



West Coast Sport and Recreation Plan – Medium Term Implementation Guidance

Background

In July 2018 Council received the West Coast Sport & Recreation Plan, which provided a detailed assessment of the quality and usage of West Coast sport and recreation infrastructure. The report can be found at https://www.westcoast.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0036/276795/West-Coast-Sport-Recreation-Plan-Report-1.pdf.

The plan identified a range of projects that could improve sport and recreation infrastructure quality and operational management. It also identified that this could not be done within current funding. The report therefore identified a range of infrastructure that was duplicated across towns, of lower quality, or underutilised.

Over the life of the West Coast Sport & Recreation Plan and the Aquatic Facilities Plan, West Coast Council has invested considerable amounts into Sport and Recreation Infrastructure. This has included major upgrades to Queenstown and Zeehan swimming pools, creation, or major overhauls of gyms in Queenstown, Zeehan and Rosebery, and upgrades to all playgrounds. This investment has increased the value of sport and recreation infrastructure on the West Coast by several million dollars. Over the life of this implementation guidance, despite the proposed disposals, the value of, and investment in sport and recreation will continue to increase. Council will deliver \$4 million in indoor sport facilities in Strahan and Zeehan, it will deliver \$3 million in MTB trails for the West Coast, close to \$200,000 investment in the ovals in Rosebery and Queenstown, and a new gym for Tullah. This is only the investment currently planned, future budgets and funding opportunities are likely to lead to even further increases for sport and recreation on the West Coast.

The West Coast Council does not consider the quality or quantity of sport and recreation infrastructure to be a primary driver for immigration into, or out of the West Coast. It is currently thought that access to: education, health services, quality housing, and employment have a greater impact in that regard. However, given the importance of attracting and retaining residents on the West Coast, Council will consider further investigation into a Resident Attraction and Retention strategy over the medium term.

Summary

The West Coast has a dispersed, low, population, which has been declining over the last decade and will likely continue decline. Most sport and recreation infrastructure were created at a time when the population was up to four times its current level. As population declined usage of facilities has reduced dramatically. With population decline operational funding availability from Council also declined, leading to a reduction in maintenance and quality of facilities. This also led to further reductions in usage.

The reality is the West Coast Council cannot afford to maintain the current level of sport and recreation infrastructure within its current budget. The current state of much of the infrastructure is a testament to this. Perhaps more importantly it also is not feasible within current capital budgets to replace aging infrastructure with new facilities, or to create new facilities that cater to changing preferences in sport and recreation.

While the West Coast Sport and Recreation Plan identified a range of areas for improvement, increased capital and operation expenditure, and spending that could increase usage. However, methods for creating this funding are not included. Grants have been successfully used for a range of capital projects but cannot offset the complete cost and will not cover operational expenses. If the West Coast Council is to: maintain facilities to a higher standard, look at additional fitness and health programs, and create new facilities as new sports or activities become popular, then cost savings must be found.

This implementation guidance identifies a path to reducing the level of infrastructure provided so that infrastructure quality can increase. It aims to chart a path so that sport and recreation can be supported across the region in a strategic way that maximizes the benefit from Council's investments.

Strategic Intention

The intention of Council is to provide a range of facilities that support the health and wellbeing of residents in a way that balances cost-effectiveness and convenience.

Additionally, Council aims to support the sport and recreation activities that people on the West Coast want to participate in.

The Council maintains sport and recreation facilities on a regional basis to maximise the quality of facilities and diversity of activities that can be supported.

Sport and Recreation Facility Service Level

The aim of the West Coast Council

In each town (Queenstown, Strahan, Zeehan, Rosebery and Tullah)

- A playground (size based on potential usage),
- A gym and multi-purpose room (suitable for fitness classes)
- Access to areas suitable for walking/running/cycling (outdoor)

For the region:

- One competition pool and one other swimming facility (outdoor) for a 3-month season
- At least one, but for the medium term, two, ovals managed to support football.
- At least one, but for the medium term two, indoor stadium managed to support basketball/netball (and potentially other indoor sports).
- One oval managed to support cricket.
- In each town with a school an outdoor area managed to support school activities (potentially managed in conjunction with other sports).
- One area to support hockey/soccer.
- At least one outdoor and one indoor tennis court.
- At least one squash court.
- At least one skate park.

These service levels will include facilities provided by other organisations, such as school, where available. Importantly moving to a regional model will require greater use of transport options. The Inter-Town Transport Trial will facilitate understand how people will use that service to access recreation opportunities. This trial should demonstrate the actual demand for transport services across the region.

Implementation of Changes

In practice this means that Council will work to:

Gyms

- Open gyms in Tullah and Strahan as funding allows. Resume management of the Tullah Hall/Stadium.
- Increase ongoing capital and operational funding to maintain gyms at the current level of service.
- Test the feasibility of Council supporting fitness programming at gyms (and multi-purpose rooms).

Swimming Pools

- Close Rosebery Swimming Pool, with the facility either handed to the community to operate, or the site disposed of via an EOI process potentially to a community group.
- Ensure the inter-town transport trial, or alternative service, is responsive to transport needs during the pool season.
- Continue investments in accordance with the Aquatic Facilities Strategy to improve change facilities, landscaping, disability access and shade provision for pools in Queenstown and Zeehan.
- Test the feasibility of offering more programs at the Swimming Pools.

Outdoor Recreation Grounds

- Dispose of the Tullah Oval.
- Remove goal posts from Strahan Oval at the end of life and maintain the grassed area as open space for junior sport activities. Either remove, or cease to cover, the cricket pitch.
- Cease to maintain the Rugby Ground at Zeehan and dispose of when feasible.
- Maintain the oval at Zeehan for cricket and junior sports only. With the cricket pitch maintained permanently and goal posts removed, and likely improvements to cricket facilities if demand is present.
- Remove the Zeehan Grandstand.
- Maintain and improve Rosebery Oval for football. Other sports provided on a full cost recovery basis.
- Maintain the Queenstown Oval for football and junior sports only. Work with the Crows and Darwin League to address surface maintenance issues. Other sports provided on a full cost recovery basis.
- Maintain and improve the Hockey and Soccer Facilities in Rosebery, investigate the potential for a synthetic or other surface and if enough usage investigates the potential for weather protection.
- Support local clubs or associations to obtain mobile facilities such as goal posts, or grandstands.

Indoor Recreation Facilities

- Maintain the Queenstown Stadium for competition basketball and netball. Invest to improve floor and facilities.
- Maintain the Rosebery Stadium for indoor sports. Investigate the potential of an alternate floor surface to facilitate a variety of indoor sports on the West Coast.
- Continue to work with Zeehan Primary School to maintain community access to the Stadium at the School.

- Where funding allows provide multi-purpose rooms (not designed to support competition) at Strahan, Zeehan and Tullah.
- The multipurpose room at Strahan should allow indoor/covered tennis, if funding allows.

Playgrounds

- Maintain the current level of playground facilities.
- Increase ongoing capital investments to replace equipment where required.
- Investigate provide equipment tailored to older children as skate parks deteriorate.
- Remove outdoor recreation equipment area at Strahan Foreshore near Visitor Centre.
- Take responsibility for the outdoor gym equipment on the Strahan foreshore.

Skate Parks

- Maintain the Strahan Skate Park, upgrade safety when funding allows.
- Remove equipment from other skate parks as they become dangerous or reach the end of life.

Tennis Courts

- Dispose of tennis facilities in Queenstown and Tullah.
- Replace the outdoor tennis courts with an indoor or covered option where funding allows in Strahan.

Future Priorities

The above lists the disposal of several facilities:

- Rosebery Swimming Pool
- Tullah Oval
- Zeehan Rugby Ground
- Queenstown and Tullah Tennis Courts
- (At the end of life) Skate parks in Rosebery, Queenstown and Zeehan.

It also recommends limiting the sports played on several facilities (or only providing other sports at full cost recovery).

- Queenstown Oval (football and junior sports)
- Zeehan Oval (cricket and junior sports)
- Rosebery Oval (football and junior sports)
- Strahan Oval (junior sports)

The operational and capital savings from these changes can then be invested in the remaining facilities and will be used, alongside grant funding, to work toward Council's priorities. Current actions being investigated or implemented (pending funding) include:

- A gym and multipurpose room for Strahan (potentially inclusive of indoor tennis).
- A gym for Tullah.
- Additional play/recreation equipment for parks as skate parks decommissioned.
- Creation and implementation of a walks and hikes strategy.
- Trails and Hikes once the recommended Trail and Hike strategy is completed.
- Further implementation of aquatic facilities strategy.
- Improvements to basketball stadiums and support for additional sports if possible.

- Improvements to drainage and surrounding facilities at Queenstown and Rosebery Ovals provided AFL continues to be played there.
- Improvements to hockey facilities.
- Energy efficiency improvements across facilities.
- Electronic access and improved security across facilities.
- Building longevity improvements.
- Creation and implementation of adventure activity plans including Rock Climbing and Water Activities.
- Ongoing improvements to accessibility of facilities.