



# GEORGE TOWN SPORTS COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

*Prepared for George Town Council*

*JULY 2016*



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PREPARED FOR GEORGE TOWN COUNCIL



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# SUMMARY

## Background

The George Town Sports Complex is the main municipal sporting and recreation asset managed by the George Town Council.

In 2009 the *George Town Sports Complex Development Plan 2009* was prepared. There have been considerable changes to the use of the sporting and recreational facilities at the Sports Complex and changes to the demographics of the George Town community since 2009. Council decided to review and revise the 2009 Plan so as to assist Council with a broader community context for capital works planning including the staging of future works at the Sports Complex.

The revised Plan reviews current policy and planning documents for sport and recreation at the State, regional and local level. It reviews demographic trends and the broader trends in sport and recreation within the Australian community to determine the likely implications for the future use of the Sports Complex. The revised Plan has also involved engagement with the Sports Complex Advisory Committee, Council and individual clubs and groups using the venue and its facilities.

In terms of the George Town Sports Complex, reflecting these trends is likely to mean:

- recognizing that Government policy and funding is increasingly being directed towards multi-purpose use;
- that new facilities should be planned, designed and constructed to provide flexibility to offer a greater diversity of programs and to be more sustainable (e.g. energy efficiency, water re-use);
- consider opportunities that will develop a greater focus on activities that promote healthy living and community wellbeing in addition to core sporting team programs;
- consider opportunities to develop a greater focus on activities that build social capital in the community;
- the existing clubs and groups face ongoing issues with finding funding to manage, maintain and upgrade their clubs and facilities to meet user expectations;

- the need to encourage skilled management and programming of the Sports Complex use to avoid pressure for further duplication of facilities; and
- consider commercial investment and involvement in providing improved sporting and recreation opportunities.

## Issues

The key issues that were identified through the extensive consultation<sup>1</sup> undertaken for the *George Town Sports Complex Development Plan 2009* can be summarized as being the need to:

- have multi-use facilities and to avoid duplication of facilities within the Sports Complex;
- upgrade existing facilities so as to better meet the needs of existing Clubs and groups;
- remove outdated buildings and structures that are no longer capable of meeting user needs
- enhance the general appearance of the Sports Complex and to improve lighting along roads and to upgrade irrigation, amenity, public toilets, paths and public safety;
- address drainage and lack of formalised car parking areas; and
- attract wider community recreation activities to the Sports Complex.

The site visits and consultations undertaken for the current review suggest that these issues remain pertinent for the Sports complex. However the key issues for the Sports Complex can be expressed through the core messages that it suffers from being:

- many places not one;
- hard to find and get around;
- under used; and
- under loved.

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<sup>1</sup> The consultations involved individual Club and group meetings, user groups survey, site walks, Council staff meeting and receipt of public submissions.

## Strategic Direction

The following vision statement has been developed:

*The George Town Sports Complex will be sustainably developed and managed as a premier sporting and recreation venue to enhance the sporting, recreational, health and wellbeing opportunities for the local community.*

Four principles underpin this vision:

**Sustainability** – The Sports Complex will be sustainably designed, constructed, managed and promoted based on an understanding of sound environmental, economic and social management outcomes.

**Quality Experience** - The Sports Complex will ensure that users and visitors can safely and equably access, enjoy and participate in a diverse range of quality sporting, recreational and community opportunities.

**Capacity to Manage** – The George Town Council, Advisory Committee, sporting clubs and recreational groups will work together and where possible, share resources to effectively manage the Sports Complex.

**Benefits** - The development and management of the Sports Complex will facilitate environmental benefits, economic development and improvement in the community's lifestyle and wellbeing.

A set of policies have been identified as practical tools to assist the Council and the Sports Complex Advisory Committee to manage the site with respect to the vision and principles.

## Revised Development Master Plan

The revised Development Master Plan indicates the opportunities to improve the Sports Complex by:

- upgrading the entry into the Sports Complex;
- improving the netball courts area;
- creating a better multi-purpose community building servicing sporting, recreational and community activities;

- creating a accessible and attractive community activity open space;
- creating a trail network within the Sports Complex and with outside links to open space areas;
- improving irrigation of the existing sportsgrounds;
- creating vehicle circulation of the main football oval;
- developing a dog off-leash area;
- fixing up some issues for the Archery Club; and
- relocating or removing un-required fencing.

## **Implementation Plan**

An Implementation Plan sets out recommended actions and staging of works for the Sports Complex over the next 10 years. It identifies priority projects to be commenced and completed within the next 3 years and then the roll-out of proposed works over the following years based on securing of funding.

It is recognised that the funding for the recommended works has to be found and consequently there is no certainty that works can be started or completed within the proposed timeframe. However the Implementation Plan does provides guidance as to what may be the priorities for seeking funding support over the next 10 years. In many cases additional planning, design and approvals are required first-up before a recommendation can be achieved. Further, whilst an action may have priority within this Development Master Plan, it is recognised that Council has other priorities within the Council that may necessitate that actions be delayed.

Rec. No..	Recommendation	Responsibility
1	Review and endorsement of the George Town Sports Complex Development Master Plan by the Sports Complex Advisory Committee and Council	Council, Advisory Committee
2	Prepare a more detailed design concept for the entry area into the Sports Complex. This should include from the entry gates to the intersection with the internal road leading to the main cricket oval. The concept will consider the actions shown in the Development Master Plan including enhancement of the entry, road pavement, kerbs and gutters, removal of redundant buildings, relocation of fences, tree planting, designated car parking and signage.	Council
3	Proceed with the development of a dog off-leash area	Council
4	Commence removal of the redundant buildings and structures within the Sports Complex.	Council
5	Review options for re-use of the caretakers house or alternatively the removal and rehabilitation of the site.	Council, GT Scouts
6	Engage an Architect to prepare a concept building plan for the re-use and extension of the recommended multi-purpose community building including cost estimates for works. This should consider the opportunities for relocating new sports from the YMCA community centre to the Sports Complex.	Council
7	Undertake a cost analysis of upgrading irrigation systems for the two main ovals.	Council, GT Football, GT Cricket
8	Commence staged works for the construction of a recreation trail network within the Sports Complex. The first stage could be the loop trail starting from the entry road area around the cycling oval to the proposed dog off-leash area, around the main football oval and returning to entry area.	Council with potential involvement of Service Clubs
9	Identify and target potential funding sources for implementing the four key projects – upgrading the entry, extending multi-purpose community building, the recreation trail network and upgraded irrigation of the main ovals.	Council
10	Subject to available Council funds, undertake minor works that will improve the use of the Sports Complex. This includes completing fencing, upgrading the central public toilet building and adding a toilet to the Archery Club and a gate for access from Marguerite Street.	Council
11	Review and clarify MOU arrangements between Council and sporting clubs and recreation groups.	Council, clubs and groups

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Recommended Implementation Plan for Next 3 Years



# SECTION 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The George Town Sports Complex is the premier municipal sporting and recreation asset managed by the George Town Council. The complex is located 1.2 kms to the north east of the town centre and within 300m of the Port Dalrymple School (kindergarten to Grade 10).

The sports complex is 2.2ha in size and contains six sports playing fields that are primarily used for cricket, football and soccer. There are two netball courts that continue to be used and four tennis courts that are no longer in use. The sports buildings within the complex include the football clubrooms and associated amenities (e.g. changerooms), cricket club house, a building shared by the George Town Junior Soccer Club and George Town Scout Club, the former tennis club building (a former ablutions block of the caravan park) is now being used by the George Town Pigeon Club, the netball clubrooms (a former ablutions block for the caravan park), the George Town Archery Club/shed and various public amenities (e.g. toilets, grandstand, kiosks, ticket booths). Council has identified a number of existing buildings for removal in the future. These buildings include the former Cycling Clubrooms and kiosk, and the caretakers house.

In 2009 Council commissioned consultants<sup>2</sup> to prepare of the *George Town Sports Complex Development Plan 2009*. Since then, there has been no major upgrading of the sports complex and several Clubs are no longer operating or utilizing the complex. These Clubs include the George Town Cycling Club, the George Town Pony Club and the George Town Tennis Club. During the same period of time, there has been growth in some sports and interest from other Clubs or community groups to make use of the complex site.

A Sports Complex Advisory Committee was formed to advise Council on development and maintenance of recreation and sports facilities at the George Town Sports Complex. The Committee has representatives from all the sporting clubs and recreation groups using the Sports Complex.

Given that there have considerable changes to the use of the sporting and recreational facilities at the Sports Complex and changes to the demographics of the George Town community, Council decided to review and revise the *George Town*

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<sup>2</sup> The consultant team was HM Leisure Planning in association with Inspiring Place Pty Ltd and Sutera Architects.

*Sports Complex Development Plan 2009*. In addition the review was considered helpful to assist Councillors with a broader community context for capital works planning including the staging of future works at the Sports Complex.

In conjunction with the above project, Council commissioned consultants<sup>3</sup> to undertake an asset condition assessment of the buildings within the Sports Complex, Memorial Hall Complex, York Cove Centre and Community Centre. The task was to undertake and record the condition of each of the buildings and prepare a catch up management plan for each with priorities and then a cyclical maintenance plan. The asset condition assessment is documented in a separate report but the key findings for the Sports Complex facilities have been integrated with the preparation of the revised Development Master Plan.

## **1.2 HOW WAS THE DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN PREPARED?**

The following tasks were undertaken in the preparation of the Development Master Plan:

- a review of relevant background reports and information including the Council *Strategic Plan* and *Asset Management Strategy*;
- research and review into demographic and leisure trends;
- meetings with Council staff;
- meeting with the George Town Sports Complex Advisory Committee;
- site visits and consultations with individual clubs and groups using the Sports Complex;
- inspection of the existing buildings and facilities;
- de-briefing with Council staff about outcomes from the site visits, stakeholder consultations and possible changes to the Development Master Plan;
- consultation with the clubs currently using the old YMCA community centre as to the potential to relocate to the Sports Complex;
- review of the findings from the asset condition assessment of the buildings within the Sports Complex;

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<sup>3</sup> The consultant team was professional architects Geoff Clark and Christie Denman.

- preparation of the draft George Town Sports Complex Development Master Plan;
- review and revision of the draft George Town Sports Complex Development Master Plan following feedback from Council and the Advisory Committee; and
- preparing the final George Town Sports Complex Development Master Plan.

The project was managed by Anne Cameron, Manager of Community Development at the George Town Council.



# SECTION 2

## CONTEXT

### 2.1 THE SPORTS COMPLEX

Map 2.1 shows the sporting and recreation facilities at the sports complex.

Figure 2.1 shows a range of photographs of the sporting and recreation facilities within the sports complex.

The main changes in sporting and recreation use at the sports complex since 2009 have been the loss of the George Town Pony and Riding Club, George Town Tennis Club and the George Town Cycling Club with the latter previously using the bike circuit and buildings be near the track e.g. clubrooms, kiosk.

The *George Town Sports Complex Development Plan 2009* indicated that there had been some changes prior to 2009 including the demise of the seniors soccer club, the George Town Axeman's Club and the loss of past uses for touch football, hockey and rugby. These sports have been lost due to lack of numbers and the consolidation of some senior sports to Launceston e.g. netball, soccer.

However since 2009, the new sporting and recreation uses at the Sports Complex include the:

- George Town Archery Club now use the southern grassed area and clubroom/shed previously occupied by the George Town Pony Club;
- George Town Pigeon Club situated in the former clubrooms of the George Town Tennis Club; and
- the George Town Scouts Club which is sharing the former senior soccer clubrooms with the George Town Junior Soccer Club.



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**Figure 2.1 Existing Facilities**

Photo 1 shows the entry gates into the Sports complex. Photo 2 shows four buildings upon entry (ticket booth, toilets, cycling club and kiosk) that are redundant or in poor condition. Photo 3 shows the current entry into the netball courts and current clubhouse (former amenities block for caravan park). Photo 4 shows view to public toilets, netball courts and soccer/scouts building. Photo 5 shows the tennis courts (no longer in use) and clubhouse (now being used by the Pigeon Club). Photo 6 shows the former senior soccer clubrooms now used by junior soccer and scouts.



- ① Georgetown Cricket Club
- ② Main cricket oval
- ③ Training cricket wickets
- ④ Public toilets
- ⑤ Junior Soccer Clubrooms shared with Georgetown Scouts
- ⑥ Soccer pitches
- ⑦ Grandstand
- ⑧ Former tennis club now used by George Town Pigeon Club
- ⑨ George Town Saints Netball Club and courts
- ⑩ Main vehicle entry into the Sports Complex
- ⑪ Former George Town Cycling Club (planned for demolition)
- ⑫ George Town Archery Clubrooms
- ⑬ Former ticket entry box (no longer used)
- ⑭ Public toilets
- ⑮ Junior sports ground with cycle track
- ⑯ Former wood chopping arena (no longer used)
- ⑰ Georgetown Football Clubrooms
- ⑱ Main football oval with night lights
- ⑲ George Town Football Club change rooms and amenities
- ⑳ Former kiosk shed (no longer used)







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**Figure 2.1 Existing Facilities (continued)**

Photo 7 shows soccer pitches used for junior training. Photo 8 shows public toilets located between soccer and cricket grounds. Photo 9 shows the main cricket oval and clubrooms. Photo 10 shows view to football club building including function room, kitchen/kiosk and amenities. Photo 11 shows the range and club/shed used by the Archery Club. Photo 12 shows the former caretaker's house (vacant and in poor condition) near the entry to the Sports Complex.

## **2.2 POLICY AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

### **2.2.1 State Level**

#### **State Government Visionary Goal**

The State Government has announced a goal to make Tasmania the healthiest population in Australia by 2025<sup>4</sup>. The policy recognizes that:

- 21.7 per cent of Tasmanians smoke, compared to 18 per cent nationally;
- 69.4 per cent of Tasmanians are physically inactive, compared to 67.5 per cent nationally;
- 65.6 per cent of Tasmanians are now overweight or obese, compared with 63.9 per cent five years ago; and
- 39.4 per cent of Tasmanians have high cholesterol – compared to 32.8 per cent nationally.

Importantly it recognizes that a healthier Tasmania starts with promoting a healthy lifestyle and preventing chronic disease.

An assessment<sup>5</sup> of sport and physical recreation value in Tasmania indicated that there is \$4 value back to the Tasmanian community for every \$1 invested in sport and recreation.

#### **Tasmania's Plan for Physical Activity 2011-2021**

*Tasmania's Plan for Physical Activity 2011-2021* is a long-term plan, prepared by the Premier's Physical Activity Council in consultation with many other Tasmanians interested in physical activity. The vision of this plan is '***all Tasmanians experience and enjoy the many benefits of regular physical activity***'. The plan includes 2 measures:

##### **Measure 1: Increasing rates of participation Target: 10 per cent in 10 years.**

The government is aiming for a 10 percentage point increase in the rates of participation in physical activity by different age groups by 2021.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.premier.tas.gov.au/releases/a\\_healthy\\_tasmania](http://www.premier.tas.gov.au/releases/a_healthy_tasmania)

<sup>5</sup> Millar P, Wadsley, A, Adams, D, Arthur, D, D & Felmingham, B 2010, *The Value of Sport and Physical Recreation to Tasmania*, Australian Innovative Research Centre, University of Tasmania, Australia.

**Measure 2: Success stories Target: 1000 stories in 10 years.**

The government is aiming to gather stories about people participating in regular physical activity and how it has made a difference to their enjoyment of life.

This Plan is supported by four goals:

- become a community that values and supports physical activity;
- create built and natural environments that enable and encourage physical activity;
- develop partnerships that build and share knowledge and resources; and
- increase opportunities for all Tasmanian's to be physically active where they live, work and play.

The proposed development of regional and local sporting and recreation facilities is consistent with these broad goals, providing sport, recreation and social opportunities for residents of the George Town and wider regional community.

**Communities Sport and Recreation (CSR) Tasmania Plan 2015-16**

The proposed development of new sporting facilities is consistent with the intent of the CRS business plan, and particularly aligned with the following key priority areas:

- develop and support a vibrant, innovative and inclusive sport and recreation sector;
- facilitate participation opportunities in sport, recreation and physical activity;
- promote the benefits and importance of sport, recreation and physical activity to the Tasmanian community; and
- support the provision of quality facilities and environments that meet the sport, recreation and physical activity needs of the community.

**2.2.2 Regional and Local Level****Regional Level**

There is no specific sport and recreation plan for the Northern Tasmania region but there have been a number of past strategic regional plans that embrace recreation planning.

These documents include:

- Tamar Valley Regional Open Space System 2004<sup>6</sup>; and
- Northern Tasmania Regional Recreation Trails Strategy 2004<sup>7</sup>.

Two key recommendations from the *Tamar Valley Regional Open Space System 2004* in relation to the George Town Sports Complex were to;

- prepare a master plan for the Sports Complex for upgrading and maintaining the site as a sub-regional facility catering for competitive sports and possibly a range of passive recreational activities; and
- create an open space link and recreation trail between the Tamar River foreshore via the town centre to the Sports Complex.

The *Northern Tasmania Regional Recreation Trails Strategy 2004* identified George Town as being part of the proposed Tamar Estuary Trail encircling the Tamar Estuary.

## **Local Level**

The *George Town Strategic Plan 2016-2026* sets out the means by which Council can guide future planning and investment decisions within the municipality. The community vision for 2026 is:

“In 2026, the George Town municipal area will be a proud community where people from all ages participate in our active recreational and community life and where we treasure the immense beauty of our natural environment and rich heritage. We will embrace our industries to drive our prosperity and growth.

As a community we:

- Are welcoming of a diverse industry and business mix,
- Are an active and vibrant community that enjoys liveable and amenity rich neighbourhoods,
- Are celebrating our natural environment and rich heritage,
- Have vibrant towns with coastal connections and rural lifestyles, and

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<sup>6</sup> Inspiring Place 2004 Tamar Valley Regional Open Space System prepared for region north!

<sup>7</sup> Inspiring Place 2004. Northern Tasmania Regional Recreation Trails Strategy prepared for region north!

- Have a council responding to our community’s needs.”<sup>8</sup>

The 10-year goals of Council are to:

- Foster the growth of a diverse business and industry mix and to foster population growth.
- Support an active, vibrant, and culturally diverse community life that enjoys liveable and amenity rich neighbourhoods.
- Conserve our natural environment and heritage and ensure it is enjoyed by our community, visitors and future generations.
- Strengthen the vibrancy of our towns and enhance the benefits of living in a rural setting and living close to the river and coast.
- Ensure Council listens to and understands community needs and continues to make responsible decisions on behalf of the community.<sup>9</sup>

Amongst the list of key priorities for achieving these goals are priorities of particular relevance to the Sports Complex. These include:

- review and manage assets and infrastructure Council currently owns in line with community needs;
- continue regular maintenance of Council infrastructure facilities;
- upgrade parks to include outdoor recreational facilities;
- connect walking and cycling paths and trails along the coastline, and develop other trails to key attractions;
- develop and implement a volunteering strategy;
- collect and distribute information on existing events and activities; and
- promote the health and community services within the municipality.

Council has a series of policies that provide guidance to the management of the Sports Complex – these include policies for tree management, dog management, risk management and assets management.

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<sup>8</sup> George Town Council Strategic Plan 2016-2026, page 4

<sup>9</sup> George Town Council Strategic Plan 2016-2026, page 5

The primary document setting out a future direction for the Sports Complex is the *George Town Sports Complex Development Plan 2009*.

A survey of community satisfaction<sup>10</sup> within the George Town LGA indicated an average satisfaction level of 68% for sportsgrounds and 62% for parks and playgrounds within the municipality. Males gave a higher level of satisfaction rating to these sportsgrounds, parks and playgrounds (average 70%) than females (average 62%). Some 26% of the respondents suggested “improving parks, playgrounds and recreation areas” as being one thing that would make George Town Council area and even better place to live, work, invest and socialize.

## 2.3 TRENDS

### 2.3.1 Demographic Trends

Census records indicate that the overall population within the LGA has not changed between 2006 and 2011, staying at 6527 persons. The population of George Town was 4304 persons in 2011, making up 66% of the total LGA population.

However the age distribution within the LGA has changed as shown in Table 2.1. The key changes have been a loss in the 5-14 years age group and a growth in the older age groups of 55-64 years and 65 years and over.

Age Group	GT LGA Census 2006 Number	GT LGA Census 2006 %	GT LGA Census 2011 Number	GT LGA Census 2011 %	Tasmania Average 2011 %
0-4 years	459	7.0	464	7.1	6.4
5-14 years	997	15.3	924	14.2	12.8
15-24 years	747	11.4	738	11.3	12.8
25-54 years	2568	39.3	2409	36.9	39.0
55-64 years	862	13.2	957	14.7	13.2
65 years and over	894	13.7	1035	15.8	15.8
Totals	6527	100.0	6527	100.0	100.0

Table 2.1 The Age Distribution 2006-2011 and Tasmania 2011

<sup>10</sup> EMRS 2015. George Town Council Community Satisfaction Survey. Research Report.

The Table also indicates that the age profile for George Town LGA differs from the Tasmanian average – generally the LGA having a higher proportion of younger age people (0-14 years), lower middle age groups (15-54 years) and slightly higher proportion of older age groups (beyond 55 years).

The potential implications of the trends in population numbers and age profile are:

- there is limited growth in demand for sport and recreation with a population base that is not growing over time<sup>11</sup>;
- the decline in age groups 5-14 years and 15-24 years is also a concern as this is when most people are introduced and become more active in sporting and recreational activities (although George Town is just slightly above the Tasmanian average for these combined age groups); and
- the increase in age groups 55-64 years and 65 years and over is also a concern with the potential for more people to become less active in sporting and recreational activities due to age, health and mobility.

The *George Town Sports Complex Development Plan 2009* noted that:

- although the Council population is small, there are continuing numbers of young people and young families in the community, these being the most important in terms of sports participation; and
- despite the comparative youthfulness of the community, there are significant numbers of older people in George Town with differing recreational needs.

Accordingly, if the Sports Complex is to remain viable and to effectively contribute to the sporting and recreation opportunities available to the community, it will need to continue to offer sporting and recreation activities while also providing activities and settings which attract and accommodate a range of other non-sporting activities across all age groups.

A recent study<sup>12</sup> examining LGA's in Tasmania ranked in the 'most disadvantaged' group on more than five indicators:

- disengaged young adults;
- unemployment;

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<sup>11</sup> The population of George Town LGA has declined by 411 persons or 5.9% from 6,938 in the 1986 Census

<sup>12</sup> Dropping off the Edge 2015 Report – Tasmania Fact Sheet prepared by the Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia.

- low family income
- contact with the criminal justice system; and
- disability.

George Town was one of six LGA's in Tasmania considered to be most disadvantaged – the others were Central Highlands, Southern Midlands, Derwent Valley, Brighton and Glenorchy City. This situation creates limits within the ability of many in the community to afford participation in sport and recreation or to contribute toward investment in new facilities and services. Consultations with clubs and groups involved with the George Town Sports Complex indicated the difficulty of increasing membership and user fees, finding volunteers and raising funds through sponsorship. At the same time, the increased costs such as water bills, power bills, insurance and other services continues to limit the capacity of clubs and groups to attract new users and upgrade facilities.

### **2.3.2 Broader Sport and Recreation Trends**

The ways by which leisure, sport and recreation opportunities have been provided has changed quite substantially over recent years. These trends are important to consider given the significant investment in community sport and recreation infrastructure (both indoor and outdoor).

The emerging trends include:

- megatrends that are likely to impact sport, recreation and leisure in coming years;
- participation levels;
- building and site designs;
- the siting of facilities;
- the development of a strong relationship between indoor and outdoor areas;
- elements of commercial provision; and
- programming.

These trends also reflect the changing aspirations of the community with regard to its engagement in sporting and recreation activities. A brief summary of these trends is presented in the following sub-sections.

## Megatrends

The CSIRO published a key report in 2013<sup>13</sup>, which sought to assess a set of critical “megatrends” which could be expected to impact on sport and recreation in Australia over coming years. The following main conclusions were reached:

- The commitment to regular, organised sport will fall in comparative terms as more people pursue single-person and small group fitness activities. This will mean that funding for facilities for these activities will need to increase, perhaps at the expense of traditional sports.
- Greater efforts will need to be put into both understanding and responding to the link between sport and recreation and mental and physical health, crime prevention, social development, and international cooperation. This may mean that some activities will be found to warrant greater funding while others are given less funding than in the past.
- Sport and recreation providers will need to respond to the changing age and cultural make-up of the community if they are to attract continuing support.
- Corporate funding and salary differentials between sports will disadvantage “loosely organised sports associations” and activities, which do not need or have structured organisations. It is thus likely that local and state governments will need to strengthen their support for these activities if the growing diversity and quality of opportunities sought by the community is to be achieved.

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<sup>13</sup> CSIRO Futures, 2013: *The Future of Australian Sport. Megatrends shaping the sports sector over coming decades*, Australian Government, Australian Sports Commission

## Participation Levels

Table 2.5 presents a summary of the broad findings from the *2013-2014 Australian Bureau of Statistics Multi-Purpose Household Survey Participation in Sport and Physical Recreation* module. The survey covers 500 persons over the age of 15 years and over within Tasmania.

Key Findings from the 2013-2014 Australian Bureau of Statistics Multi-Purpose Household Survey	Relevance to George Town Sports Complex
<p>67.3 % of Tasmanians aged over 15 participated in at least once in physical activity for exercise, recreation or sport in the previous 12 months – there has grown from 65.2% in 2005-06</p>	<p>Tasmania had the second highest participation rate (67%) in physical activity of all state and territories, and was 7% above the national rate (60%).</p> <p>The Australian and Tasmanian community is becoming increasingly aware of the need to participate in some form of regular physical activity – whether an organised sport or group fitness activity, or unstructured activities such as walking or cycling.</p> <p>The Sports Complex is the major sporting and recreation asset to the George Town community and also caters for some regional events (e.g. football, cricket).</p>
<p>The survey shows a general trend of decreasing participation rates with age in Tasmania. Highest participation rates in Tasmania are in the 25-34 age group, then 45-54 years and 35-44 years. The lowest participation is in the 65+ age group.</p>	<p>The Sports Complex has the capacity to cater for a range of organised sports and unorganised sports and recreational activities.</p> <p>The Sports Complex will continue to provide opportunities to cater for, and encourage, older people to participate in physical activity. Consultation with the clubs indicated there is likely to be continued growth in some sports - netball, junior soccer, scouts, football and cricket.</p> <p>This may occur in both junior age groups and with the growth of women's involvement with traditional sports such as football and cricket. Incorporation of community functions within the Complex will help foster activities – both active and passive, that attract a wide cross section of the community.</p>
<p>The Tasmanian rate of participation in three or more physical activity sessions per week was 26.5%. The Tasmanian regular participation rate is 3.9% above the national average of 22.6%.</p>	<p>This level of participation, if evident in the George Town community, supports the need for the Sports Complex to cater for a physical activity and to encourage greater use and diversity of opportunities within the Complex.</p>

Key Findings from the 2013-2014 Australian Bureau of Statistics Multi-Purpose Household Survey	Relevance to the Proposed Regional Sports Stadium
Tasmanian regular participation levels increase steadily as income increases - 21% for Tasmanians with lower income levels as compared with 34.9% for higher income levels	<p>The economic and social profile of George Town LGA suggests the need to deliver sporting and recreational activities that are affordable, easy to access and attractive to foster use.</p> <p>The age and condition of the existing sports facilities (mainly buildings) are not conducive to attracting new interest in sport and recreation. Council has initiated an asset management assessment of existing assets to help determine future needs and priorities. There are several buildings within the Sports Complex that are in a poor condition and no longer used. The removal of these buildings over time would improve the attractiveness of the complex.</p>
The survey showed that regular participation rates are stable across age groups with the highest rates of regular participation in the 35-44 age group (32%) and the lowest rates of regular participation in the 15-17 and 65 and over age groups.	<p>The 35-44 age group for George Town LGA is slightly below the Tasmanian average (12.1% compared with 13.2%) but has the same proportion of the population in the 65 age group and over to the Tasmanian average (15.8%).</p> <p>The complex has the capacity for increased opportunities for both male and female participation in physical activities and organised sports. Given the diversity of uses, it also has the potential to attract interest across all age groups within the regional community</p>
The survey indicates that regular participation in physical activities in Australia and Tasmania are correlated with education levels – regular participation rates increase as the level of education increases.	The Sports Complex is accessible to a broad range of users, including those of lower socio-economic backgrounds. It is important that these people continue to have access to community facilities, and to be encouraged to participate in sport and recreational activities.

Table 2.2 Sport and Recreation Trends Assessment

The *Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey 2010 (ERASS)*<sup>2</sup> provides an indication of the most popular organized sports and non-organised physical activity undertaken within Tasmania. It found that the most popular organised sport activities were (in order) recreational walking, aerobics/fitness, cycling, walking (bush), running, golf, Australian rules football, fishing and tennis. Recreational walking attracted a participation rate within the Tasmanian population of 38.4% in 2010, more than double that of the second highest activity of aerobics/fitness at 17.7%.

In regards to organised physical activities the ERASS survey found the most popular activities were aerobics, football, golf, netball, Australian rules football, tennis, touch

football, basketball, cricket, lawn bowls and dancing. The participation rate varied from 7.1% for aerobics to 1.9% for lawn bowls and dancing.

The George Town Sports Complex currently caters for several sports amongst those most participated in organised physical activities – football (soccer), netball, Australian rules football and cricket. It previously catered for cycling and tennis but these Clubs have since finished, primarily due to limited membership and support.

There has been an overall trend of decreasing participation in organised physical activities (e.g. organised by a sporting club, association, fitness centre or other organisation) within Australia over the last 5 years. The shift towards unstructured, or un-organised physical activities is likely, due in part, to the time and financial pressures that the community face.

Many people now pursue sport and recreational activities specifically because they are aware of the significant personal and community health benefits that involvement provides rather than for the enjoyment of the selected activities *per se*. This is occurring across a wide range of age groups with people taking up or recommencing activities that offer body strengthening, enhanced aerobic capacity, weight loss and a general improvement in their health. Much of the activity is non-competitive engagement but some sports are also gaining participation numbers as a consequence. It has also meant that some activities that previously had low participation rates may find growing interest.

Significantly, the pursuit of healthy outcomes has generated another linked trend, that being participation in active recreation pursuits across nearly all age groups with some of the greatest growth occurring in the 50s, 60s and 70s age groups as older, healthier people remain active. Importantly, venues that deliver these programs need to be attractive and the presence of staff and programmers is often very important <sup>14</sup>.

## **Building design trends**

Building design and presentation of sporting venues have being greatly improved over recent years, as have the settings in which the buildings are placed, in order to attract more use and to meet rising user expectations of attractive venues.

Building quality and user conditions (through the use of colour, materials, air conditioning, heating, quality amenities, lounge areas etc) are rising dramatically in response to building and health regulations, workplace safety standards, competition,

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<sup>14</sup> Research reported in early 2015 by Latrobe University academics has found strong links between participation in sporting activities, community health and wellbeing and social benefits. Professor Russell Hoye from Latrobe stated to Radio ABC (See "Local AFL clubs deliver economic, social and mental health benefits study finds") that "we found that for every dollar...the community and local governments invested in getting a club to operate... they (the clubs) generated a \$4.40 return in social value". See <http://www.abc.net.au/am/content/2015/s4187997.htm>

wider user experiences, expectations regarding the standards of local provision, and the recognition that the quality of the use setting enhances the quality of the user experience and the number of users.

There are substantial increases in the expectation of, and the legal requirement for improved building amenities and services, for user safety, parking, safety and security lighting, access, pathways, and signage. Provision of these reduces costs and litigation while enhancing the user experience and attracting higher use levels.

Buildings are increasingly being designed with inherent use flexibility and the capacity to “move spaces around” or be changed and expanded as demands and needs grow, contract and change.

There is an increased focus on the linked provision of indoor and outdoor/ breakout/ and informal spaces as a means of allowing programming flexibility and variability, providing attractive social areas, linking the built facilities to surrounding and district spaces (such as parks and trails) and providing cheaper program areas.

Overall, there is a growing move to create community hubs and “destinations” for all members of the community. The George Town Sports Complex has the potential to become a stronger sporting and community recreation hub that is well-linked to the town centre and attractive foreshore trails.

### **Siting and locational trends**

Throughout Australia, buildings are no longer treated as stand-alone venues but rather, are increasingly being sited along with other community activity hubs such as schools, public transport, outdoor sporting and recreation venues and trail networks, shopping centres and libraries. This co-location widens community awareness, encourages the “cross pollination” of use and saves significantly on infrastructure and servicing costs

In a similar vein, the consolidation and co-location of sport and recreation opportunities entails the development of multi-component and multi-user venues rather than multiple, stand-alone facilities for each different sport and recreation activity. The George Town Sports Complex has evolved over a long period of time in response to the individual needs of individual clubs and groups – it often takes time and significant funding resources to transition towards greater multi-use infrastructure and use.

The consolidation of provision and sharing of use allows:

- the freeing up of land for other purposes;
- efficiency savings through the sharing of enhanced infrastructure and other services across a number of user groups and activities;
- Clubs to focus on their activities and programs rather than on building maintenance, operation, building insurances and security;
- reduced maintenance costs by having fewer venues to care for and repair;
- the possible application/sharing of professional management; and
- the mounting of far more effective and regional events and programs.

### **Commercial Involvement**

There is a growing mix of community and commercial program and services delivery (e.g. physiotherapists, hairdressing, chiropody, personal trainers, café and food services) associated with major sporting and recreation facilities. There has been some degree of commercial investment in public sporting venues.

The growth of leisure and sport participation and the greater capacity of many in the community to pay for recreation activities not provided by government has led to substantial commercial investment in recreation. While some pursuits such as restaurants, travel, tourism and the like have always been commercially-focused, more and more businesses are investing in health and fitness venues, recreation-related service industries, tennis and golf clinics, boating, off road adventure activities, music and the arts.

Traditionally, governments and commercial leisure providers have taken a them-and-us approach –or worse still, a them-versus-us approach to commercial provision. Yet this need not be: in one mainland example, a community performing arts centre includes a commercially-operated “fine dining” restaurant. Similarly, many Councils now license the use of parks and gardens for bootcamp/fitness programs while others lease the operation of their aquatic, health and fitness and stadium facilities to private or not-for-profit organisations.

Increasingly in these situations, leaseholders are expected to provide diverse, quality programs and in some instances, to make a capital investment in the assets. In other Councils, commercial providers have offered to invest in Council facilities so as to diversify the mix of opportunities provided. Such opportunities should be pursued and promoted as they strengthen the economic and market base of venues, diversify

the client base that is attracted and offer opportunities that may not have otherwise been afforded by, or appropriately provided by, a Council.

### **Programming and use trends**

There is increasingly tight management control over programming and program timetabling in order to optimise venue use and to offer a diverse array of activities to a wider cross-section of the community.

Professional programmers have replaced volunteers at many venues in response to user expectations, risk and insurance issues, and competition. In virtually every Council across Australia, professional managers and programmers are now employed to run libraries, indoor leisure and sports centres, pools, museums and galleries. Good managers and programmers know how to engage people, how to identify and meet community and member needs and how to evaluate and improve on what they have offered previously.

One of the strengths of programming is that it does not have to be regular. Rather, programs might be run on anything from a one-off, daily, weekly, monthly, half yearly, annual, holidays/seasonal or even less frequent basis. Many Councils, which do not have the financial capacity or space to build new facilities, have put a growing emphasis on targeted programming and have won national awards for their efforts.

There is a growing trend to link the activities that are programmed to local, state and national health objectives rather than running programs for the program's sake. This has led to the deletion of some activities, which are known to be detrimental to participants and their replacement with others with known health benefits. Some community sporting and recreation venues have developed doctor referral programs while the opportunity to include medical practices in community leisure centres has been explored by a number of Councils.

Venues are staying open for increasingly longer hours to accommodate demand levels, to ensure accessibility for shift workers, part time workers and families of mixed make-up and to counter commercial 24/7 operators.

Program diversification entails providing new and different activities that encourage participation. It includes:

- provision of new opportunities to target residents who are not actively involved in existing groups and clubs e.g. youth at risk, people with disabilities, new residents, aged and lone household members of the community, members of cultural minorities;

- provision of programs that deliver benefits that cannot be achieved through existing pursuits; and
- existing clubs working together to offer a mixed program of activities over say one or two weekends annually.

There is a growing provision of community activities and sports and in particular, non-competitive activities. This trend embraces two elements - the provision of activities and sports as opposed to buildings, and the provision of non-competitive activities.

Built sport and recreation facilities (whether ovals, parks or buildings) are simply the means to a recreational outcome and not an end in themselves. Councils and State governments are increasingly recognising that there are many people in the community who need access to programs and services (such as community transport, information, fee assistance) ahead of facilities. They are also recognising that where existing facilities are better programmed, greater benefits are delivered to the community. This applies to all age and ability groups but in particular, to the aged, people with disabilities, a person from different cultural backgrounds, children, and the families of working couples, single parents, lone residents and new arrivals in a town or district. Well-designed multi-user facilities have a strong capacity to support a diversity of programming initiatives.

From a competition versus non-competition perspective, for many people, being active does not involve competitive sports: instead, it involves for example, boot camps, fitness classes, walking a dog, cycling, gardening, going for a run, casual swimming, scratch matches of 3-5 a-side teams, and the use of walking/ cycle tracks. The availability of facilities for these self-programming opportunities encourages regular but casual enjoyment of healthy, largely self-directed recreation activities.

The non-competitive programming trend is increasing as the population ages, as people become more aware of the health benefits of exercise, as the cost of competitive participation increases and as family, work and other commitments impact on the availability of regular free time in large blocks. As such, it is important that whatever sport and recreation facilities, programs and services are provided, they are provided with a capacity to sustain casual, informal, non-competitive or irregular use.

A final point of relevance with regard to this trend is that greater support needs to be given to sports that are able to be pursued across a far broader age span compared with those with a narrow age span. Activities with a narrow age span should identify and develop ways by which people can/will continue to participate. These may include rule changes for older participants (e.g.: different balls, fewer players, shorter

duration games), the addition of social activities as part of the competition program, the development of alternate training regimes, and changed times of competition. A good example of this has been the success of ‘barefoot’ lawn bowls to introduce a more social activity within the wider community.

### 2.3.3 Club/Group Membership and Use Trends

Consultations were arranged with each of the existing sporting clubs and recreation groups using the Sports Complex. A summary of the trends in membership and use of the Sports Complex is provided in Table 2.3

Club/Group	Membership and Trends	Use of the Sports complex
George Town Saints Netball Club	Currently 12 teams train at the venue – 8 junior teams and 4 senior teams. During winter, competition games are played at Launceston. In summer there is a social roster played at the Complex. Membership has grown since 2009 to over 100 members and expected to keep growing in coming years	Training occurs on the netball courts on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights.
George Town Cricket Club	Currently 4 senior teams and 2 junior teams – similar to 2009. Likely to have juniors women cricket team.	Use the main cricket oval and junior sportsgrounds with games scheduled on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Training on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.
George Town Football Club	Currently have seniors, reserves, U19 and junior teams. There are about 90 senior players and 150-200 supporters. There are 5 junior teams with about 200 players.	Training on week nights and games played on the main ground on weekends.
George Town Junior Soccer Club	Currently 7 teams – 3 U6 teams, 2 U9 teams, 1 U11 and 1 U13 team. Even mix between boys and girls playing. About 70 junior players. Consider the membership may grow in future.	Use of the soccer sportsgrounds for training on Wednesday late afternoons. Competition games played in Launceston on weekends. Share former soccer club building with Scouts.
George Town Scouts	Operating for 4 years at the Sports Complex. Currently about 25 members with 12 Joeys, 7-8 Cubs and 3 Scouts. Expect membership could continue to grow especially if better facilities/base found and allowance of overnight camping in Complex.	Use of the former soccer clubrooms in a shared arrangement with Junior Soccer. Joeys training on late Monday afternoons followed by Cubs into evening. Scouts use facilities on Friday evenings.

Table 2.3 Club Membership and Use

Club/Group	Membership and Trends	Use of the Sports complex
George Town Archery Club	Operating for 18 months and have 8 members. Attract some school group use and community interest and try-out.	Use the former Pony Club site club/shed and grounds. Open event every Sunday and club members may use the site at other times of the week.
George Town Pigeon Club	Operating in the Sports complex since 2015. Currently 12 members with 10 active in pigeon flying.	Use the former tennis clubhouse for meetings and storage. Meetings on Wednesday nights

Table 2.3 Club Membership and Use (continued)

Outside of the above use by sporting clubs and recreation groups, there is some casual or unorganized use of the Sports Complex. This includes occasional use of the cycle track, running/fitness and children's informal play in bushland areas. The Sports Complex has also been used for junior orienteering course. It is also reported that trail bike users have occasionally accessed the roads and grounds to gain access to the crown land and private land to the east of the Sports Complex.

Contact was also made with some of the current users (e.g. boxing, judo and weightlifting) of the YMCA community centre building as to whether the Sports Complex would be a suitable location for their future use. Discussion with the George Town Boxing Club indicated there were major constraints at the YMCA centre that prevent the Club to meet potential demand for junior boxing programs. The development of a multi-purpose room with the capacity for a boxing ring would allow the Club to grow to an expected involvement of 50 members (10 times current levels).

### 2.3.4 Club/Group Needs

Consultations<sup>15</sup> with the sporting clubs and recreation groups identified a range of needs or things that need fixing within the Sports Complex. Some of those needs relate to the condition and repair of existing buildings and these have been directed to the asset condition assessment of the buildings that is being conducted.

The expressed needs included:

- introducing better irrigation systems to allow a more efficient and effective upkeep of the main sports grounds (currently this requires volunteers moving hoses on a daily basis with water costs being a major cost for Clubs);

<sup>15</sup> The consultations included on-site meetings with the individuals clubs and groups and a meeting with the Sports Complex Advisory Committee. Council also provided information from past building asset assessments.

- 
- consider introducing alternative energy systems (e.g. solar panels) to help reduce rising costs to Clubs;
  - consider relocation of the current sporting uses (e.g. weightlifting, boxing, judo) from the old YMCA building to the Sports Complex
  - consider opportunities to attract wider community interest in the Sports Complex e.g. multi-use trails;
  - improve night lighting along the internal road within the Sports Complex;
  - need to upgrade changerooms and toilets for soccer, scouts, archery and netball;
  - need to provide suitable changerooms and facilities for women teams and umpires;
  - need to have clarity in roles and responsibilities with MOU between Council and Clubs; and
  - scouts ideally need a building to better store equipment and undertake training activities.

### **2.3.5 Implications for Future Planning**

It is evident from the foregoing that there is a number of important trends in sport and recreation provision that warrant consideration in planning all future sport, recreation and leisure facilities, programs and services provision. In terms of the George Town Sports Complex, reflecting these trends is likely to mean:

- recognizing that Government policy and funding is increasingly being directed towards multi-purpose use;
- that new facilities should be planned, designed and constructed to provide flexibility to offer a greater diversity of programs and to be more sustainable (e.g. energy efficiency, water re-use);
- consider opportunities that will develop a greater focus on activities that promote healthy living and community wellbeing in addition to core sporting team programs;
- consider opportunities to develop a greater focus on activities that build social capital in the community;

- the existing clubs and groups face ongoing issues with finding funding to manage, maintain and upgrade their clubs and facilities to meet user expectations;
- the need to encourage skilled management and programming of the Sports Complex use to avoid pressure for further duplication of facilities; and
- consider commercial investment and involvement in providing improved sporting and recreation opportunities.

Action on these trends will strengthen the initiatives that are taken, will contribute to the economic wellbeing of the Complex and will make it a more attractive and resilient place.

However it is recognized that there are significant constraints that will influence the capacity to change the Sports Complex in the short to medium term. These constraints include:

- the relatively small population catchment of the George Town LGA to support the diversity of sporting and recreational activities;
- the location of the Sports Complex is not necessarily suitable to attracting new sporting and recreation uses;
- limited financial capacity of the Council, sporting clubs, recreation groups and local community to invest in major infrastructure investments;
- high reliance on Federal and State Government funding support for such investments and the high level of competition for attracting funding for sport and recreation throughout Tasmania;
- the limited scope to attract major new sports with funding resources (e.g. Launceston will continue to be the prime regional centre for many competitive sports such as soccer and netball with the Sports Complex providing a valuable junior training venue);
- many of the existing buildings within the Sports Complex are old and in poor condition and will require major maintenance, upgrading or replacement in coming years; and
- the social and economic disadvantages within the LGA may lead Governments to focus on other higher priority needs within the community e.g. employment, business growth, health, community services.

## 2.4 KEY ISSUES

The key issues that were identified through the extensive consultation<sup>16</sup> undertaken for the *George Town Sports Complex Development Plan 2009* can be summarized as being the need to:

- have multi-use facilities and to avoid duplication of facilities within the Sports Complex;
- upgrade existing facilities so as to better meet the needs of existing Clubs and groups;
- remove outdated buildings and structures that are no longer capable of meeting user needs
- enhance the general appearance of the Sports Complex and to improve lighting along roads and to upgrade irrigation, amenity, public toilets, paths and public safety;
- address drainage and lack of formalised car parking areas; and
- attract wider community recreation activities to the Sports Complex.

The site visits and consultations undertaken for the current review suggest that these issues remain pertinent for the Sports complex. However the key issues for the Sports Complex can be expressed through the core messages that it suffers from being:

- many places not one;
- hard to find and get around;
- under used; and
- under loved.

### 2.4.1 Many Places Not One

The sports complex has evolved over decades in a somewhat piecemeal manner in order to meet the needs of various individual sporting clubs, recreation groups community groups at the time. As a consequence the Sports Complex is presented

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<sup>16</sup> The consultations involved individual Club and group meetings, user groups survey, site walks, Council staff meeting and receipt of public submissions.

more as a home for individual sporting activities rather than being one well-developed integrated sport and recreation complex.

There is a duplication of buildings and public facilities mainly as a result of these being planned, funded and constructed in isolation to other Clubs and groups within the complex. There is also a poor layout of the Sports Complex, some duplication of facilities, redundant buildings and structures, an unattractive entrance.

There are redundant buildings and structures that are no longer fit for purpose. Old rails and fencing creates unnecessary barriers that detract from the amenity and accessibility within the Complex. The re-use of the former caravan park for the netball and tennis courts was logical but remains unsightly with poorly maintained surfaces. The conversion of the caravan park public amenities into clubhouses has limited functionality of the clubrooms and their quality of design and no longer meet the expectations or needs of the users.

On a positive note, there is one entry road into the Sports Complex that allows the potential to promote the Sports Complex as being one site within which multiple activities take place. However, this is marred by the unattractive view on arrival of rusting gateway features, old fencing, buildings in poor condition, lack of signage and minimal landscaping treatment.

## **2.4.2 Hard to Find and Get Around**

Unfortunately the Sports Complex is not highly visible from the main roads within the town, and sits at the extremity of the eastern town boundaries. Access is via residential streets with poor wayfinding signage to the Complex. There are no well-developed open space links yet to the Complex and thus poor connectivity to other community spaces within the town. However, the potential exists for better linking of open spaces along York Creek and Boongala Reserve to access the Sports Complex.

The entry to Sports Complex does not include information about the range of sporting and recreational uses within the Complex. The existing signs are outdated and provide regulative messages without promotion of the Complex. There is very limited directional signage within the Complex although good visibility to the sporting facilities assists with finding the Clubs.

There are numerous fences resulting from past uses (especially the caravan park) that detract from the appearance of the Complex and create unnecessary barriers to informal use.

There is no overall trail system within the Sports Complex to cater for the activities that have the higher participation rates within the community - recreational walking, running and bike riding.

### **2.4.3 Under Used**

There are many areas and facilities within the Sports Complex that are under-utilised for considerable times within the week. These include:

- the soccer pitches are mainly used for training on Wednesday afternoons only;
- the tennis courts are currently not used;
- the grassed area south of the main football oval is currently not used;
- the cycling circuit and oval are used only on an occasional basis;
- the archery grassed area is typically used on weekends;
- the main and junior sportsgrounds are not used outside of seasonal use by traditional sports of football or cricket; and
- the remaining vacant land areas and bushland receive very limited use.

It is recognised that this has occurred as a result of *ad hoc* development within the Sports Complex, relocation of regional competition for some sports to Launceston, loss of past Clubs and that the Complex was of such a size that individual clubs and groups were able to be established in separation to other groups.

As identified in the *George Town Sports Complex Development Plan 2009*, there is very limited community recreation use occurring within the Sports Complex and a lack of adequate facilities (e.g. trails, play, picnic, community meeting rooms) to attract this use.

### **2.4.4 Under Loved**

The Sports Complex is George Town's major sporting and recreation asset but suffers from limited resources to upgrade the infrastructure and achieve a high level of maintenance. The signs of being under loved are:

- poor arrival experience into the Sports Complex;

- *ad hoc* layout with facilities filling available space rather than being planned to integrate with their surrounds;
- poor condition of most buildings and facilities including the need to remove redundant buildings and structures;
- inefficient irrigation systems for the main sportsgrounds;
- the lack of a considered planting and landscaping framework that defines and articulates various use areas within the Park; and
- the visual impacts resulting from aging fencing, old signage, redundant buildings, poor maintenance and a lack of designated parking areas;

Together, these shortcomings lead to an under-realisation of the Sports Complex potential to cater for a more diverse range of sporting, recreational and community interests. The Development Master Plan is an opportunity to bring consistency to the future development of the Sports Complex.

# SECTION 3

## THE DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN

### 3.1 VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The George Town Sports Complex is a major community asset, which continues to cater for a range of sporting needs of the local community and residents of the municipality.

The management framework should be based on having:

- a clear vision statement for the Sports Complex;
- principles that underpin the vision; and
- a set of guiding policy statements to help guide appropriate planning, development and management decisions consistent with the vision and principles.

#### 3.1.1 Vision Statement

The following vision statement has been developed:

*The George Town Sports Complex will be sustainably developed and managed as a premier sporting and recreation venue to enhance the sporting, recreational, health and wellbeing opportunities for the local community.*

The term “sustainable” is defined in several ways:

- the ability of the sporting and recreation facilities, programs and services to continue to be available as a result of good maintenance, good management and, where relevant, with minimal or no detrimental impacts to the environment;
- the ability of the Council and the community to afford the opportunities which are provided (e.g. viability); and
- to ensure that the opportunities made available continue to be relevant and attractive, and meet the needs of the community.

It suggests that facilities, programs and services that are not sustainable will, over time, be restructured, revised or discontinued.

### 3.1.2 Principles

Four principles underpin this vision:

**Sustainability** – The Sports Complex will be sustainably designed, constructed, managed and promoted based on an understanding of sound environmental, economic and social management outcomes.

**Quality Experience** - The Sports Complex will ensure that users and visitors can safely and equably access, enjoy and participate in a diverse range of quality sporting, recreational and community opportunities.

**Capacity to Manage** – The George Town Council, Advisory Committee, sporting clubs and recreational groups will work together and where possible, share resources to effectively manage the Sports Complex.

**Benefits** - The development and management of the Sports Complex will facilitate environmental benefits, economic development and improvement in the community's lifestyle and wellbeing.

### 3.1.3 Guiding Policies

The policies have been identified as practical tools to assist the Council and the Sports Complex Advisory Committee to manage the site with respect to the vision and principles. The policies are:

1. The Sports Complex will be managed as a multi-purpose asset providing a diverse range of sporting and recreational needs for the regional and local community.
2. The Council will have overall responsibility for the management of the Sports Complex but involve, communicate and consider the views of stakeholders through the Sports Complex Advisory Committee and wider community.
3. Priority will be given to the health, risk and public safety of users and the general community at the Sports Complex.
4. Integrated co-location and sharing of sporting and recreation facilities and use of spaces within the site will be fostered.

5. The existing facilities and development of new facilities, programs and services will be based on identified community need and be appropriate to meet the standard, level of use and community expectations.
6. The opportunity for an equitable range of structured sport and unstructured recreational experiences will be pursued.
7. Ensure that what is being provided is regularly reviewed and revised in keeping with changing community needs.
8. The Sports Complex will have strong and safe connections with the town centre, other community spaces and residential areas.
9. Sporting, recreation and community events will be encouraged at the Sports Complex where there will be no adverse impact on the existing use, condition of the facilities and surrounding uses.
10. Avoid, remedy or mitigate against any lasting impacts on the visual amenity and the quality of facilities and use of the site.
11. The opportunities for securing partnership/shared responsibility for development and management of facilities will be pursued.
12. Fees and charges will be applied to allow for equitable contribution of all users to the development, management and maintenance of the Sports Complex.
13. Any commercial investment on the site will be subservient to the primary role as public open space for sporting, recreation and community use.
14. All decisions should be consistent with Council's adopted policies, regulations and By-laws.

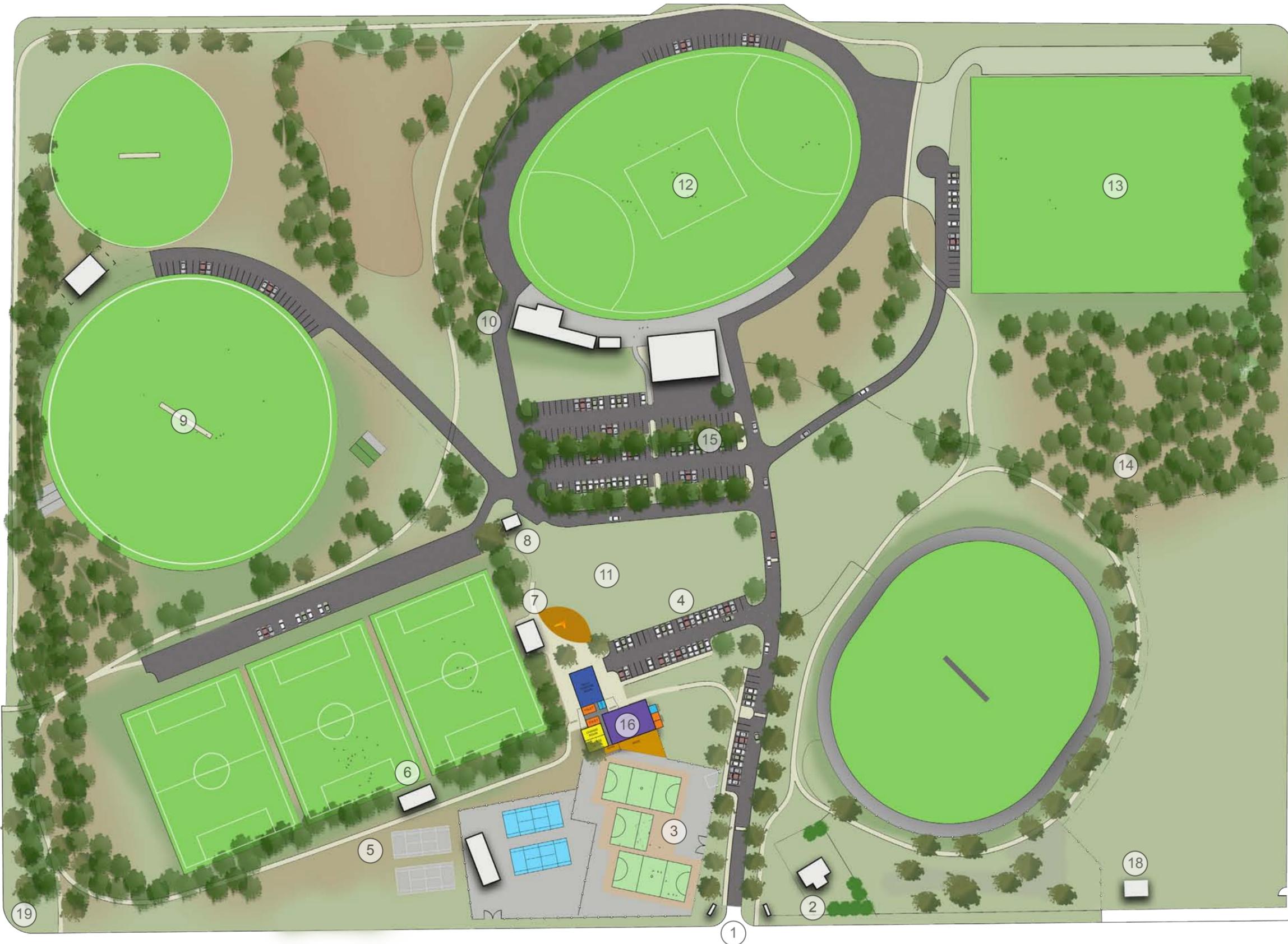
### **3.2 REVISED DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN**

A revised Development Master Plan (Map 3.1) has been prepared based on the review of the *George Town Sports Complex Development Plan 2009*, site visits and further consultations with existing sporting clubs and recreation groups.

A summary of the key features in the Development Master Plan and the supporting rationale is outlined in Table 3.1.

Key Feature of the Development Master Plan	Supporting Rationale
Upgrading the entry into the Sports Complex	<p>The plan shows a number of actions to improve the entry including tree planting along entry road, relocating the netball fence to capture more land into the entry, removal of the redundant buildings and structures (e.g. toilets, kiosk, cycling clubhouse, ticket booth, treated pine barriers).</p> <p>The Plan provides for formal car parking on the northern side of the entry road to reduce the safety risks of people having to cross the road to access the netball courts. It is proposed that entry to the netball courts be via the proposed adaptation of the former senior soccer club to create a new netball clubrooms, viewing deck and shared use of changerooms and amenities.</p> <p>The Plan shows the placement of an entry sign to the Sports Complex listing each of the Clubs, groups and activities that can be undertaken.</p> <p>The vacant caretakers house should be either demolished and reinstated back to open space or an alternative use found for the building or site. It is recommended that the feasibility for using the building or part of the building for the George Town Scouts be assessed.</p>
Improving the netball courts area	<p>The Plan shows demolishing of the former caravan park amenities building that is not fit for purpose as clubrooms. It shows the potential to create a shade structure between the two courts and the addition of a half court behind the shelter. Edges of the bitumen surfaces should be ripped and converted to low maintenance landscaping to improve the amenity of the site.</p> <p>It is proposed that the former senior soccer club be adapted to become the main entry into the netball courts. The opportunity exists to add to the building to create a netball clubroom space, a viewing deck and shared use of upgraded changerooms and amenities. The relocation of the fences to improve entry into the Sports Complex would also better define the netball area to be managed by the Club (i.e. it reduces waste land on the southern side of the courts).</p>
Creating a better multi-purpose community building servicing sporting, recreational and community activities	<p>The 2009 Plan recommended the redevelopment of the former senior soccer clubrooms into a multi-purpose building. It suggested upgrading of existing facilities and adding a gym/program room, crèche and increased clubrooms/function space. The need for a gym has been met outside of the Sports Complex but the potential to relocate boxing, judo and weightlifting from the old YMCA community centre remains. The YMCA centre requires major capital investment and ongoing maintenance and it is considered better to redirect any future funding into a better designed facility at the Sports Complex.</p> <p>It is considered that a better use of the existing building could be achieved through shared use of junior soccer with netball. Given the differing use and storage needs of scouts, it is recommended that the feasibility to re-use the former caretakers building be explored. If this was not a feasible option, then the needs of Scouts could be included in the overall design for the multi-purpose community building to overcome current constraints.</p> <p>An initial concept plan for the building is shown in Figure 3.1. A formal car park area is shown to service the multi-purpose community building.</p>

Table 3.1 Outline of Revised Development Master Plan



- ① Improve the entry with tree planting, relocating netball fence, removal of redundant buildings and formalising car parking layout
- ② Assess feasibility for re-use of the caretakers site and house by the scouts
- ③ Integrate netball clubroom facilities within the upgraded multi-purpose building, add viewing deck demolish existing clubrooms and add new shade shelter, new half court and low maintenance landscaping
- ④ Formalise car parking area
- ⑤ Remove fences around bitumen courts
- ⑥ Retain and repair existing grandstand as per asset maintenance report
- ⑦ Construct new group shelter with BBQ facilities and small play facilities
- ⑧ Upgrade existing public toilets
- ⑨ Upgrade irrigation system on cricket oval
- ⑩ Future link road to improve vehicle circulation around the main football oval
- ⑪ Create vehicle free grassed open space for community activity
- ⑫ Upgrade irrigation system on main oval
- ⑬ Proposed new dog off-leash area with small car parking area
- ⑭ Potential field archery course subject to meeting safety and risk management
- ⑮ Overflow car parking area with potential to be formalised in long term
- ⑯ Create multi-purpose community building for shared use by soccer and netball. Add new multi-purpose space for potential relocation of boxing, judo and weight lifting from current YMCA building. Potential for scouts to continue use of building if caretakers site not suitable
- ⑰ Instal gates to allow vehicle access from George Street to the Archery Club
- ⑱ Install toilet in Archery Club. Parking for members on Marguerite Street with gate to clubrooms
- ⑲ Remove exterior fencing in bush land corner of the Sports Complex to help create parkland setting



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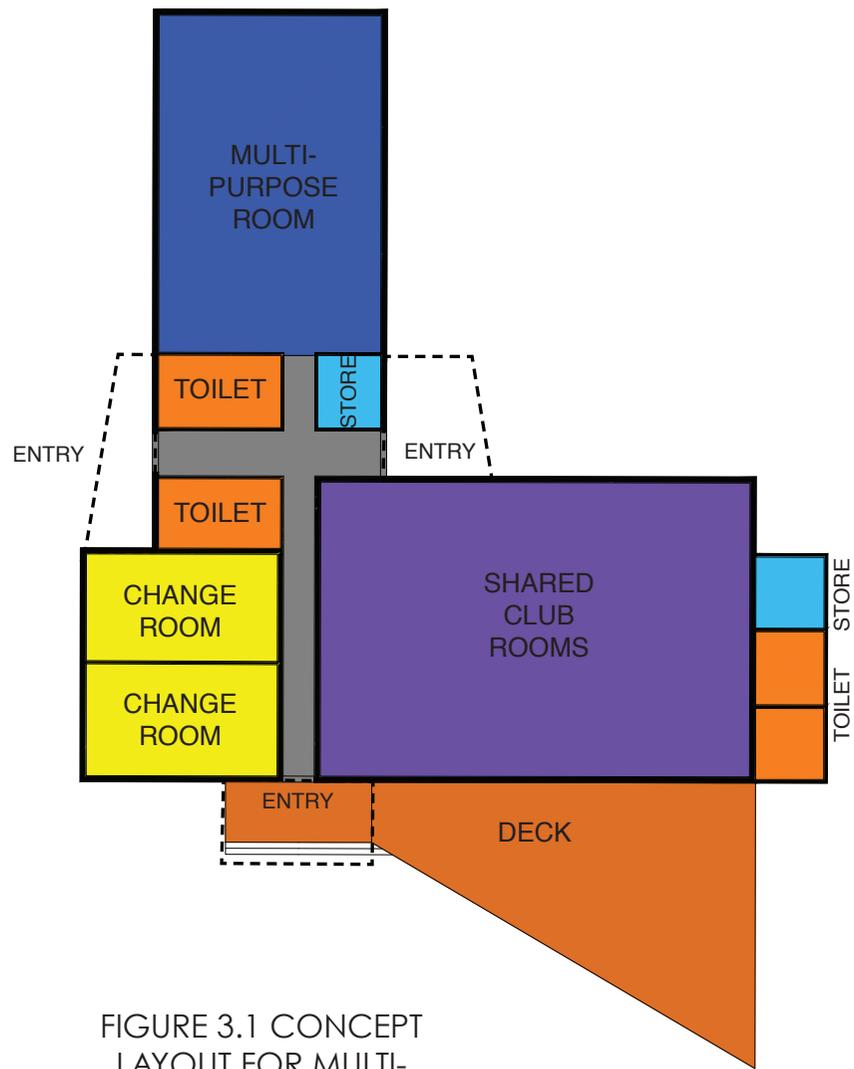


FIGURE 3.1 CONCEPT LAYOUT FOR MULTI-PURPOSE BUILDING

Key Feature of the Development Master Plan	Supporting Rationale
Creating a accessible and attractive community activity open space.	<p>The 2009 Plan recommended a community open space area be located in the centre of the Sport Complex, to the east of the proposed multi-purpose community building. The main reason was to attract greater community awareness and activity into the Sports Complex. This site remains as the most suitable location in relation to the existing facilities.</p> <p>The review recommends that the space be a flat grassed area for multi-use activities and contain a smaller play facility. The 2009 Plan made provision for a 3:3 basketball court but the revised Plan recommended that a half netball court be added to the netball court area.</p> <p>It is recommended that an open shelter structure be located at the southern end of the soccer grounds with provision for group gatherings and barbeques.</p> <p>The review recommends retaining and upgrading the public toilets located at the northern end of the proposed community activity open space. These could be opened on a daily basis.</p>
Creating a trail network within the Sports Complex and with outside links to open space areas.	<p>The Development Master Plan shows a potential trail circuits/loops within the Sports Complex that would appeal to runners and recreational walkers. The trail route avoids potential conflict with existing sporting use and proposes safe crossing points over the existing internal roads.</p> <p>The Plan shows how the Sports Complex can be potentially linked down Roberts Avenue to Boongala Reserve. It would then be possible to extend this link along the York Creek open space corridor to the York Cove foreshore using existing trail connections to the town centre.</p>
Improving irrigation of the existing sportsgrounds	<p>The existing Clubs provide volunteers to physically move the hoses for irrigation of the main sporting ovals. This system consumes considerable time and does not necessarily result in efficient use of water or the best turf care. The introduction of an automated irrigation system as occurs on many sportsgrounds throughout Tasmania should be further explored. Whilst there are upfront capital costs, there may be some cost savings in meeting the increasing cost of water provision. Volunteers would also be free to use their time on other priorities for their Clubs.</p>
Creating vehicle circulation of the main football oval	<p>The 2009 Plan shows the capacity to improve circulation of vehicles around the oval with a link road on the northern side of the existing changerooms. The revised Plan retains overflow car parking below the oval and scope for improving amenity through tree planting to help designate the parking layout. It also recognises the high capital costs of formalizing the car parking area and that the grassed areas can cater for overflow parking.</p>

Table 3.1 Outline of Revised Development Master Plan (continued)

Key Feature of the Development Master Plan	Supporting Rationale
Developing a dog off-leash area	Discussions with Council indicated the desire to find a suitable dog off-leash areas within the town. The grassed ground located to the south of the main football oval is ideally suited to such use being largely isolated from other sporting and recreational activities. The land is flat and is currently not being used. There is an existing access road to the location with adequate room for parking of vehicles. It would require repair and completion of the low height fence around the ground.
Fixing up some issues for the Archery Club	<p>The track from the entry road to the Archery Club traverses a poorly drained area. Discussions with the Archery Club indicate that the members would be happy to park on Marguerite Street if a gate allowed access the club/shed. Vehicle access for servicing the Club/shed would be better if directly accessed from George Street if locked entry gates were installed.</p> <p>The club/shed does not have a toilet and members or visitors are required to walk 200m to the toilet block near the netball courts. It would be preferable to have a toilet that could be connected to the reticulated services along Marguerite Street.</p> <p>The Club also indicated interest for a field archery course to be developed within the bushland area at the end of the grassy range. The bushland receives little formal use and a field archery course could be considered in the future subject to addressing safety and risk management issues.</p>
Relocating or removing un-required fencing	There are opportunities to progressively relocate or remove some fencing within and around the Sports Complex. This includes near the entry road (e.g. relocate netball court fencing, remove caretaker house fencing), removal of the external fence and court fence to the redundant bitumen tennis courts, the external fence around the bushland on Davies Street and Marguerite Street, and removal of the external fence from the former caretakers house to the Archery Club. The removal of the latter two exterior fences would help create a sense of the Sports Complex being also a parkland rather than just sports facilities to the streets.

Table 3.1 Outline of Revised Development Master Plan (continued)

### **3.3 10 YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2016-2026**

An Implementation Plan sets out recommended actions and staging of works for the Sports Complex over the next 10 years. It identifies priority projects to be commenced and completed within the next 3 years and then the roll-out of proposed works over the following years based on securing of funding.

It is recognised that the funding for the recommended works has to be found and consequently there is no certainty that works can be started or completed within the proposed timeframe. However the Implementation Plan does provides guidance as to what may be the priorities for seeking funding support over the next 10 years. In many cases additional planning, design and approvals are required first-up before a recommendation can be achieved. Further, whilst an action may have priority within this Development Master Plan, it is recognised that Council has other priorities within the Council that may necessitate that actions be delayed.

#### **3.3.1 Priority Projects for Starting and Completion within the Next Three Years**

These projects focus on the essential pre-planning investigations that are needed to help source funding for works in upgrading the role and facilities at the Sports Complex. These investigations will allow for more informed decisions about what works are required, what the costs will be and what the potential sources of funding are for implementation. It recognises that Council, sporting clubs and recreation groups have limited capacity to fund the works and consequently strong funding support submissions will need to be directed to the State and Federal Governments.

Rec. No..	Recommendation	Responsibility
1	Review and endorsement of the George Town Sports Complex Development Master Plan by the Sports Complex Advisory Committee and Council	Council, Advisory Committee
2	Prepare a more detailed design concept for the entry area into the Sports Complex. This should include from the entry gates to the intersection with the internal road leading to the main cricket oval. The concept will consider the actions shown in the Development Master Plan including enhancement of the entry, road pavement, kerbs and gutters, removal of redundant buildings, relocation of fences, tree planting, designated car parking and signage.	Council
3	Proceed with the development of a dog off-leash area	Council
4	Commence removal of the redundant buildings and structures within the Sports Complex.	Council
5	Review options for re-use of the caretakers house or alternatively the removal and rehabilitation of the site.	Council, GT Scouts
6	Engage an Architect to prepare a concept building plan for the re-use and extension of the recommended multi-purpose community building including cost estimates for works. This should consider the opportunities for relocating new sports from the YMCA community centre to the Sports Complex.	Council
7	Undertake a cost analysis of upgrading irrigation systems for the two main ovals.	Council, GT Football, GT Cricket
8	Commence staged works for the construction of a recreation trail network within the Sports Complex. The first stage could be the loop trail starting from the entry road area around the cycling oval to the proposed dog off-leash area, around the main football oval and returning to entry area.	Council with potential involvement of Service Clubs
9	Identify and target potential funding sources for implementing the four key projects – upgrading the entry, extending multi-purpose community building, the recreation trail network and upgraded irrigation of the main ovals.	Council
10	Subject to available Council funds, undertake minor works that will improve the use of the Sports Complex. This includes completing fencing, upgrading the central public toilet building and adding a toilet to the Archery Club and a gate for access from Marguerite Street.	Council
11	Review and clarify MOU arrangements between Council and sporting clubs and recreation groups.	Council, clubs and groups

### 3.3.2 Projects for Implementation in Years 4-10

These projects are based on the successful outcomes from the priority projects listed in Section 3.1.1. The projects allow for implementation of a range of improvements within the Sports Complex in line with the overall vision. The timing will be dependent on sourcing available funds to undertake the works.

Rec No	Recommendation	Responsibility
1	Commence and complete implementation of the detailed design concept for the entry area into the Sports Complex	Council
2	Commence and complete the staged upgrading of the former senior soccer clubrooms into the multi-purpose community building.	Council
3	Continue the staged works for construction of the recreation trail. This stage could include connection to the entry area (as part of recommendation 1) and extension of the loop around the cricket ovals and soccer grounds.	Council with potential involvement of Service Clubs
4	Commence the upgrading of the irrigation systems based on the key findings from the cost analysis.	Council, GT Football, GT Cricket
5	Remove the existing building used by netball (given completion of the multi-purpose community building) and replace with a shade structure. Add a half netball court into the vacant court area.	Council, GT Saints Netball Club
6	Develop a grassed open space area between the proposed car parking for the multi-purpose community building and the internal road leading to the Cricket Club. Construct a small play facility within the open space and a group shelter (with barbeque facilities) at the southern end of the soccer pitches.	Council
7	Removal of un-necessary fences within the Sports complex to help open up some open spaces. This includes the bushland corner near Davies Street and Marguerite Street, around the bitumen tennis courts and between the former caretaker's house and Archery Club.	Council
8	Review applications for new use and development within the Sports Complex with regard to the vision, principles and guiding policies set out in the Development Master Plan.	Council, Advisory Committee
9	Review the George Town Sports Complex Development Plan 2016 in 10 years with minor reviews on an annual basis with the input of the Sports complex Advisory Committee.	Council

### **3.4 USING THE DEVELOPMENT MASTER PLAN**

Once approved by Council, the Development Master Plan will provide a framework for guiding on-going decision making about the Sports Complex and for future negotiations with the sporting and recreation Clubs and groups. Having an agreed Development Master Plan will enable Council to:

- assess proposals for development and/or key management decisions about the Sports Complex;
- formulate a long term budget to upgrade and improve the Sports Complex;
- seek resource and funding assistance to instigate the recommended actions; and
- consult with key stakeholders and the community about the future planning, development and management of the Sports Complex.

#### **3.4.1 Decision Making**

Once the Development Master Plan is reviewed by the wider community and adopted by the Council, it provides a strong basis for assessing new proposals for development or key management actions in the Sports Complex.

Council should also assess whether the proposed development or management action will impact, either positively or negatively, on the achievement of the other recommended actions for the Sports Complex.

Council should ensure that any proposed development or major management action does not conflict with the long term vision, principles and guiding policies for the Sports Complex, as set out in Section 3.1. A thorough appraisal with community consultation should take place if any proposed development and/or major management action provides scope for conflict with the long term vision and guiding principles for the Sports Complex or achievement of the other recommended actions.

#### **3.4.2 Long Term Budget**

The Development Master Plan allows the Council to prepare a long term budget for the upgrading of facilities and improving the management of the Sports Complex. This could be undertaken through the preparation of a 5 Year Works Plan.

Whilst funds need to be distributed across many Council functions, the Sports Complex is the premier sports and recreation facility for the municipality and consistent investment of resources over a long time frame will provide a range of environmental, economic and social benefits to the community beyond the dollar value involved. Investment will also reinforce the potential of the Sports Complex to better cater for a range of recreational, social and health needs within the community.

### **3.4.3 Resource Assistance**

The Development Master Plan can be used as a vehicle to support submissions for funding assistance under programs managed by the Commonwealth and State Governments. As the Development Master Plan covers a wide range of interests – sport, recreation, community open space, health, access etc – there may be opportunities to use the Development Master Plan to target available funds. The Development Master Plan may also be used as a guide for engaging and guiding the support of community and Service Clubs for improving facilities for the community.

### **3.4.4 Consultation**

The Development Master Plan can become a useful mechanism for communicating with stakeholders interested in the development and management of the Sports Complex. In particular, stakeholders can provide advice as to the priorities for action and what aspects of the Plan may need to alter during any review process. It is recommended that Council undertake 'minor' reviews of the Development Master Plan every second year with the input of the George Town Sports Complex Advisory Committee. A 'major' review of the Development Master Plan should occur every 10 years, with significant involvement of the local community and other stakeholders.