the VRAS - Bendigo Academy of Sport and potential relocation of the Netball Victoria Northern Zone Academy to this site further value adds to the sports hub proposition.



PREMIER VENUE – QUEEN ELIZABETH OVAL

The alignment of Richmond Football Club to the Bendigo Thunder Women's Football Club (Bendigo Thunder) provides an extraordinary opportunity for the Region to realise State level facility requirements at the Queen Elizabeth Oval where this relationship can be capitalised on.

Richmond Football Club have clearly stated their intent to be 'team ready' if and when the AFLW is expanded. Their partnership with the Bendigo Thunder strengthens their case for entry into the AFLW.

The Bendigo Thunder Division 1 team are already based at the Queen Elizabeth Oval and will be playing some home games at Punt Road Oval from Season 2017. The Division 2 team are currently located at Weeroona Oval. Any future development would need to consider alternate oval access options for Bendigo Thunder teams below Division 1 and capacity for an AFLW team.

Like the Eureka Stadium model in Ballarat, the formalised presence of an AFL club in the Region provides opportunity to lobby for significant investment at the Queen Elizabeth Oval, the only recognised State level venue in the Region.

Partnerships between key stakeholders would need to be developed to encourage the presence of Richmond Football Club, and lobby for improved facility provision to meet AFL expectations.

The economic benefit to Ballarat with 2 AFL and 1 JLT Community Series match through the Western Bulldogs alignment is estimated at \$3.6M.

Similar outcomes could be enjoyed by the Central Victorian Region where the Richmond Football Club relationship resulted in the Queen Elizabeth Oval hosting JLT Community Series and AFL Women's matches (when a women's team becomes a reality for the Club).

This alignment also provides female participation pathway opportunities where a VFL Women's licence became available or the competition expanded. There is potential to provide a development pathway structure from TAC Cup female teams (Bendigo Pioneers), to VFL if opportunity arises (potentially through the Bendigo Thunder) then AFLW where Richmond Football Club are included in the competition.



FACILITY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Regions growth LGAs should consider the use of a synthetic multi purpose AFL field to provide capacity to cater for growth and existing demand.

Pre-season training requirements and participation extending beyond traditional catchment areas with players travelling further distances to attend training, provides opportunity to identify a central, dedicated training venue for the Region for all clubs to access. This would preferably be within the Bendigo area and is being explored by Bendigo and Macedon Ranges LGAs.

AFL endorsed synthetic fields can take up to three times the use of a natural turf field and in a climate such as Central Victoria, a mix of each would best meet future need in the most efficient manner.

Where the use of synthetic surfaces is not a viable option, development of any new playing fields should consider alternate turf options such as reinforced natural turf. This new turf option is able to sustain intensive wear, increasing turf carrying capacity from approximately 25 to 40 hours per week.

Whilst LED lighting attracts an additional 30-40% in capital costs from traditional metal halogen lights, use of this type of lighting would future proof lighting maintenance costs for decades, increase lighting life spans and ensures lighting uniformity across ovals. LED lights also provide dimmable options that ensure uniform lighting around the playing area.

Recommendations from the *AFL Preferred Facility Guidelines* should also be considered, including provision of unisex change rooms, appropriately sized multi use social rooms to enable sustainability and club growth, Universal Design principles and sustainability best practices.

Sustainability practices include passive solar design of facilities, water harvesting and reuse and solar energy to reduce operational costs.

Netball court provision should aim to meet the national standards outlined in *Netball Victoria's Compliance Factsheet* or the *National Facilities Policy* whilst facility provision should consider as a minimum preferred local club level guidelines identified in the *Netball Victoria Facilities Manual 2016*.

Where a new facility is to be considered for regional level classification, the preferred minimum facility requirements would extend to provision of two ovals (where possible) or capacity to plan for an additional oval into the future, unisex change rooms and umpire rooms, sports lighting at night competition level on one oval, a suitably sized pavilion, two netball courts and netball player amenities.

PROJECTED GROUND REQUIREMENTS

AFL Victoria recommend that ideally no more than 7 teams use one natural turf ground at one time, however localised factors such as the ages of those teams and the condition and maintenance regime of the natural turf should be taken into account at each venue. The estimated growth of 4.8% in football participation by 2026 equates to the need for access to an additional 3 grounds under this rule of thumb across the Central Victoria Region as a whole.

Participation growth however, is centred in Greater Bendigo and Macedon Ranges. Increases in participation based on current penetration rates for these two municipalities would result in the need for an additional 3 grounds in Greater Bendigo and 2 additional ground in Macedon Ranges. Proposed planning of greenfield sites by these LGAs currently addresses this projected need.

An increase of individual LGA penetration rates of just 1% would result in an additional 114 players with all project partner LGAs projected to see growth in participation. This may be achieved through the growth in female football participation. This increase would result in access to 1 additional ground being required across the Region by 2026.

This highlights the importance of project stakeholders continuing to monitor football participation and plan accordingly.

The impact of cross municipality participation also needs to be considered. In some municipalities, population may be declining, however participation continues to be strong and sit above State regional averages.

Players continue to be attracted to 'country' based competitions and travel from large regional centres, such as Bendigo to rural areas to play football.

Understanding cross municipal participation will be further supported by the AFL's participant mapping system that maps player data against facility locations linked to clubs and leagues. Utilising this tool will support prioritisation of facility investment requirements based on participation growth and identified amenity gaps.

PROJECTED COURT REQUIREMENTS

In terms of court provision, Netball Victoria recommend 60 members per netball court. The estimated growth of netball participation by 535 participants by 2026 equates to the need for an additional 9 courts in the Region as a whole. However, like football, netball participation growth is limited to Greater Bendigo and Macedon Ranges municipalities.

Based on Netball Victoria preferred court provision ratios, Greater Bendigo will require an additional 12 courts and Macedon Ranges an additional 6 courts by 2026. Whilst Greater Bendigo has recently delivered two new courts in the South Bendigo area and both LGAs have planned for additional court development, current investment in new court projects will not meet 2026 projections based on current participation levels.

Initiating annual State of Play Reports to ensure a collective understanding of participation across the Region will be essential if a continued strategic approach to facility investment, that is based on participation growth and identified need, is to be ensured.





Strategic directions to plan and develop new facilities in key growth areas across the Region, considering regional needs and talent pathways, programs and competitions at key locations.

- 2.1 **Critical:** Netball Victoria undertake a comprehensive review of netball court and facility provision in the Netball Victoria Loddon Mallee South Region.
- 2.2 **Critical:** AFL Central Victoria develop a working party with key talent pathway stakeholders to investigate options for elite facility provision within the Bendigo area.
- 2.3 Collaboration to continue between AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria and Central Victoria Region LGAs in the planning of new facilities. The local facility requirements from the *AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines* and / or *Netball Victoria Facilities Manual 2016* to be considered where the facility will cater for football or netball.
- 2.4 Project partners collectively lobby for recognised regional priorities and new developments in this Strategy to gather external funding support and investment.

- 2.5 AFL Victoria, AFL Central Victoria, Greater Bendigo and Macedon Ranges LGAs investigate options for the installation of a synthetic oval with potential funding models for the Region.
- 2.6 Innovations in facility materials and products to be considered by project partners to increase carrying capacity and reduce ongoing maintenance costs.
- 2.7 AFL Victoria continue to provide a Club Establishment Fund to provide seed funding for the establishment of new football clubs.
- 2.8 AFL Victoria to maintain a strong relationship with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) and growth area LGAs to provide sport specific information, spatial requirements and design expertise to inform all current and future Precinct Structure plans being developed.
- 2.9 Project partners reference principles outlined in SRV's *Design for Everyone Guide* and *Female Friendly Sport Infrastructure Guidelines* for all new and existing facility upgrades.



PRIORITY 3

Support the capacity building of clubs, their people and their culture

The structure of football and netball across Victoria is changing with female football, male netball, Access All Abilities teams and expansion of programs into CALD communities. Within the Region, fifty clubs already support female players with planned expansion of female participation into senior competitions. There has been significant growth in umpiring numbers and program offerings now accommodate participation beyond traditional competition structures.

This Priority outlines initiatives to support clubs to maximise growth in these participation opportunities and ensure club sustainability and capacity.

In many regional areas, clubs are the 'community', particularly those clubs that are based in small towns. Clubs generally understand their greater responsibility to provide leadership, add social worth and ensure healthy sports environments which are accessible and inclusive.

The economic and social value of community football clubs is now well researched and understood and extends to providing a sense of community and belonging, reducing isolation, increasing community pride and improving physical and mental health and wellbeing.

For municipalities experiencing population decline, continuing to encourage participation opportunities and provide facilities to support club sustainability will be essential if the social and economic benefits that football-netball clubs bring to wider communities are to be preserved.

The 2011 review of country football by AFL Victoria Chairman Peter Jackson recognised that volunteers were the key factor in the historical success and sustainability of community football (and netball) in Victoria. This has not changed.

The capacity of clubs to recruit, train and retain volunteers continues to be a critical issue at the local level and clubs require ongoing assistance to grow volunteer bases. This assistance could include the creation of sporting 'clubs' across sports / committees to share volunteer resources, volunteer retention programs, clearly defining volunteer expectations through position descriptions, supporting the latest innovations in player welfare, coordinating "Volunteer Forums" or think tanks with the aim of identifying areas where volunteer work loads can be reduced and potential for developing an education qualification that would support attraction of volunteers to clubs. These initiatives should continue to be investigated and implemented by AFL Central Victoria.

Educating clubs on the value of paid administrators is also essential. The employment of a paid administrator could significantly relieve volunteer burden and enhance governance processes. Part time employment, traineeships or shared roles between clubs should be considered with AFL Central Victoria providing guidance on recruitment and employment models to clubs.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

The structure of football, netball and partner sport codes across the Region will need to change if sport is to continue to grow. A more flexible and regional approach to competition structures could occur through a more efficient governance structure, that is capable of ensuring competitions meet the needs of each club, and that teams within those clubs have the capacity to play other teams at the same level throughout the region.

Stronger governance alignment will improve collaboration between sporting codes, identify competition opportunities to meet the needs of clubs, and simultaneously reduce volunteer burden.

Currently netball, football and hockey in the North Central competition is overseen by three separate governing bodies; the North Central Netball Association, the North Central Football League and the North Central Hockey Association. This structure is detrimental to collaboration between sports, improving understanding of competition structures and growth, establishing long term strategic directions that considers all stakeholders, pooling of resources and knowledge and capitalising on funding opportunities as they become available. Each sport is effectively working in isolation and therefore volunteers are not used efficiently.

Football, hockey and netball governance processes in the North Central competition and the potential for AFL Central Victoria to govern and administer these bodies as one competition into the future should be considered. This would ensure governance consistency across all these sports and better support stakeholder collaboration, funding, sports development opportunities and prioritisation of facility investment between LGAs, leagues and clubs. Significant support would need to be provided to clubs where governance processes changed. This includes the provision of model constitutions or even memorandums of understanding as a first step to move towards amalgamation of codes at the local level.

This model could also be considered by other leagues should a lack of strategic alignment be occurring between competitions, whereby clubs are requiring more flexibility around who their teams play, or where leagues are simply struggling to find and identify suitable people with the appropriate skill set to sit on their Boards.

Competing competitions may limit the games' ability to grow, including its ability to capture the increased interest in participation segments such as female football. This is particularly important in smaller communities where availability of player numbers is reduced and competition requires travel to Bendigo or another large regional hub. Sport will need to continue to collaborate on competition structures to ensure participation opportunities are capitalised on.

ASSOCIATION NETBALL

Facility development keeping pace with participation growth is an issue for the Regions growth municipalities. Both Macedon Ranges and Greater Bendigo have expressed concerns over LGA financial capacity to provide second netball courts where netball participation has now exceeded court provision. This is further exacerbated at landlocked venues where no space exists for second courts.

Netball continues to expand its participation offering attracting new participants to programs like Rock Up Netball, Netacise and Fast5.

Netball court and amenity gaps identified in Netball Victoria's State-wide Facilities Strategy may be addressed in the short term through improved governance processes and collaboration of competitions between the various leagues, netball associations and club based netball in Bendigo.

It is highly probable that the number of associations and football netball leagues in Victoria will change over the period of this Strategy. Whatever occurs, the changing mix and number of associations will have facility implications. Competition for players and facilities between leagues, clubs and associations can lead to facility duplication and impact the capacity for netball competitions to realise their full potential.

Netball Victoria will continue to provide support to associations and football netball leagues to ensure the successful growth and continuation of netball opportunities for players, coaches, umpires and administrators throughout Victoria.

Netball Victoria will also encourage expanding associations to optimise the capacity and use of existing facilities before constructing new facilities.

With regional level amenities provided at Bendigo Stadium, Greater Bendigo expects that facility gaps initially be addressed through improved access for all netball associations and clubs in the municipality at this venue.

GROWING CLUB CAPACITY

The capacity of clubs to meet increasing governance requirements is a developing issue. There is a need for sports administration bodies to review their support processes to clubs to better address these governance requirements and ensure clubs are adequately guided through these new challenges.

As participation grows and new teams emerge, consideration needs to be given to Sunday and evening competitions, offering NAB AFL Auskick over alternate times and venues and changing match schedules for games. Participation growth needs to be fully tracked and understood so competition structures can be reviewed accordingly and balanced against other competing participation opportunities like interleague and tournaments which are traditionally held on Sundays.

Project partners raised concerns regarding participation data and the capturing of player registrations, particularly NAB AFL Auskick participants at the club level. Participation data used to support this Strategy was provided by AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria. However, the Region's LGAs indicated that several clubs enjoy high NAB AFL Auskick participant numbers but these are not captured in formal registration processes. This may also be the case for NetSetGO participation.

It is essential that AFL Central Victoria educate clubs on the value of completing formal registration processes with relevant state sporting bodies at all levels of football and netball if participation change is to be appropriately planned for.

Anomalies in participant data are highlighted in Appendix 2, Study Limitations of this Strategy. These data limitations concerned project partners who expressed a desire for AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria to review their registration and participant tracking processes, again to ensure participation changes are fully understood. Added to this the introduction of AFL Victoria's *Club Sustainability Program* relies on player historical data in order support the point allocation system. Incorrect data could impact allocation outcomes.

The current rotation of League finals and grand final venues is supported by project partners. The social and economic value of this rotation process to local communities however, has never been fully analysed.

AFL Central Victoria are encouraged to initiate a cost benefit analysis of finals rotations so outcomes are better understood and can be promoted to clubs and leagues.

The Region's LGAs provide a variety of opportunities to encourage and promote sport that AFL Central Victoria and Netball Victoria could access. LGAs support regional events and also actively connect into CALD communities. Sport can use these connections to grow participation by introducing new arrivals to football and netball.

Collaboration between football, netball and the Region's LGAs to pool resources, share opportunities and better support each other with sport program and event delivery should be considered to enhance club development opportunities.

The continued delivery of the annual AFL Central Victoria Expo, where clubs actively participate in governance training and social awareness programs, is also essential for ongoing club development.

The sustainability of clubs is directly related to both the people involved in running the club and the provision of appropriate facilities. Helping to build the capacity of clubs and facilities to meet current and projected participation demands for football and netball remains a priority. A sustainable club provides a range of opportunities for the community to participate in the sport regardless of age, gender, background or ability.

Prioritisation of investment into facilities should consider clubs who are working to a strategic plan and financial management model and have capacity to invest in facility upgrades. Clubs should also be actively committed to implementing diversity initiatives (female football, female umpires, multi-cultural or indigenous programs or access all abilities teams).

AFL Central Victoria recognises the financial pressures faced by Local Government and are educating their clubs around this and other issues to increase the sport's capacity to contribute to volunteer support and facility development.

To support this, a Framework for Funding Allocation that could be used by LGAs to determine infrastructure investment has been developed as part of this Strategy (refer Appendix 3). This Framework considers identified facility need together with club service levels governance, financial management, ability to support infrastructure investment and commitment to sports development initiatives.

Guaranteeing sports participation into the future may be challenge for some areas experiencing population decline. Competition structures will need to consider club and volunteer capacity and the impact on communities of club mergers and participation, particularly netball participation where amalgamations often mean clubs are glutted with netball players and loss of volunteers.



Strategic directions to support capacity building of clubs, their people and their culture

- 3.1 **Critical: Netball Victoria review netball association governance and facility access provision within the Bendigo Region.**
- 3.2 **Critical: AFL Central Victoria, in consultation with Netball Victoria and Hockey Victoria, complete a strategic review of current governance structures in the north central area.**
- 3.3 AFL Central Victoria collaborate with La Trobe University to complete a benefit analysis to local communities of rotating league finals and grand finals.
- 3.4 AFL Central Victoria actively promote to clubs the need to formalise player registrations, particularly introductory program participants to actively track participation growth.
- 3.5 AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria review participation data and registration processes to ensure participation is fully understood.
- 3.6 AFL Central Victoria support financial management and governance processes at the club level that ensures strategic planning and includes club investment into future facility upgrades.
- 3.7 AFL Central Victoria, Netball Victoria and Central Victoria Region LGAs meet twice yearly to better collaborate on sports development opportunities.



PRIORITY 4

Continue to enhance the relationship between football, netball and government in the planning, provision and funding of facilities and programs

As the majority of football facilities are provided on land owned and/or managed by local government they carry the burden of responsibility for funding the renewal and upgrade of these assets. The financial pressures placed on local government with the introduction of rate capping, coupled with ageing infrastructure and anticipated growth in sport in some municipalities, has required a shift in how local government approaches infrastructure investment.

Reliance on additional funding through State and Federal government, clubs and peak sports bodies and sourcing alternate funding streams will be paramount if funding shortfalls and facility renewal and investment gaps are to be met.

This Strategy formalises steps project partners have taken to balance the conflicting needs of sport and government, by collaboratively planning future investment and facility upgrades at a strategic level. The Strategy provides direction on future investment that is targeted to provide facilities and amenities beyond club 'desires', to what is actually required to support participation growth for netball and football at both local club and regional level provision.

Beyond this Strategy collaboration between the Region's LGAs and sport should continue through the establishment of a local level Local Government Reference Group.

This would be the key consultative group for issues affecting football and netball that relate to local government functions and services in the Region. The Group could also support AFL Central Victoria with the design and implementation of community health and social participation programs to engage clubs and community.

Continuing to collaboratively plan facility renewal based on participation trends and projections will maximise facility usage, strategically direct new developments and support football participation growth into the future.

Collaboration will extend beyond current project partners to include other government sectors including Sport and Recreation Victoria, VicHealth and the Department of Education and Training.

State Government have made a further 4 year commitment to the Country Football Netball Program (CFNP), the key infrastructure renewal funding source that supports LGA investment shortfalls. LGAs, however will be challenged to meet infrastructure renewal gaps into the future if CFNP is not extended beyond this period.

AFL Victoria continues to support investment into its sport through increased staff resources at the regional level, implementation of its *Heartland Strategy* which has seen the roll out of regional planning across the State, the implementation of specific funding programs and subsequent facility development and renewal into known facility gaps.

Ongoing partnerships and collaboration with Netball Victoria on facility planning, CFNP provision and regional planning combined with relationships established with Cricket Victoria, further ensures that facility investment considers multi-users and supports participation development across a number of sports.

The implementation of the AFL Victoria's *Community Club Sustainability Program* across the Region is educating clubs on the value of re-directing funds into facility investment and supporting renewal, particularly where investment is required beyond core amenity provision.

It is recognised that LGAs have a strategic commitment to providing for all sport and recreation in their area. Competition for funding is high between sporting codes and projected increases in participation in some areas needs to be balanced against planning for potential population decline and supporting sport sustainability in other municipalities.

Initiating annual State of Play Reports to ensure a collective understanding of participation across the Region will be essential if a continued strategic approach to facility investment, that is based on participation growth and identified need, is to be ensured.

LGA investment could be further supported by State Government with provision of alternate funding models. New funding models could consider the capacity of LGAs to combine existing multiple applications, provision of alternate funding streams and support of investment that recognises current participation and supports 'retention and stability' of participation not just participation growth. Working with State Government to review funding models will be a key focus for AFL Victoria moving forward.

Continued LGA support of the AFL Victoria Local Government Forum, initiating regular State of Play Reports and implementation of a local level Local Government Reference Group to review implementation of this Strategy is essential to guarantee initiatives remain current and reflect the strategic direction for the Region.



Strategic directions to continue to enhance the relationship between football, netball and government in the planning, provision and funding of facilities and programs

- 4.1 Implement an AFL Central Victoria Local Government Forum to review the initiatives from the AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy and to act as a further consultative process for football, netball and LGAs in the Region.
- 4.2 Project partners work collaboratively to identify alternate funding streams to support infrastructure investment.
- 4.3 Central Victoria Region LGAs continue to support AFL Victoria Local Government Forum held every two years.
- 4.4 Initiate annual football and netball State of Play reports, ensuring collective understanding and progress of participation, sports development and facility improvement activities.
- 4.5 Project partners develop a reporting mechanism on outcomes from the AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy that will support future regional planning opportunities.



5. STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION



Implementation of identified facility priorities, planning, sports development and partnership objectives will require collaboration, investment and a commitment of human resources from AFL Central Victoria, Netball Victoria, government and industry stakeholders.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

The following Implementation Plans are provided to guide sport and LGAs financial and human resource commitment into the future. By creating a focus on collaboration, planning, and support for key projects, sport can continue to build its capacity to realise many of the potential outcomes identified in this Strategy.

Competing investment priorities, funding pressures on local government and the broader focus of local government to accommodate a range of sports in facility renewal and development, will require football and netball to continue to advocate for and on behalf of their sports in the Region.

Identification of funding streams beyond traditional funding partners and a coordinated approach to accessing funding will be critical to strategic outcomes. The Region's LGAs and AFL Central Victoria should look to implement a planned approach to State Government for funding provision, particularly relating to the Female Friendly Facilities Program, Better Indoor Stadiums Fund and State and Regional Level facilities.

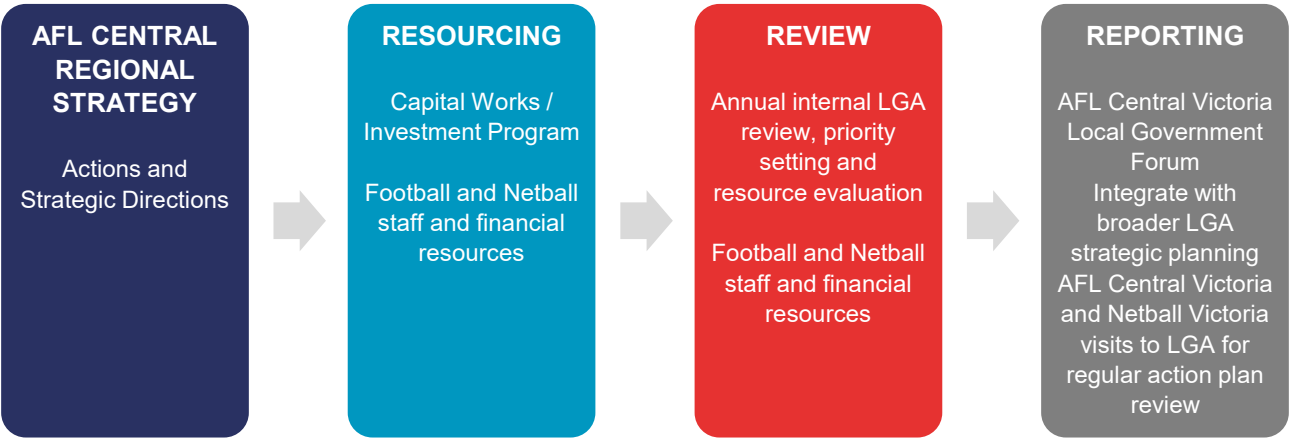
Other funding options available to achieve facility improvements will be the Country Football Netball Program, AFL Victoria Female Facilities Change Room Fund and any new funding streams developed through the review of the *Heartland Strategy*, LGA Capital Works Programs, Club contributions and the AFL Victoria Football Development Fund to fill the gap in infrastructure renewal generally overlooked by other funding bodies. Non traditional funding partners such as Community Bank Programs, commercial investment and sponsorship should also be investigated.

Implementation objectives are set out in a priority framework. However, annual goal and target setting will be required by Strategy partners. Formal evaluation of the Strategy by the project partners will be required to ensure ongoing and consistent alignment with the sport and LGA objectives. Strategy implementation will also need to recognise and accommodate the differing decision making processes and priorities of each project partner within the Region.



MONITORING, MEASURING AND EVALUATING

To ensure stakeholders are successful in achieving mutual objectives in an efficient and effective manner, regular reviews of strategic directions are paramount. To this end the following implementation, monitoring and reporting system is provided for stakeholder guidance and participation in Strategy measurement.





CRITICAL ACTIONS

The AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy has been prepared to guide the development of football and netball within the Central Victoria Region. It addresses a range of issues and provides clear direction regarding future infrastructure provision to grow participation throughout the Region. It also makes recommendations regarding stakeholder roles and responsibilities.

To support the achievement of proposed objectives highlighted within this Strategy and to ensure the needs of the sport are met in the short, medium and longer-term, **six Critical Actions** have been identified. These Critical Actions are high priorities and should be used to inform each project partners long term planning. It is not expected that all project partners will be able to deliver all Critical Actions in the short and medium term.



CRITICAL ACTION #1

Project partners prioritise change room upgrades for application to SRV Grants Programs to cater for unisex use.



CRITICAL ACTION #2

Project partners identify options for temporary change room structures with supporting funding models for key locations that will, in the short term, address player amenity provision for female football and netball.



CRITICAL ACTION #3

Netball Victoria undertake a comprehensive review of netball court and facility provision in the Netball Victoria Loddon Mallee South Region.



CRITICAL ACTION #4

AFL Central Victoria develop a working party with key talent pathway stakeholders to investigate options for elite facility provision within the Bendigo area.



CRITICAL ACTION #5

Netball Victoria review netball association governance and facility access provision within the Bendigo Region.



CRITICAL ACTION #6

AFL Victoria, in consultation with Netball Victoria and Hockey Victoria, complete a strategic review of current governance structures in the North Central area.

KEY STAKEHOLDER IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES



AFL CENTRAL VICTORIA

AFL Central Victoria will play a lead role in Strategy implementation and continued collaboration with project partners. AFL Central Victoria will need to drive collaboration between elite pathway stakeholders to identify facility development options, support infrastructure projects, identify funding opportunities and coordinate sport development related initiatives through directing the Region's staff work plans and priorities. AFL Central Victoria's commitment to continued delivery of football and netball in a changing environment is critical.

AFL Central Victoria will need to participate in facility planning and provide information and advice to LGAs on participation trends, strategic directions and goal setting. This includes supporting a cost benefit analysis of the finals rotation system.

Implementation of female football and introductory and junior program expansion will continue to be core development opportunities for AFL Central Victoria to expand participation and grow their base.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Project partner LGAs have a core responsibility to support sport and recreation and infrastructure planning, improvement and sport development initiatives across all sports, including football and netball. LGAs will need to consider the implementation of Critical Actions and use Strategy directions to inform facility investment priorities, internal LGA planning, policy and capital works programs and securing partner investment. LGAs are encouraged to facilitate three-way communication between AFL Central Victoria and Clubs and adopt Strategy objectives and priorities, utilising them as the basis for future planning regarding facility provision.

CLUBS AND NETBALL ASSOCIATIONS

Clubs and netball associations will continue to remain the deliverers of football and netball services to their communities. Specific to Strategy implementation will be their commitment to adapting to the changing environment of sport, implementing policies and processes from their State and Regional bodies, harnessing participation opportunities and supporting facility renewal through planning and direct investment.

AFL VICTORIA

AFL Victoria will play a support role in Strategy implementation through provision of advice on facility requirements that meet the sports' needs, identifying new developments in sports infrastructure materials and technology that improves facility investment outcomes and continuing to take a leadership role in sourcing funding that supports LGA investment in community facilities.

Managing state wide strategies that support participation projections, improved club governance, financial management and sustainability processes, maintaining strong partnerships with State and Federal Governments to support facility investment, sourcing alternate funding streams and providing a Club Establishment Fund for new clubs in growth areas will also be essential to grow participation.

NETBALL VICTORIA

Like AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria will generally play a support role in Strategy implementation. The comprehensive review of netball facility provision in the Region and assessment of netball governance structures will have to be led by Netball Victoria, however, if current and future netball need is to be fully understood, planned for and met.

Netball Victoria will have a role in assisting grass roots netball growth and development, supporting competition and club structure reviews and ensuring state wide strategies for netball are implemented. Continued support of the CFNP combined with harnessing opportunities for facility investment through existing relationships with State and Federal Government will be essential to support Strategy implementation.

STATE / FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Government will play a key support role in the funding of strategic initiatives. It will also be responsible for ensuring continued focus is provided on the delivery of Strategy actions for greater benefit of the Central Victorian community. As a funding partner, SRV's Community Infrastructure Team plays a role during the design phase to develop facilities that are fit for purpose, consider environmentally sustainable and accessible design principles and serve the needs of the community.

SCHOOLS

Schools in the Region will have a key role in growing participation through embracing participation opportunities provided by sport and supporting facility access and investment where gaps in provision exist at the local level.





IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

DELIVERING THE AFL CENTRAL VICTORIA REGIONAL STRATEGY

Through the implementation phases of the Strategy there will be three key roles for stakeholders to play:

INITIATE

Planning and scoping of the range and timing of Strategic Directions, programs, activities and service provision.

DELIVER

On the ground delivery of Strategic Directions, activities and services to the Central Victoria community.

SUPPORT

Support for program, activity and service delivery through the provision of people, skills, funding, equipment and promotion.

The AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy has been developed to provide Strategic Directions that are practical and realistic.

Many Strategic Directions will require further stakeholder consultation. To ensure key actions can be achieved in a timely manner, continued collaboration between sport and government is crucial.

Proposed Strategic Directions have been allocated a level of priority based on their relative impact on delivering the desired outcomes for the Region. The level of priority should be used to inform each project partner of the relative importance of a particular action as opposed to an expected delivery timeframe. A description of each priority level is provided below:

CRITICAL ACTION

A Strategic Direction that has a serious impact on ongoing service delivery and without achievement other Strategic Directions cannot be progressed or will be severely hindered in their implementation.

MEDIUM

Strategic Direction that contributes to meeting overall Regional Strategy objectives.

LOW

Strategic Direction that contributes to overall Regional Strategy improvement activities.

ONGOING

Strategic Direction that will require ongoing commitment of sport and government stakeholders.

PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Increase the quality and functionality and maximise the use and carrying capacity of existing facilities

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	PRIORITY	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITY		
		INITIATOR	DELIVERER	SUPPORTERS
1.1 Project partners prioritise change room upgrades for application to SRV Grants Programs to cater for unisex use.	Critical	AFL Central Victoria & LGAs	LGAs	AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria & State Government
1.2 Project partners identify options for temporary change room structures with supporting funding models for key locations that will, in the short term, address player amenity provision for female football and netball.	Critical	AFL Central Victoria, Netball Victoria & LGAs	AFL Victoria & LGAs	AFL Central Victoria, Netball Victoria & State Government
1.3 Project partners work collaboratively to bring facilities with no or low lighting up to minimum standards and where possible to 100 lux to support alternate fixturing.	Medium	AFL Victoria & Netball Victoria	AFL Victoria and LGAs	AFL Central Victoria, State Government and Clubs
1.4 AFL Victoria support identification of lighting priorities across the Region through implementation of a structured lux level testing program of oval and netball court lighting.	Medium	AFL Victoria	AFL Central Victoria	Netball Victoria, LGAs, Clubs and Netball Associations
1.5 Project partners investigate shared procurement opportunities as they arise to support facility upgrade investment requirements.	Medium	AFL Central Victoria & LGAs	LGAs	AFL Victoria & Netball Victoria
1.6 AFL Central Victoria investigate options for innovative fixturing to support ground capacity planning and participation growth.	Medium	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Central Victoria and Leagues	LGAs, AFL Victoria & Netball Victoria
1.7 Project partners explore all opportunities to advocate for access to schools facilities and developing ongoing partnerships with schools.	Medium	AFL Central Victoria & LGAs	LGAs & State Government	AFL Victoria & Netball Victoria
1.8 AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria continue to foster a working partnership with the School Building Authority to identify opportunities for school facility access and joint investment.	Medium	AFL Victoria & Netball Victoria	AFL Victoria & Netball Victoria	AFL Central Victoria & LGAs
1.9 AFL Central Victoria encourage cultural change at the Club level to support acceptance of non traditional venues for pre-season training and co-tenancy facilities.	Medium	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria & LGAs
1.10 AFL Victoria provide education to clubs and LGA parks and grounds staff to support improved grounds management and capacity.	Medium	AFL Victoria	AFL Victoria	AFL Central Victoria, Netball Victoria & LGAs
1.11 Project partners reference Universal Design Principles as outlined in SRV's Design for Everyone Guide for all new and existing facility upgrades.	Ongoing	State Government & LGAs	LGAs	AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria, AFL Central Victoria & Clubs

Priority 2: Plan and develop new facilities in key growth areas across the Region, considering regional needs and talent pathways, programs and competitions at key locations

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	PRIORITY	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITY		
		INITIATOR	DELIVERER	SUPPORTERS
2.1 Netball Victoria undertake a comprehensive review of netball court and facility provision in the Netball Victoria Loddon Mallee South Region.	Critical	Netball Victoria	Netball Victoria & LGAs	AFL Central Victoria, AFL Victoria & State Government
2.2 AFL Central Victoria develop a working party with key talent pathway stakeholders to investigate options for elite facility provision within the Bendigo area.	Critical	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Central Victoria, Bendigo Pioneers, Netball Victoria & Bendigo Thunder FC	AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria & LGAs
2.3 Collaboration to continue between AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria and Central Victoria Region LGAs in the planning of new facilities. The local facility requirements from the <i>AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines</i> and/or <i>Netball Victoria Facilities Manual 2016</i> to be considered where the facility will cater for football or netball.	Medium	AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria & LGAs	AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria & LGAs	AFL Central Victoria, Clubs and Netball Associations
2.4 Project partners collectively lobby for recognised regional priorities and new developments in this Strategy to gather external funding support and investment.	Medium	AFL Victoria & Netball Victoria	LGAs	AFL Central Victoria & State Government
2.5 AFL Victoria, AFL Central Victoria Greater Bendigo and Macedon Ranges LGAs investigate options for the installation of a synthetic oval with potential funding models for the Region.	Medium	AFL Victoria, AFL Central Victoria & LGAs	LGAs	State Government
2.6 Innovations in facility materials and products to be considered by project partners to increase carrying capacity and reduce ongoing maintenance costs.	Medium	AFL Victoria & Netball Victoria	LGAs	AFL Central Victoria & State Government
2.7 AFL Victoria continue to provide a Club Establishment Fund to provide seed funding for the establishment of new football clubs.	Medium	AFL Victoria	AFL Victoria	AFL Central Victoria & LGAs
2.8 AFL Victoria to maintain a strong relationship with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) and growth area LGAs to provide sport specific information, spatial requirements and design expertise to inform all current and future Precinct Structure plans being developed.	Ongoing	AFL Victoria	AFL Victoria	LGAs
2.9 Project partners reference principles outlined in SRV's <i>Design for Everyone Guide</i> and <i>Female Friendly Sport Infrastructure Guidelines</i> for all new and existing facility upgrades.	Ongoing	State Government & LGAs	LGAs	AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria, AFL Central Victoria & Clubs

Priority 3: Support the capacity building of clubs, their people and their culture

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	PRIORITY	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITY		
		INITIATOR	DELIVERER	SUPPORTERS
3.1 Netball Victoria review netball association governance and facility access provision within the Bendigo Region.	Critical	Netball Victoria	Netball Victoria, Bendigo Strathdale Netball Association & Golden City Netball Association	Netball Victoria, Greater Bendigo, & Associations
3.2 AFL Central Victoria, in consultation with Netball Victoria and Hockey Victoria, complete a strategic review of current governance structures in the North Central area.	Critical	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Central Victoria, Netball Victoria & Hockey Victoria	NCNA, NCFL & NCHA
3.3 AFL Central Victoria collaborate with La Trobe University to complete a benefit analysis to local communities of rotating league finals and grand finals.	Medium	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Central Victoria & La Trobe University	LGAs, Leagues, AFL Victoria & Netball Victoria
3.4 AFL Central Victoria actively promote to clubs the need to formalise player registrations, particularly introductory program participants to actively track participation growth.	Medium	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Central Victoria	Leagues & Clubs
3.5 AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria review participation data and registration processes to ensure participation is fully understood.	Medium	AFL Victoria & Netball Victoria	AFL Victoria & Netball Victoria	AFL Central Victoria, Leagues, Clubs & Netball Associations
3.6 AFL Central Victoria support financial management and governance processes at the club level that ensures strategic planning and includes club investment into future facility upgrades.	Medium	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Central Victoria & Clubs	AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria & Leagues
3.7 AFL Central Victoria, Netball Victoria and Central Victoria Region LGAs meet twice yearly to better collaborate on sports development opportunities.	Ongoing	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Central Victoria, Netball Victoria & LGAs	AFL Victoria

Priority 4: Continue to enhance the relationship between football, netball and government in the planning, provision and funding of facilities and programs

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	PRIORITY	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITY		
		INITIATOR	DELIVERER	SUPPORTERS
4.1 Implement an AFL Central Victoria Local Government Forum to review the initiatives from the AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy and to act as a further consultative process for football, netball and LGAs in the Region.	Medium	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Central Victoria, Netball Victoria & LGAs	Leagues, Clubs & Netball Associations
4.2 Project partners work collaboratively to identify alternate funding streams to support infrastructure investment.	Medium	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Central Victoria, Netball Victoria & LGAs	State Government
4.3 Central Victoria Region LGAs continue to support AFL Victoria Local Government Forum held every two years.	Medium	AFL Victoria	AFL Victoria	LGAs
4.3 Initiate annual football and netball State of Play reports, ensuring collective understanding and progress of participation, sports development and facility improvement activities.	Ongoing	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria & LGAs
4.5 Project partners develop a reporting mechanism on outcomes from the AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy that will support future regional planning opportunities.	Ongoing	AFL Central Victoria	AFL Central Victoria, Netball Victoria & LGAs	AFL Victoria

APPENDIX 1 | CASE STUDIES

Crusoe College

Partnering with Schools for Facility Access

Clubs:

Kangaroo Flat Junior Football Club & St Monica’s Junior Football Club

Club Council:

City of Greater Bendigo

Facility Partners:

Crusoe College, City of Greater Bendigo, AFL Central Victoria and Cricket Victoria



Partnership Benefits:

- Collaboration between LGA, school, football and cricket
- Year round facility usage
- Provides pathway for school participants directly into club based competition
- Improved facility provision
- Improved grounds management processes

Transforming Crusoe College infrastructure into community sport and recreational activities, with the support of all user groups ensures maximum community utilisation and facility sustainability well into the future

Crusoe College is a year 7-10 secondary college (formally Kangaroo Flat Secondary College) within the City of Greater Bendigo municipality. In 2008 Crusoe College merged with Golden Square Secondary College, changed the school name and upgraded their facilities. The College during this upgrade reconstructed sporting amenities including an oval, netball courts and a stadium.

Crusoe College and the City of Greater Bendigo then established a joint use agreement for community access to the College. The agreement retained College use during the day, with community access available after school hours and on weekends. The agreement extended to the oval and also a small section of the stadium where the associated toilets are accessed by users externally.

The primary tenants are the Kangaroo Flat Junior Football Club and St Monica’s Junior Football Club in the winter season and Kangaroo Flat Cricket Club and Marong Cricket Club in the summer season. The additional green space in summer also allows clubs located outside of the municipality to complete some pre-season training at the venue.

Greater Bendigo has assisted facility development through the establishment of supporting facilities such as player shelters and ongoing oval renovations. The Council is also considering potential for a lighting installation project where there is identified need.

Access to Crusoe College supports the redistribution of access provision at other facilities in the Kangaroo Flat area and avoids overuse of grounds. Tenant users at Crusoe College enjoy positive relationships with College students clubs who provide these clubs with growth opportunities through direct access to potential new players.

The College is supportive of the relationship with local government as it provides an increased service standard to the ground and understanding relating to facility access such as mowing times, renovation works and user requirements.



APPENDIX 2 | STUDY LIMITATIONS

The proposed project methodology was endorsed by the PCG prior to the commencement of the study. Although due diligence and a rigorous approach to analysis and data collection was undertaken by project consultants, a number of limitations to the data have been identified.

The scope of the project was to focus on football and netball infrastructure within the Central Victoria Region and provide meaningful analysis on existing and projected regional and local football and netball participation, facility and development information.

Football participant data was provided by AFL Victoria and reflects registrations for Season 2016. Analysis was provided for participants within an AFL Central Victoria Commission aligned club based on age and gender cohorts.

As AFL Central Victoria Commission based participant data does not fully represent participation within the Central Victoria Region and to enable population and penetration analysis, further analysis was conducted on all known football participant data across Central Victoria.

Netball participant data for both club based and Association based netball was provided by Netball Victoria and reflects registrations for Season 2015. Data for Season 2016 was not available at the time of analysis.

Changes in Netball Victoria registration online processes have resulted in improved data capture since 2014. This impacts trend analysis as data prior to the 2014 does not accurately reflect all known netball participation in Central Victoria.

It is also noted that netball participation is not restricted to one club or association with players often participating in both programs. This again affects participant data with some participants having both a "primary" registration to identify where they initially registered and then multiple "secondary" registrations.

Accordingly, trend data between Association and Club based netball can be affected, dependent on which program a participant registered with first from season to season. There has also been a change in Netball Victoria's IT management system. Netball Associations have been transitioning onto the new system since 2014.

Participant data also does not include football and netball school participation.

Population and penetration analysis has been based on population data grouped by recognised player categories. Population and demographic information has been sourced through the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning *Victoria in Future 2012* data release. This was to ensure consistency in population data between project partner LGAs as not all LGAs subscribe to online population forecasting tools such as *forecast.id*.

Facility location data and renewal / development investment information was sourced from AFL Victoria and from available LGA and club information.

Whilst every effort has been made to address potential gaps and limitations in these areas, readers should be mindful of these factors when considering this document and the key focus areas and issues presented.

APPENDIX 3 | FRAMEWORK FOR FUNDING ALLOCATION

The following table outlines proposed club management, participation and governance ratings to determine priorities in funding allocation. It is suggested that this Framework be applied where facility upgrade requirements are similar between a number of clubs, but LGA investment capabilities are limited and cannot support all investment requirements simultaneously, or through the one funding pool.

COMPONENT / CAPABILITY	WEIGHTING	CLUB RATING
1. Facility condition rating from the AFL Central Victoria Regional Strategy	35	
2. Club has the ability to financially co-contribute (financial and/or in kind) to identified infrastructure upgrade.	15	
3. Club has a detailed five year strategic plan and produces, operates and reports to an annual budget.	15	
4. Club has implemented the required policies and procedures as set by AFL Victoria, AFL Central Victoria, Netball Victoria, associated Leagues and LGAs.	10	
5. Club supports diversity (for example youth and/or senior female football team, FIDA, AAA, indigenous players or male netball participants).	10	
7. Club is aligned with or supports NAB AFL Auskick Centre and/or NetSetGo.	5	
8. Club actively participates in industry training, club development and accreditation initiatives.	5	
9. Club is financially up to date with relevant Council accounts.	5	
TOTAL	100	/100

APPENDIX 4 | FACILITY CLASSIFICATIONS AND IDENTIFIED GAPS

Classifying facilities is important when assessing provision against proposed facility use. Classification provides direction for the development of new facilities and/or those being considered for upgrades and ensures facility provision is fit for purpose.

AFL Victoria's *Heartland Strategy* recognises that the principle purpose of a local facility is to accommodate local club level programs and competitions.

Regional level facilities service a collection of suburbs or geographic areas within a municipality and usually cater for more than one code or activity. These facilities ideally have perimeter fencing to restrict vehicle and pedestrian access, amenities with capacity to host competition finals and have oval surface quality maintained to a high standard.

State level facilities primarily service VFL and TAC Cup being the second highest level of competition below the AFL competition. These facilities are also used for competition finals as they are maintained to a showcase level, offering a higher standard of amenities with perimeter fencing and the capacity to cater for larger crowds.

In order to meet the preferred **minimum local level facility** requirements, core facility amenities should reflect minimum provision as outlined in the *AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines*. These include:

- capacity for player and umpire change rooms to cater for female participation through the provision of pan toilets and lockable shower cubicles;
- lighting provision is to minimum training standards (50 lux level);
- pavilion (social rooms) meet the recommended size of 100m2 to facilitate social interaction, support club growth and club sustainability; and
- the overall condition of the change rooms, ground surface and pavilion rated as "moderate" (considerable wear but still comfortable for users).

In consultation with Netball Victoria and related criteria from their *Facilities Manual*, preferred minimum provision has been identified in order to assess netball amenities:

- lighting provision is to minimum training standards (100 lux level for outdoor courts and 300 lux level for indoor courts);
- the condition of netball player facilities and the main netball court have rated as "moderate" (considerable wear but still comfortable for users).



APPENDIX 4 | FACILITY CLASSIFICATIONS AND IDENTIFIED GAPS

The Current Facility Classifications and Identified Gaps chart located on page 64 of this Strategy, detail facility condition and provision based on audit outcomes.

The chart groups venues into one of four categories following assessment against preferred minimum provision from the *AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines* and Netball Victoria facility planning guidelines.

Facility condition categories are:

- **Facility Gaps:** core amenity provision is below *AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines* or Netball Victoria facility planning guidelines according to facility classification;
- **Local:** venue meets preferred minimum provision for Local level classification;
- **Regional:** venue meets preferred minimum provision for Regional level classification; and
- **State:** venue meets preferred minimum provision for State level classification.

Generally the majority of facilities across the Region have been identified as requiring some improvement, in order to reach Local level classification.

It is important to note that facility ratings reflect a point in time.

Whilst facility information was collected by AFL Central Victoria staff, further review is required by all project stakeholders prior to formalising commitments to infrastructure upgrades and/or renewal and determining strategic directions for the AFL Central Victoria Region.



CURRENT FACILITY CLASSIFICATION AND IDENTIFIED GAPS

LOCAL LEVEL CLASSIFICATION				STATE LEVEL CLASSIFICATION
FACILITY GAPS			SATISFACTORY	FACILITY GAPS
Backhaus Oval (CR, UR, NL, NC)	Donald Recreation Reserve (CR, UR, NF)	Leitchville Recreation Reserve (CR, UR, FL, NL)	Allingham Street	FACILITY IMPROVEMENT CODES <i>The following abbreviations have been applied to facilities where there is a gap in facility amenities, highlighted under IMPROVEMENT REQUIRED. This is according to outcomes of facility audits conducted in February-May 2016.</i> CR – Change Rooms UR – Umpire Rooms OS – Oval Surface Condition MP – Main Pavilion FL – Football Lighting NF – Netball Facility NL – Netball Lighting NC – Netball Court
Barrack Reserve (CR, FL)	Charlton Park (CR, UR, FL, NL)	Boort Park (CR, UR)	Browning Street	
Canterbury Park (FL)	Nullawil Football Oval (CR, UR, FL, NL)	Bridgewater Recreation Reserve (CR, UR, NF)	California Gully	
Dower Park #2 (CR, UR, NL)	George Cartwright Oval (CR, UR, FL, NL)	Calivil Recreation Reserve (CR, UR)	Catholic College Bendigo-La Valla Crusoe College Oval	
Elmore Recreation Reserve (CR, UR, FL)	Sea Lake Oval (CR, UR, FL, NF)	Donaldson Park (CR, UR, MP, NF)	Ewing Park	
Epsom Huntly Recreation Reserve (NF, NL)	Wycheproof Recreation Reserve (CR, UR, FL, NL)	Inglewood Sporting Complex (CR, UR, FL, NF, NL)	Kennington Primary School	
Golden Square Recreation Reserve (CR, UR, NF, NL)	Toolleen Recreation Reserve (CR, UR, FL)	Mitchell Park (CR, UR, FL, NF, NL)	La Trobe University (potential future venue)	
Harry Trott Reserve (CR)	Colbinabbin Recreation Reserve (CR, UR)	Mitiamo Recreation Reserve (CR, UR, FL, NF)	Long Gully Oval	
Malone Park (CR, UR, FL)	Gunbower Recreation Reserve (CR, UR, FL, NL)	Riverside Park (CR)	Maiden Gully Oval	
North Bendigo Oval #2 (CR, UR)	Lockington Recreation Reserve (CR, UR, FL, NL)	Serpentine Park (CR, FL)	Marist College (potential future venue)	
Raywood Reserve (CR, UR, MP, FL, NC)	Princes Park (CR, UR, NL)	Camp Reserve (CR, UR, NL)	Quarry Hill Ken Wust Reserve	
Strauch Reserve (CR, UR, FL)	Kyneton Showgrounds (CR, UR)	Lord Nelson Park 2 (CR, UR, MP, FL, NF, NL)	St Peters School Oval	
Tannery Lane Recreation Reserve (CR, UR)	Gardiner Reserve (CR, UR, NF)		Tom Flood Sports Centre	
White Hills Recreation Reserve (CR, UR, FL)			Weeroona Oval	
			East Loddon P-12 College	

LGA COLOUR CODE

	Bendigo
	Buloke
	Campaspe
	Central Goldfields
	Gannawarra
	Loddon
	Macedon Ranges
	Mount Alexander
	Northern Grampians

Note 1: Improvements to change rooms and umpire rooms may refer to either the **condition** of the rooms or that the rooms **do not cater** for female participants.

Note 2: Improvements to Main Pavilion may refer to either the **condition** of the pavilion or that the pavilion is **below the minimum size** recommended in the AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines.

Note 3: Facility improvements are based on **minimum standards** from the AFL Preferred Facility Guidelines. It is recognised that project partner LGAs have their own strategic planning documents that determine facility investment. The Guidelines are provided as a guide only to inform these.

Note 4: Woorinen Youth Girls play in the BJFL and host home games at Woorinen Recreation Reserve which is aligned to the AFL Victoria Central Murray Commission. Woorinen Recreation Reserve facilities were lost to fire 2015. Temporary facilities are currently in use until rebuild is completed.

PROPOSED FUTURE FACILITY HIERARCHY

LOCAL LEVEL CLASSIFICATION				STATE LEVEL CLASSIFICATION
Backhaus Oval	Allingham Street	Donald Recreation Reserve	East Loddon P-12 College	Queen Elizabeth Oval
Barrack Reserve	Browning Street	Charlton Park	Boort Park	
Canterbury Park	California Gully	Nullawil Football Oval	Bridgewater Recreation Reserve	
Dower Park #2	Catholic College Bendigo-La Valla Crusoe College Oval	George Cartwright Oval	Calivil Recreation Reserve	
Elmore Recreation Reserve	Ewing Park	Sea Lake Oval	Donaldson Park	
Epsom Huntly Recreation Reserve	Kennington Primary School	Wycheproof Recreation Reserve	Inglewood Sporting Complex	
Golden Square Recreation Reserve	La Trobe University (potential future venue)	Toolleen Recreation Reserve	Mitchell Park	
Harry Trott Reserve	Long Gully Oval	Colbinabbin Recreation Reserve	Mitiamo Recreation Reserve	
Malone Park	Maiden Gully Oval	Gunbower Recreation Reserve	Riverside Park	
North Bendigo Oval #2	Marist College (potential future venue)	Lockington Recreation Reserve	Serpentine Park	
Raywood Reserve	Quarry Hill Ken Wust Reserve	Princes Park**	Camp Reserve**	
Strauch Reserve	St Peters School Oval	Kyneton Showgrounds**	Lord Nelson Park 2	
Tannery Lane Recreation Reserve	Tom Flood Sports Centre	Gardiner Reserve**		
White Hills Recreation Reserve	Weeroona Oval	Leitchville Recreation Reserve		

LGA COLOUR CODE

	Bendigo
	Buloke
	Campaspe
	Central Goldfields
	Gannawarra
	Loddon
	Macedon Ranges
	Mount Alexander
	Northern Grampians

****It is recognised that Gardiner Reserve and Kyneton Showgrounds (Macedon Ranges), Princes Park (Central Goldfields) and Camp Reserve (Mount Alexander) are classified as Regional Level venues within the AFL Goldfields Regional Strategy. This is due to venue access and amenity requirements during League finals within the AFL Goldfields region where these facilities require additional infrastructure to meet finals provision. This usage is outside of requirements for the AFL Central Victoria region.**

APPENDIX 5 | CRITERIA FOR RATING FACILITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES

The following charts outline the ratings used throughout facility audits to identify strengths and gaps in football and netball facility and amenity provision according to outcomes from facility audits conducted in February to May 2016. Ratings are based on preferred minimum provision from the *AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines* and the *Netball Victoria Facility Manual*.

Ratings shaded in blue indicate that the amenity is below preferred minimum provision for a “local level” facility, and highlights an area for upgrade / renewal.

FACILITY CONDITION RATING CRITERIA - FOOTBALL	
HOME AND AWAY CHANGE ROOM RATINGS	
CHANGE ROOM SIZE (OUT OF 5)	RATING
Greater than 90m2	5
75m2-90m2	4
55m2-75m2	3
45m2-55m2	2
Less than 45m2	1
SHOWER TYPE (OUT OF 6)	RATING
Lockable cubicle – suitable for female use	6
Unlocked cubicle- not suitable for female use	2
Open – not suitable for female use	1
No Showers provided	0
CHANGE ROOM OVERALL CONDITION (OUT OF 10)	RATING
Excellent condition (as new)	10
Good condition (some wear)	8
Moderate (considerable wear but still comfortable for players)	6
Poor (multiple quality issues identified, is reaching end of life)	4
Very Poor (significant quality issues identified, needs immediate attention)	2
UMPIRE CHANGE ROOM RATINGS	
SHOWER TYPE (OUT OF 6)	RATING
Lockable cubicle – suitable for female use	6
Unlocked cubicle – not suitable for female use	2
Open – not suitable for female use	1
No Showers provided	0
SUITABLE FOR FEMALE USERS (OUT OF 10) (lockable shower cubicles, separate change area and pan toilets)	RATING
Yes	10
No	0
UMPIRE CHANGE ROOM OVERALL CONDITION (OUT OF 10)	RATING
Excellent condition (as new)	10
Good condition (some wear)	8
Moderate (considerable wear but still comfortable for umpires)	6
Poor (multiple quality issues identified, is reaching end of life)	4
Very Poor (significant quality issues identified, needs immediate attention)	2

FACILITY CONDITION RATING CRITERIA (CONTINUED)	
PAVILION / SOCIAL ROOM RATINGS	
PAVILION / SOCIAL ROOM SIZE (OUT OF 10)	RATING
Greater than 200m2	10
150m2-200m2	8
100m2-150m2	6
Less than 100m2	4
No social/community room	0
PAVILION / SOCIAL ROOM OVERALL CONDITION (OUT OF 10)	RATING
Excellent condition (as new)	10
Good condition (some wear)	8
Moderate (considerable wear but still comfortable for spectators/players)	6
Poor (multiple quality issues identified, is reaching end of life)	4
Very Poor (significant quality issues identified, needs immediate attention)	2
OVAL AND GROUND AMENITIES RATINGS	
DRAINAGE SYSTEM (OUT OF 4)	RATING
Drainage in good operating and efficient condition	4
Drainage functional but requires improvement	3
Drainage system present but dysfunctional	2
No drainage provided	1
CENTRE CRICKET WICKET PROFILE (OUT OF 6)	RATING
No pitch or drop in wicket	6
Turf wicket well maintained	5
Turf wicket with some coverage and hardness issues	4
Synthetic pitch	4
Turf wicket with issues and poor coverage	2
IRRIGATION SYSTEM (OUT OF 2)	RATING
Automatic irrigation system	2
Hose / manual irrigation	1
No irrigation	0
OVAL SURFACE CONDITION - OVERALL RATING (OUT OF 15)	RATING
Excellent condition (as new)	15
Good condition (some wear)	10
Moderate (considerable wear but still playable)	8
Poor Quality (multiple quality issues identified, oval is reaching end of life)	4
Very Poor Quality (safety concerns identified, oval at end of life and requires attention)	2

FACILITY CONDITION RATING CRITERIA (CONTINUED)	
OVAL AND GROUND AMENITIES RATINGS	
OVAL FENCED (OUT OF 1)	RATING
Yes	1
No	0
SPORTS LIGHTING (OUT OF 15)	RATING
300+ lux	15
150 - 300 lux	12
100 - 149 lux (suitable community football night games)	10
50 - 99 lux (minimum training standard)	8
Less than 50 lux	5
No lighting provided	0
SITE FENCED (OUT OF 1)	RATING
Yes	1
No	0

FACILITY CONDITION RATING CRITERIA - NETBALL	
NETBALL AMENITIES (OUT OF 10)	RATING
Excellent (as new)	10
Good (some wear)	8
Moderate (considerable wear but still comfortable for users)	6
Poor to Very Poor Quality (multiple quality issues identified)	4
Rated poorly by all stakeholders (significant quality issues identified)	2
No netball amenities provided	0
MAIN NETBALL COURT (OUT OF 15)	RATING
Excellent (as new)	15
Good (some wear)	10
Moderate (considerable wear but still playable)	6
Poor (multiple quality issues identified, court is reaching end of life)	4
Very Poor (safety concerns identified, court at end of life and requires attention)	2
No netball court provided	0
SPORTS LIGHTING (OUT OF 15)	RATING
Indoor: 1500 lux (Australian standard for televised matches)	15
Indoor: 750 to 800 lux : International/National Class 2	15
Indoor: 500 to 750 lux (regional / club / local competition level Class 3)	15
Indoor: 300 to 500 lux (low level / training requirement)	15
Outdoor: 200 lux (regional / club / local competition level)	15
Outdoor: 100 lux (low level / training)	10
Outdoor: 50-99 lux (below low level / training requirement)	5
Nil lighting	0

Current Facility Condition Ratings – City of Greater Bendigo

BENDIGO		Home Change Room				Away Change Room				Umpires		Social Room		Oval and Amenities								FOOTBALL		NETBALL					TOTAL
Reserve	Primary Club / User	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Overall Rating	Drainage	Wicket Profile	Irrigation	Overall Surface Condition	Oval Fence	Lighting	Site Fence	TOTAL	%	Netball Facilities	Lighting	Main Court Condition	TOTAL	%	
Backhaus Oval	YCW FNC	2	1	0	4	1	1	0	4	1	0	4	10	8	3	6	2	8	1	5	0	61	40%	4	5	2	11	28%	38%
Barrack Reserve	Heathcote FNC	2	1	0	4	2	1	0	4	1	0	6	Under construction		4	5	2	10	1	5	1	49	32%	4	10	10	24	60%	38%
Canterbury Park**	Eaglehawk FNC	3	6	10	10	2	6	10	10	6	10	10	Under construction		4	5	2	15	1	5	1	116	76%	10	10	15	35	88%	79%
Dower Park #2	Kangaroo Flat FNC	3	1	0	6	4	1	0	4	2	0	6	8	10	3	5	2	10	1	10	1	77	51%	6	5	10	21	53%	51%
Elmore Recreation Reserve	Elmore FNC	3	1	0	6	2	1	0	6	1	0	6	8	6	4	5	2	10	1	5	1	68	45%	6	10	10	26	65%	49%
Epsom Huntly Recreation Reserve	Bendigo Pioneers	3	6	10	10	NP	NP	NP	NP	6	10	10	10	10	4	6	2	15	1	10	1	114	75%	No facility	No lights	15	15	38%	67%
Golden Square Recreation Reserve	Golden Square FNC	5	1	0	8	4	1	0	8	1	0	8	8	8	4	5	2	15	1	12	1	92	61%	No facility	5	10	15	38%	56%
Harry Trott Reserve**	South Bendigo FNC	1	1	0	4	1	1	0	4	6	10	4	Design Phase		4	5	2	10	1	8	1	63	41%	0	15	15	30	85%	52%
Malone Park	Marong FNC	2	1	0	6	1	1	0	6	2	0	2	10	8	3	5	2	10	1	5	1	66	43%	4	15	15	34	85%	52%
North Bendigo Oval #2	North Bendigo FNC	2	1	0	4	1	6	10	6	6	0	6	10	6	3	5	2	10	1	8	1	88	58%	6	10	10	26	65%	59%
Queen Elizabeth Oval	Sandhurst FNC	4	6	10	8	4	2	0	8	2	10	8	6	8	4	5	2	15	1	15	1	119	78%	8	10	15	33	83%	76%
Raywood Reserve	Calivil FNC	2	1	0	6	1	1	0	4	1	0	4	4	4	3	6	1	10	1	5	0	54	36%	6	15	2	23	58%	40%
Strauch Reserve	Huntly FNC	3	1	0	4	1	1	0	4	1	0	4	10	8	4	5	2	10	1	5	1	65	43%	4	15	15	34	85%	52%
Tannery Lane Recreation Reserve	Strathfieldsaye FNC	4	2	0	8	3	2	0	8	2	0	10	6	10	4	5	2	15	1	8	0	90	59%	8	10	10	28	70%	61%
White Hills Recreation Reserve	White Hills FNC	4	1	0	6	1	1	0	6	6	0	8	8	8	3	5	2	10	1	5	0	75	49%	8	10	10	28	70%	54%

Note: Current Facility Condition Ratings are based on outcomes from facility audits conducted in February-May 2016.

Current Facility Condition Ratings – City of Greater Bendigo Junior / School Grounds

BENDIGO JUNIOR / SCHOOL GROUNDS		Home Change Room				Away Change Room				Umpires			Social Room		Oval and Amenities								FOOTBALL	
Reserve	Primary Club / User	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Overall Rating	Drainage	Wicket Profile	Irrigation	Overall Surface Condition	Oval Fence	Lighting	Site Fence	TOTAL	%	
Allingham Street	Golden Square JFC	Rating not applicable												3	4	2	10	1	0	0	20	47%		
Browning Street	Kangaroo Flat JFC	Rating not applicable												3	4	0	10	0	0	0	17	40%		
California Gully	Eaglehawk JFC	Rating not applicable												3	4	2	8	1	0	0	18	42%		
Catholic College Bendigo - La Valla	School based competition	Rating not applicable												3	4	0	8	0	0	0	15	35%		
Crusoe College Oval	St Monica's JFC/Kangaroo Flat JFC	Rating not applicable												4	4	0	10	0	0	0	18	42%		
Ewing Park	Sandhurst FNC/JFC	Rating not applicable												3	4	2	8	0	5	0	22	51%		
Kennington Primary School (School ground)	School based competition	Rating not applicable												4	4	0	8	1	NP	0	17	40%		
Latrobe University	Potential future venue	Rating not applicable												3	6	0	10	1	NP	0	20	47%		
Long Gully Oval	BJFL	Rating not applicable												3	4	0	8	0	0	0	15	35%		
Maiden Gully Oval	Maiden Gully JFC	Rating not applicable												3	4	2	8	1	5	0	23	53%		
Marist College	Potential future venue	Rating not applicable												4	4	2	10	0	NP	0	20	47%		
Quarry Hill Ken Wust Reserve	Quarry Hill JFC	Rating not applicable												4	4	2	8	1	5	0	24	56%		
St Peter's School Oval	St Kilians / St Peters	Rating not applicable												3	4	NP	8	0	0	0	15	35%		
Tom Flood Sports Centre	Overflow facility	Rating not applicable												3	6	2	10	1	10	0	32	74%		
Weeroona Oval	Sandhurst Marist Dockers JFC	Rating not applicable												3	5	2	10	1	5	1	27	63%		

Note: Current Facility Condition Ratings are based on outcomes from facility audits conducted in February-May 2016.

NP = amenity is present but rating not provided during audit

Current Facility Condition Ratings – Buloke Shire Council

BULOKE		Home Change Room				Away Change Room				Umpires			Social Room		Oval and Amenities								FOOTBALL		NETBALL					TOTAL
Reserve	Primary Club / User	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Overall Rating	Drainage	Wicket Profile	Irrigation	Overall Surface Condition	Oval Fence	Lighting	Site Fence	TOTAL	%	Netball Facilities	Lighting	Main Court Condition	TOTAL	%		
	Donald Recreation Reserve	3	1	0	6	3	1	0	6	2	0	4	6	8	4	4	2	10	1	8	1	70	46%	4	10	10	24	60%	49%	
	Charlton Park	3	1	0	6	3	1	0	6	1	0	6	10	8	4	5	2	10	1	5	1	73	48%	8	5	10	23	58%	50%	
	Nullawil Football Oval	2	1	0	6	2	1	0	6	2	0	6	10	8	4	5	2	10	1	5	0	71	47%	8	5	10	23	58%	49%	
	George Cartwright Oval	5	1	0	4	2	1	0	4	1	0	6	10	8	4	5	2	10	1	5	1	70	46%	6	5	6	17	43%	45%	
	Sea-Lake Oval**	1	1	0	4	1	1	0	4	2	0	4	4	6	4	4	2	8	0	5	0	51	34%	No facility	15	15	30	75%	42%	
	Wycheproof Recreation Reserve	4	1	0	8	5	1	0	4	2	0	6	10	8	3	6	2	10	1	5	1	77	51%	4	5	10	19	48%	50%	

****Sea Lake Oval: CFNP funding has been received for netball court and lighting upgrade**

Note: Current Facility Condition Ratings are based on outcomes from facility audits conducted in February-May 2016.

Current Facility Condition Ratings – Campaspe Shire Council

CAMPASPE		Home Change Room				Away Change Room				Umpires			Social Room		Oval and Amenities								FOOTBALL		NETBALL					TOTAL
Reserve	Primary Club / User	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Overall Rating	Drainage	Wicket Profile	Irrigation	Overall Surface Condition	Oval Fence	Lighting	Site Fence	TOTAL	%	Netball Facilities	Lighting	Main Court Condition	TOTAL	%		
Toolleen Recreation Reserve	Mount Pleasant FNC	1	1	0	6	2	1	0	4	6	0	8	10	8	3	5	1	10	1	5	1	73	48%	10	15	10	35	88%	56%	
Colbinabbin Recreation Reserve	Colbinabbin FNC	3	1	0	8	3	1	0	6	2	0	4	8	8	3	5	2	10	1	10	1	76	50%	8	15	10	33	83%	57%	
Gunbower Recreation Reserve	Leitchville Gunbower FNC	2	1	0	6	2	1	0	8	1	0	6	8	8	4	5	1	15	1	5	0	74	49%	8	5	6	19	48%	48%	
Lockington Recreation Reserve	Lockington Bamuawm United FNC	5	1	0	6	3	1	0	6	1	10	8	8	8	3	6	2	8	1	5	1	83	55%	8	5	10	23	58%	55%	

Note: Current Facility Condition Ratings are based on outcomes from facility audits conducted in February-May 2016.

Current Facility Condition Ratings – Central Goldfields Shire Council

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS		Home Change Room				Away Change Room				Umpires			Social Room		Oval and Amenities							FOOTBALL		NETBALL					TOTAL
Reserve	Primary Club / User	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Overall Rating	Drainage	Wicket Profile	Irrigation	Overall Surface Condition	Oval Fence	Lighting	Site Fence	TOTAL	%	Netball Facilities	Lighting	Main Court Condition	TOTAL	%	
Princes Park	Maryborough FNC	3	1	0	8	3	1	0	8	6	0	6	6	8	3	4	2	10	1	10	1	81	53%	8	10	10	28	70%	

Current Facility Condition Ratings – Gannawarra Shire Council

GANNAWARRA		Home Change Room				Away Change Room				Umpires			Social Room		Oval and Amenities							FOOTBALL		NETBALL					TOTAL
Reserve	Primary Club / User	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Overall Rating	Drainage	Wicket Profile	Irrigation	Overall Surface Condition	Oval Fence	Lighting	Site Fence	TOTAL	%	Netball Facilities	Lighting	Main Court Condition	TOTAL	%	
Leitchville Recreation Reserve	Leitchville Gunbower FNC	4	1	0	6	1	1	0	4	1	0	6	8	8	4	5	2	10	1	5	1	68	45%	8	5	15	28	70%	

Note: Current Facility Condition Ratings are based on outcomes from facility audits conducted in February-May 2016.

Current Facility Condition Ratings – Loddon Shire Council

LODDON		Home Change Room				Away Change Room				Umpires			Social Room		Oval and Amenities							FOOTBALL		NETBALL					TOTAL
Reserve	Primary Club / User	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Overall Rating	Drainage	Wicket Profile	Irrigation	Overall Surface Condition	Oval Fence	Lighting	Site Fence	TOTAL	%	Netball Facilities	Lighting	Main Court Condition	TOTAL	%	
Boort Park	Boort FNC	3	1	0	6	2	1	0	6	2	0	6	10	10	4	6	2	15	1	12	1	88	58%	6	10	15	31	78%	62%
Bridgewater Recreation Reserve	Bridgewater FNC	2	1	0	6	1	1	0	6	2	0	4	8	8	3	4	2	10	1	8	1	68	45%	4	10	15	29	73%	51%
Calivil Recreation Reserve	Calivil FNC	2	1	0	8	2	1	0	8	6	0	8	8	8	3	5	2	10	1	8	1	82	54%	6	10	15	31	78%	59%
Donaldson Park	Wedderburn FNC	1	1	0	4	2	1	0	4	1	0	2	2	4	3	6	2	10	0	12	1	56	37%	2	10	15	27	68%	43%
Inglewood Sporting Complex	Inglewood FNC	2	1	0	6	2	1	0	6	2	0	8	6	8	4	4	2	15	1	5	1	74	49%	4	5	15	24	60%	51%
Mitchell Park	Pyramid Hill FNC	4	1	0	8	2	1	0	8	0	0	6	6	8	3	4	2	15	1	5	1	75	49%	4	5	15	24	60%	52%
Mitiamo Recreation Reserve	Mitiamo FNC	2	1	0	6	2	1	0	6	0	0	6	6	8	3	6	2	15	1	5	1	71	47%	4	10	15	29	73%	52%
Riverside Park	Newbridge FNC	4	1	0	10	4	1	0	10	6	10	10	10	10	3	4	2	15	1	10	1	112	74%	10	10	15	35	88%	77%
Serpentine Recreation Reserve	Bears-Lagoon Serpentine FNC	4	2	0	10	4	2	0	10	6	10	10	10	10	3	6	2	15	1	5	1	111	73%	10	10	15	35	88%	76%

LODDON JUNIOR / SCHOOL GROUNDS		Home Change Room				Away Change Room				Umpires			Social Room		Oval and Amenities							FOOTBALL		NETBALL					TOTAL
Reserve	Primary Club / User	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Overall Rating	Drainage	Wicket Profile	Irrigation	Overall Surface Condition	Oval Fence	Lighting	Site Fence	TOTAL	%	Netball Facilities	Lighting	Main Court Condition	TOTAL	%	
East Loddon P-12 College	School based competition	Rating not applicable													0	4	1	8	1	0	1	15	35%	Rating not applicable					35%

Note: Current Facility Condition Ratings are based on outcomes from facility audits conducted in February-May 2016.

Current Facility Condition Ratings – Macedon Ranges Shire Council

MACEDON		Home Change Room				Away Change Room				Umpires			Social Room		Oval and Amenities							FOOTBALL		NETBALL					TOTAL
Reserve	Primary Club / User	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Overall Rating	Drainage	Wicket Profile	Irrigation	Overall Surface Condition	Oval Fence	Lighting	Site Fence	TOTAL	%	Netball Facilities	Lighting	Main Court Condition	TOTAL	%	
Kyneton Showgrounds	Kyneton FNC	5	1	0	6	3	1	0	4	2	0	2	6	8	4	4	2	10	1	10	1	70	46%	6	10	10	26	65%	50%
Gardiner Reserve	Gisborne FNC	3	1	0	4	3	1	0	2	1	0	4	10	10	1	4	2	10	1	10	1	68	45%	No facility	15	15	30	75%	51%

Current Facility Condition Ratings – Mount Alexander Shire Council

MOUNT ALEXANDER		Home Change Room				Away Change Room				Umpires			Social Room		Oval and Amenities							FOOTBALL		NETBALL					TOTAL
Reserve	Primary Club / User	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Overall Rating	Drainage	Wicket Profile	Irrigation	Overall Surface Condition	Oval Fence	Lighting	Site Fence	TOTAL	%	Netball Facilities	Lighting	Main Court Condition	TOTAL	%	
Camp Reserve	Castlemaine FNC	2	2	0	6	2	2	0	6	6	0	6	10	8	3	5	2	8	1	12	1	82	54%	6	5	6	17	43%	52%

Note: Current Facility Condition Ratings are based on outcomes from facility audits conducted in February-May 2016.

Current Facility Condition Ratings – Northern Grampians Shire Council

NORTHERN GRAMPIANS		Home Change Room				Away Change Room				Umpires			Social Room		Oval and Amenities							FOOTBALL		NETBALL					TOTAL
Reserve	Primary Club / User	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Shower Type	Female Suitability	Overall Rating	Size	Overall Rating	Drainage	Wicket Profile	Irrigation	Overall Surface Condition	Oval Fence	Lighting	Site Fence	TOTAL	%	Netball Facilities	Lighting	Main Court Condition	TOTAL	%	
Lord Nelson Park 2	St Arnaud FNC	4	1	0	6	3	1	0	6	1	0	4	No rooms		4	6	1	10	0	5	1	53	35%	No facility	5	6	11	28%	33%

Note: Current Facility Condition Ratings are based on outcomes from facility audits conducted in February-May 2016.

Current Facility Provision – Association Netball Facilities

Facility	Netball Association	Facility Type	Number of Player Amenities	Number of Courts	Court Type
Bendigo South East College	Bendigo Strathdale Netball Association	Indoor and Outdoor Courts	0	3 indoor 5 outdoor	Air thrust/sprung timber floor & Synthetic/Acrylic
West Bendigo Sports Complex	Golden City Netball Association	Outdoor	0	9	Hot mix asphalt
Wesley Hill Reserve	Castlemaine and District Netball Association	Outdoor	0	6	Acrylic (3) Hot mix asphalt (3)
Kyneton Sport and Aquatic Centre	Kyneton Netball Association	Indoor	0	2	Air thrust/sprung timber floor

Note: West Bendigo Sports Complex has one court that is currently unplayable due to a potential tripping hazard caused by a pit cover sealing drainage pits located inside the court area.

Note: Wesley Hill Reserve is under redevelopment with player amenities to be provided during Stage 2 of construction, which includes a new multi-purpose pavilion for netball and other user sports. Construction is anticipated for 2018.

Current Facility Condition – Association Netball Courts

Court Type	Number of Courts	Number that meet the minimum court run off requirements	Court Condition Rating "Moderate" or Above	Court Condition Rating "Poor" or "Very Poor"
Indoor Courts	5	0	5	0
Outdoor Courts	20	18	19	1

APPENDIX 6 | PARTICIPATION

FOOTBALL

- Across the Central Victoria Region there were 10,916 registered football participants in Season 2016. Of these, 51% (5,596 players) were registered to an AFL Central Victoria Commission based club. The remaining 49% of football participants play in other AFL Victoria Commissions including AFL Goldfields and AFL Western District. Refer to Figure 05 on the following page for analysis of all football participation by LGA and player category (age group) in the Central Victoria Region.
- Greater Bendigo has the largest projected population growth of all project partner LGAs and currently supports 30% of all Central Victoria Region registered football participants. This is followed by Campaspe and Macedon Ranges who each have 16% of player registrations across the Region.
- Penetration rates for junior, youth and senior player categories sit well above Victorian country average penetration rates with some project partner LGAs more than doubling these averages. This is the case for Loddon, Buloke and Ganawarra LGAs who enjoy higher than average participation levels across all player categories.
- By 2026, the Region's population aged 5-39 (typically the key football and netball playing age) is forecast to increase by 11% to 116,600 people.
- Significant population growth in the 5-39 age cohort to 2026 is projected for Greater Bendigo (+9,000) and Macedon Ranges (+3,000). Minor growth is also projected for Central Goldfields (+34).
- Some LGAs like Loddon are currently experiencing population stabilisation. However, by 2026 population decline is projected in the 5-39 age cohort for all other project partner LGAs.
- Projected population decline translates to a decrease of -10 people in Mount Alexander Shire, -40 people in Campaspe Shire, 80 people in Northern Grampians Shire, - 240 people in Buloke Shire, -370 in Loddon Shire and -530 people in Gannawarra Shire.
- Junior and female participation are recognised as the two most significant growth areas for football.
- 306 females participated in football within AFL Central Victoria Commission based clubs in 2016, spread between junior, youth girls and women's teams. This was an 11% increase on Season 2015.
- The Region's average for female penetration is at 0.8% of the Region's female population aged 5-39. This is double the State regional female penetration average of 0.4%.
- Across Victoria, female football has grown 41% since 2016. The State average for female participation in football is 5.5% of total player numbers. Central Victoria is moving closer to this average with 4% of total players being female in Season 2016.
- The highest number of participants play football within the Bendigo Junior Football League (45%) followed by the Bendigo Football League (16%), Loddon Valley Football League (14%), Heathcote District Football League (13%) and North Central Football League (12%).
- All Leagues experienced participation growth from Season 2016, averaging an increase in player numbers of between 10-14%.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ High participation is enjoyed across the Region.
- ▶ Many LGAs have penetration rates that more than double Victorian country averages
- ▶ Significant population growth anticipated for Bendigo and Macedon Ranges LGAs
- ▶ Female participation 4% of total player numbers which is close to the State average
- ▶ AFL Central Victoria Leagues have enjoyed steady growth in player numbers

FIGURE 05 | CENTRAL VICTORIA REGION ALL FOOTBALL PARTICIPANT REGISTRATIONS BY PLAYER CATEGORY AND LGA (2016)

LGA	AGE 5-9	AGE 10-14	AGE 15-19	AGE 20-39	AGE 40+	Total
Buloke	20	140	136	275	13	584
Campaspe	26	574	504	621	32	1,757
Central Goldfields	60	176	125	300	24	685
Gannawarra	29	212	243	379	26	889
Greater Bendigo	410	1284	831	692	16	3,233
Loddon	3	78	209	471	23	784
Macedon Ranges	174	729	429	396	28	1,756
Mount Alexander	49	198	137	258	21	663
Northern Grampians	9	160	161	225	10	565
TOTAL	780	3,551	2,775	3,617	193	10,916

FIGURE 06 | CENTRAL VICTORIA REGION AVERAGE FOOTBALL PENETRATION RATES BY AGE COHORT AND LGA (2016)

LGA	AGE 5-9	AGE 10-14	AGE 15-19	AGE 20-39	AGE 40+
Buloke	6.0%	37.3%	39.7%	29.5%	0.4%
Campaspe	1.1%	23.9%	20.5%	8.8%	0.2%
Central Goldfields	8.4%	27.9%	19.8%	14.5%	0.3%
Gannawarra	5.1%	35.0%	37.0%	25.8%	0.5%
Greater Bendigo	5.6%	18.6%	11.3%	2.4%	0.0%
Loddon	0.7%	19.5%	56.2%	46.8%	0.5%
Macedon Ranges	5.4%	22.5%	14.6%	4.2%	0.1%
Mount Alexander	5.5%	18.9%	14.2%	8.1%	0.2%
Northern Grampians	1.5%	23.6%	23.9%	10.7%	0.2%
AVERAGE	4.8%	21.8%	16.9%	6.5%	0.1%

Source: AFL Victoria registered participant data (2016)

APPENDIX 6 | PARTICIPATION

NETBALL

- Across the Central Victoria Region, there were 11,352 registered netball participants in Season 2015. Of these, 22% were registered to an AFL Central Victoria Commission based club and a further 22% were registered to a Region based netball association. The remaining participants are registered to clubs or associations that fall outside the project scope.
- The highest participation rate is in the junior participant player category (10-14 age cohort) with 3,587 participants or 32% of total registrations.
- The highest number of participants play netball within the Loddon Valley FNL and Bendigo Football Netball League (27% of club based netball total respectively), followed by Heathcote District FNL (25%), North Central Netball Association (18%) and the Golden Rivers Netball League (2%).
- North Central Netball Association and Golden City Netball Association hosted All Abilities netball participants in Season 2015, making up 1% of all player participation. This is indicative of the efforts made by Netball Victoria to expand participation opportunities through School Clinics which then connect students into local clubs.
- Within the study area, the highest rate of association netball participation is based in Greater Bendigo (60%) followed by Macedon Ranges Shire (24%).
- The municipality of Greater Bendigo supports the highest rate of netball participation across the Central Victoria Region with 34% of all registrations, followed by Macedon Ranges and Campaspe (both 16%).
- The Central Victoria Region average netball penetration rate of 4.8% is well above the rural and regional Victorian average penetration rate of 3.2%. These penetration rates are significantly higher across some individual project partner LGAs and player categories (refer Figure 08 on the following page).
- 3% of all netball participants across the Central Victoria Region are male, with all project partner LGAs having at least one male netball participant in 2015. The highest male participation is in Campaspe LGA with 138 players, followed by Macedon Ranges Shire (128 players), Greater Bendigo (58 players) and Mount Alexander Shire (37 players).
- Central Victoria Region male netball participation is across all age categories. The highest participation in the 20-39 age cohort (31%) followed by the 15-19 age cohort (22%). Interestingly, 16% of all players in the 40+ age cohort are male (63 participants) in the Central Victoria Region, indicating the growing acceptance of the sport beyond its traditional female participant base.
- Netball Victoria has divided the State into 6 zones to better resource regional areas. Zones most relevant to this Strategy are the Northern Zone (Sunraysia, Murray, Wimmera Mallee and North Central) and the North East Zone (Goulburn and North East).
- Penetration rates for each of these Netball Victoria Regions vary with the highest being 5.6% of total population for the Loddon Mallee North Region, 3.4% for the Loddon Mallee South Region and 3.0% for the Hume Goulburn Valley Region.
- In 2015, there were 47,600 Netball Victoria members in rural and regional Victoria which equates to 3.2% of the total population. Loddon Mallee North had the highest netball penetration rate in both rural and regional Victoria.
- Participation projections based on population growth and current penetration rates combined with Netball Victoria sport development programs will see an anticipated 4.7% growth in netball participation across the Region or 535 players by 2026. Strategies to address facility provision and accommodate this growth is crucial to continuing to support netballs' expansion.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

▶ Loddon Mallee North Netball Region has the highest netball penetration rate in rural and regional Victoria.

▶ 2% Netball diversifying with nearly 400 males participants and over 30 all abilities participants in Season 2015

▶ 4.7% growth in participation anticipated to 2026

▶ Facility provision to accommodate growth needs to be addressed

FIGURE 07 | CENTRAL VICTORIA REGION ALL NETBALL PARTICIPANT REGISTRATIONS BY PLAYER CATEGORY AND LGA (2015)

LGA	AGE 5-9	AGE 10-14	AGE 15-19	AGE 20-39	AGE 40+	Total
Buloke	133	176	176	153	66	704
Campaspe	275	476	444	529	138	1862
Central Goldfields	61	142	121	157	28	509
Gannawarra	140	330	298	343	77	1188
Greater Bendigo	375	1461	923	860	201	3820
Loddon	66	141	114	116	41	478
Macedon Ranges	319	543	385	325	219	1791
Mount Alexander	48	214	168	103	67	600
Northern Grampians	41	104	109	113	33	400
TOTAL	1,458	3,587	2,738	2,699	870	11,352

FIGURE 08 | CENTRAL VICTORIA REGION AVERAGE NETBALL PENETRATION RATES BY AGE COHORT AND LGA (2015)

LGA	AGE 5-9	AGE 10-14	AGE 15-19	AGE 20-39	AGE 40+
Buloke	39.6%	46.9%	51.3%	16.4%	2.0%
Campaspe	12.0%	19.8%	18.1%	7.5%	0.7%
Central Goldfields	8.5%	22.5%	19.2%	7.6%	0.4%
Gannawarra	24.4%	54.5%	45.4%	23.3%	1.3%
Greater Bendigo	5.2%	21.1%	12.5%	3.0%	0.4%
Loddon	15.0%	35.3%	30.6%	11.5%	0.9%
Macedon Ranges	9.9%	16.8%	13.1%	3.5%	0.9%
Mount Alexander	5.4%	20.4%	17.4%	3.2%	0.6%
Northern Grampians	6.8%	15.3%	16.2%	5.4%	0.5%
AVERAGE	8.9%	22.0%	16.7%	4.9%	0.7%

Source: Netball Victoria registered participant data (2015)

APPENDIX 6 | PARTICIPATION PROJECTED TO 2026

FIGURE 09 | FOOTBALL PARTICIPANT NUMBERS BY 2026 ACROSS ALL AFL CENTRAL VICTORIA REGION LGAS

- PROJECTED CHANGE FROM SEASON 2016 BY AGE COHORT
- PROJECTED CHANGE WITH A 1% INCREASE IN PARTICIPATION

LGA	AGE 5-9	AGE 10-14	AGE 15-19	AGE 20-39	AGE 40+	TOTAL CHANGE FROM 2016	1% INCREASE
Buloke	-4	-40	-36	6	-2	-76	5
Campaspe	-2	-45	-66	55	2	-57	17
Central Goldfields	1	20	-8	-1	2	14	7
Gannawarra	-7	-36	-56	-36	-1	-136	8
Greater Bendigo	71	240	125	155	3	593	38
Loddon	-1	-24	-31	-23	-0	-79	7
Macedon Ranges	43	147	59	59	7	315	21
Mount Alexander	-3	-29	-14	24	4	-19	6
Northern Grampians	-1	-22	-28	19	0	-31	5
AVERAGE	97	211	-55	258	15	524	114

FIGURE 10 | NETBALL PARTICIPANT NUMBERS BY 2026 ACROSS ALL AFL CENTRAL VICTORIA REGION LGAS

- PROJECTED CHANGE FROM SEASON 2015 BY AGE COHORT
- PROJECTED CHANGE WITH A 1% INCREASE IN PARTICIPATION

LGA	AGE 5-9	AGE 10-14	AGE 15-19	AGE 20-39	AGE 40+	TOTAL CHANGE FROM 2015	1% INCREASE
Buloke	-28	-50	-47	3	-8	-129	6
Campaspe	-19	-38	-59	47	7	-61	18
Central Goldfields	1	16	-8	-0	2	11	5
Gannawarra	-35	-56	-69	-32	-4	-196	10
Greater Bendigo	64	273	139	192	41	709	45
Loddon	-22	-44	-17	-6	-0	-89	4
Macedon Ranges	79	109	53	49	57	347	21
Mount Alexander	-3	-31	-17	10	12	-30	6
Northern Grampians	-4	-14	-19	10	0	-27	4
AVERAGE	33	165	-44	273	107	535	119

Note: Projections on participant numbers by 2026 are based on current individual LGA penetration rates and population growth projections to 2026 as identified in the DPCD Victoria in Future 2012 data release.



Value of a Community Football Club



Research Background

The Centre for Sport and Social Impact (CSSI) at La Trobe University was commissioned by AFL Victoria to determine the social value of a “typical” community football club; specifically its social, health and community impact.

Research Design

The research design comprised two stages:

1. Conducting nine case studies on the activities and outcomes of football clubs in various locations across Victoria developed through 110 in-depth interviews with club and community members; and
2. A survey sent to all members of AFL Victoria football clubs across the state (with 1677 returned) examining individual health, well-being, trust and social connectedness.

It is important to note that this research includes the views of people outside of football clubs. The research design deliberately sought to confirm the views of football club members with those in their communities in developing the case studies and comparing the results of the survey of football club members with the general community.

For every \$1 spent on a community football club, there is at least \$4.40 return in social value.



Social Return on Investment

The social return on investment for an average community football club indicates that for every \$1 spent to run a club, there is at least \$4.40 return in social value in terms of increased social connectedness, wellbeing, and mental health status; employment outcomes; personal development; physical health; civic pride and support of other community groups.

SROI is an increasingly accepted method for undertaking impact assessments, especially for community focussed organisations and has been identified by the Productivity Commission as a comprehensive method for social impact assessment. SROI is based on program logic – the process of identifying the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts associated with an organisation.

Social Outcomes

1. Football clubs provide an environment where people are more socially connected at every age group compared to other Victorians.
2. Football clubs are 3 times more useful for developing social networks than work, education or other community group networks.
3. Football clubs provide club members greater social support than through their other social networks.
4. Football clubs help people develop skills in public speaking, problem solving, decision making, conflict resolution, and dealing with people from diverse backgrounds.
5. Football clubs provide individuals, particularly those aged 15 to 24, with significantly increased chances of securing employment via the social networks provided by the club.

Health Outcomes

1. Football clubs are important and effective vehicles for delivering health and safety campaign messages for young people.
2. Individuals associated with a football club have a greater level of self-reported wellbeing at every age group compared to a sample of the Victorian population.
3. Individuals associated with a football club have higher levels of self-reported physical and mental health at most age groups compared to a sample of the Victorian population.
4. The self-reported mental health of people aged 18-24 associated with a football club is substantially higher than the general population; given the higher incidence of mental health issues among young people, it could be argued that 'football clubs help those at greatest risk of poor mental health'.



Things that would suffer if my football club disappeared ...



'We joined this club when we moved; I didn't know a single person in the town. Now I can walk down the street and know lots of people.'

'You know the one thing about footy, whenever you meet up with someone you played footy with, you've always got something to talk about, it creates those lifelong connections with people.'

'My football club is like a second family to me and everyone involved with the club. Not only have I gained many lifelong friends, but I have role models who I look up to and have taught me so much since joining the club. Our club is a place where you can go to escape from normal everyday life and also confront your problems with the help of the people at the club.'



'Our club is the hub of our community. I have witnessed young boys who come from abusive homes and are disconnected from school and the community come to our club and feel part of a team. These boys learn respect, discipline, team work, responsibility, mate ship and a sense of belonging.'

'You can always be welcomed down at the football club – it doesn't matter who you are or what your background is.'

'My football/netball club brings the community together. Living in a country area, it is a place that allows everyone to catch up at least once a week, brings the family together and strengthens relationships.'

'I know from my own experience that I would not be in the career I am now if it was not for the contacts I made through football.'

Community Outcomes

1. Football clubs harness the collective energy of players, coaches, administrators, volunteers and supporters to not only deliver sport and social activities for members, but for their respective communities.
2. Football clubs are increasingly engaged with their communities, delivering a range of services such as school holiday clinics and health awareness programs in schools, while supporting other community groups' events and fundraising efforts, supporting health awareness and education campaigns, and supporting socially disadvantaged members of the community participate in football.
3. A football club's reach is significant and extends beyond its players, coaches, administrators and volunteers; for every 1 player, football clubs reach 10 people in their community, generating increased civic pride.
4. Football clubs are considered the hub of a community, particularly in rural and regional areas, are a focal point for community efforts in times of crisis and celebration, and are considered by club and community members as central to shaping the identity of a township or area.
5. Sponsors typically support community football clubs to assist them deliver community benefits rather than for commercial gain.
6. Football club leaders, on and off the field, are considered community role models.

Economic Outcomes

1. As highlighted under social outcomes, football clubs create direct employment opportunities for their communities.
2. Football clubs are large consumers within their own communities, supporting local businesses such as bakeries, cafes, hotels, butchers, restaurants and local trades people.
3. The average community football club in Victoria makes an annual economic contribution of \$630,000 (Street Ryan Economic Contribution Assessments of Australian Football).

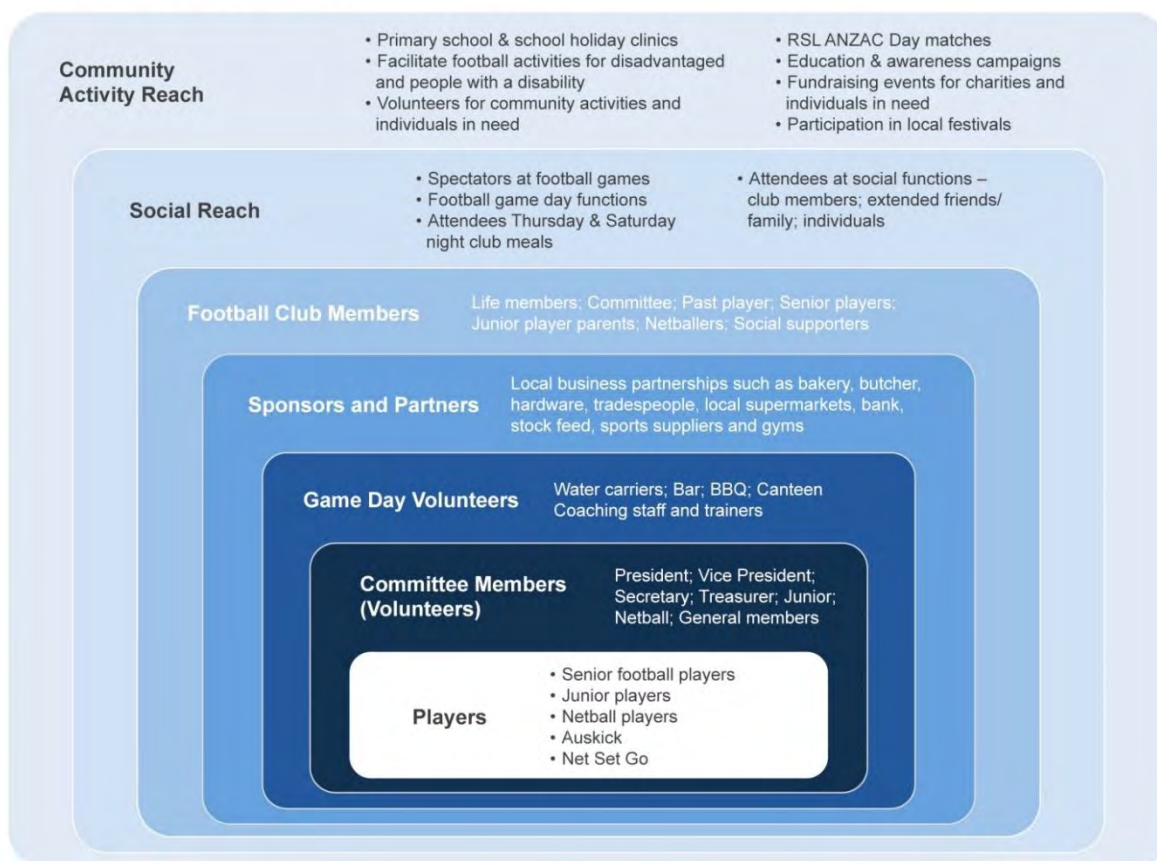
It does not matter where you live, how long or how often you are involved in a football club, or what role you have (player, coach, volunteer, supporter) in the club, people associated with a football club experience greater social connectedness, wellbeing and self-reported physical and mental health.

For further information on this project contact:
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www.latrobe.edu.au/cssi



A football club's reach is significant and extends beyond the players, coaches, administrators and volunteers within the club; for every 1 player, football clubs reach 10 people in their community.

Reach of football clubs





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