



*looking after
our community*

Recreation Strategy 2013

August

STRATEGIC PLANNING

25 July 2013

This document has been prepared by Mid-Western Regional Council.

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Executive Summary

The purpose of the strategy is to reinforce the direction provided in the 2005 Strategy and continue to offer direction to Council and the community on the planning and development of recreation opportunities and facilities over the next 10-15 years.

The methodology included an extensive community survey undertaken by Micromex Research. The feedback identified high levels of satisfaction with sport and recreation facilities and there was no widespread belief within the community that the area requires a specific (new) sporting facility. Further, 72% of respondent was supportive of a plan to have one key regional sporting complex at Glen Willow. Council's focus should be on the maintenance and embellishment of existing facilities and the continued development of Glen Willow.

As an outcome of the study, a large number of issues were identified. Many of these are summarised in the following sections of the report. By analysing and integrating these issues, a number of 'high priority' were identified (based on their strategic importance, their relationship to other issues, identified gaps and/or their significance in terms of the level of community need/demand expressed).

The priority issues for Council's future management of recreation facilities are detailed in section 7 with the specific recommendations listed below:

Management practices and Council's role

Recommendation: *That Council continue to support the Sports Council's, including the revival of the Rylstone/Kandos Sports Council in their role in the management and organisation of sport in the region.*

Efficiency of management and maintenance

Recommendation: *The Council undertake the necessary consultation to relocate rugby union to Glen Willow and redevelop Jubilee Oval, the Rugby Clubhouse site and former netball courts for urban development in the short term. A longer term concept plan be prepared for the option to relocate hockey and softball from West End and junior league from Cahill Park in the future.*

Recommendation: *That Council develop that a strategy for the ongoing upgrade and maintenance of play grounds at a rate of one within 400m of a dwelling.*

Recommendation: *That consideration be given to the disposal of pocket parks that represent a duplication of space or are not contributing to the overall open space network.*

Recommendation: Developer contributions (via the Section 94 Plan) should be directed towards the provision of equipment or facilities and embellishment of facilities as a whole, rather than the provision of land.

External Promotion of Sporting Facilities

Recommendation: That Council, through organised sporting groups, the Sports Council's and Mudgee Regional Tourism Inc, investigate opportunities for the promotion of the region's sporting facilities for sports related tourism.

Equity of opportunity

Recommendation: That Council encourage participation of youth in decision making in regard to open space and recreation planning and management through the youth council.

Recommendation: The Council continue to develop shared pedestrian/cycleway networks throughout the towns including cycle warning signage on local roads adjacent to the urban areas.

Facility development and improvement

Recommendation: That Council focus on the maintenance and embellishment of the existing infrastructure and delivery of Stages 2 and 3 of the Glen Willow facility in conjunction with rationalisation of duplicated facilities.

Recommendation: That Council investigate opportunities which would facilitate access to swimming year round.

Strategic Asset Management and Planning

Recommendation: That Council prepare a detailed capital works plan to set priorities for the ongoing management of Open Space and Recreation throughout the region.

1.0 Introduction

Sport and recreation play an important role in the Mid-Western Regional Local Government Area (LGA). A large number of recreation facilities are located throughout the LGA. Most of these facilities are managed and maintained Council.

1.1 Background

In 2005, Council commissioned GHD Pty Ltd to undertake a study of recreation and cultural facilities, activities and community needs, and prepare the Mudgee Shire Recreation and Cultural Strategy for the former Mudgee Shire Council Area. Further, in February 2008 Council adopted a Recreational and Open Space Strategic Plan 2007. The latter sort to build on the recommendations of the 2005 Strategy and produced a strategic plan for the maintenance and capital expenditure on recreational facilities within the region. The 2007 Strategic Plan also incorporated those parts of the Mid-Western Regional LGA not covered in the 2005 Strategy being in the former Rylstone Shire.

This review document provides a review of the 2005 Recreation Strategy. While it utilises the data presented in the 2007 Strategic Plan, the purpose is not to provide maintenance and capital works program, rather to look at the direction set in 2005, determine whether we are still on the right track and make recommendations moving forward.

The 2005 Strategy identified and recorded the changing needs and concerns of the local community, with respect to recreation (and cultural¹) activities at that time. The study provided a range of recommendations and priorities for future planning, management and funding allocation to meet these needs. Those recommendations, together with a comment as to the Council response are outline below.

1.1.1 Management Practices and the Role of Council – Sports Councils

There were (in 2005) two Sports Councils; in Gulgong and Mudgee. Issues of coordination, representation of various sports and communication were identified as issues.

Response: Council continues to support the operation of the Sports Councils which function in Gulgong and Mudgee. There is a Sports Council representing Rylstone/Kandos however it has been relatively inactive in recent years. This should be addressed in terms of the revival of the Rylstone/Kandos Sports Council to better coordinate sport in this area.

¹ The study undertaken in 2005 included cultural facilities. This review is concerned only with Open Space and Recreation

1.1.2 Efficiency of Management and Maintenance

The 2005 Strategy suggested that better management could be achieved by locating facilities together and developing multi use and shared facilities.

Response: Council actively sort and received funding for a multi use regional sporting facility at Glen Willow. The first stage of Glen Willow was officially opened in 2012 and included a premier football field, grandstand seating for 1000 including, a new netball facility and touch football and soccer facilities.

The other issues raised in terms of maintenance concerned the efficiency of managing a large area of open space. The total area of both developed and undeveloped recreation areas exceeds the demand generated by the population. The excessive number of pocket parks was provided as an example. These are underutilised and it is simply not possible for Council to provide and maintain facilities within all of these parks.

Finally, the 2005 Strategy raised the issue of rationalisation of the number and location of ovals and playing fields, however, at the same time recognising that this was not generally acceptable to the community.

Response: Council has not addressed the rationalisation of pocket parks, nor sports fields, however, this is an issue that has been once again canvassed in this review. Although it did not undertake to dispose of open space, Council did respond to the recommendations in terms of prioritising the provisions of facilities to achieve a desirable standard. The priorities identified by in 2005 for improvements to playground equipment in parks, together with the Council response is illustrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1: PARK UPGRADES

	Response
Recommendation of Playground Upgrade Maintain/Embellish	
Lawson Park	Replacement of playground equipment, including fencing
Four other parks in Mudgee	Playground equipment installed at: Robinson Park (fenced) Blackman Park Bellevue (fenced)
2 Parks in Gulgong inc Billy Dunn Oval	Installation of new equipment at Apex Park Installation of new Equipment at Anzac Park (fenced)
Parks in Villages	Goolma

1.1.3 Coordination and Communication

The 2005 Strategy recommended that improvements could be made to the communication and coordination of open space.

Response: Council has continued to support the Sports Councils. Improvements to bookings and the processes for coordinating activities have been made through better use of Councils web site.

1.1.4 Equity and Opportunity

An outcome of the 2005 Strategy centred around the need to address specific groups being women and youth. It suggested this could be achieved through:

- Improvement to the swimming pools
- Promoting cycling
- Promoting youth involvement in the Sports Council
- Improving access to coaching and regional level competitions
- Investigate additional skate park and basketball facilities
- Improvements to netball facilities

Further, the demographic profile indicated a trend (which is continuing today) towards an aging population and in response recommendation were made focused on improvements to walking tracks; in particular a track along Cudgegong River from Lawson Park to Walkers Oval and general improvements to Lawson Park as a premier park.

Response: Council has completed upgrades at the pools. All three pools are now heated and have new change room facilities.

Shared pedestrian/cycleways have been established in Mudgee from Bellevue, through Lawson Park to Walkers Oval (with a further extension proposed that will ultimately connect through to Putta Bucca Wetland) and along Ulan and Putta Bucca Roads. A shared pedestrian/cycleway exists linking Rylstone and Kandos with a further link to Charbon due for completion within the next 2 years. Work is also commenced on a path in Gulgong.

1.1.5 Facility Development

The need for improvement to existing and provision of new facilities was identified. These recommendations are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2 FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

<i>Improvement/Upgrade</i>	<i>Response</i>
Mudgee Pool	Upgrades to filtration and pumps, new change room, office and canteen facilities (and heating at all pools)
Netball Courts (west end)	New competition grade netball facilities at Glen Willow
Expansion of clubhouse at West End	Moving netball took some pressure off the shared facilities.
Parks – upgrade playground equipment	Replacement and upgrades undertaken
<i>New Facilities</i>	<i>Response</i>
Indoor Pool	Upgrades at three pools ²
Playground Equipment in Lawson Park	Installed
Walking Tracks	Installed and ongoing
Picnic Facilities in Natural Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avisford Reserve • Red Bank Creek Dam 	No facilities at Avisford or Red Bank Dam, however, significant works undertaken at Putta Bucca Wetlands
Regional Sporting Facility at Glen Willow	Stage 1 completed
Formalise Open Space Corridor along Cudgegong River	Completed to Walkers Oval, on-going

1.1.5 Future Strategic Planning

There were two initiatives identified:

- Open Space Walking Track between Lawson Park and Walkers Oval; and
- Policy for the development of parks in new release areas.

As discussed above, Council has plans to continue the walking track along the river, ultimately linking up with Glen Willow via a pedestrian bridge at Cox Street and extension of the track to Putta Bucca Wetlands and providing a loop back to Mudgee via Putta Bucca and Ulan Roads. The urban release area at Caerleon will also be linked back to Mudgee with a shared pathway running parallel to the railway corridor and linking into the Bellevue Estate development.

Earlier in 2013, Council adopted a Development Control Plan which includes requirements for the provision of or access to parks or open space with any new residential subdivision of 20 lots or more. This is intended to support the provision of access to open space in the urban areas of the towns whereby all dwellings will be within 400m of a local park or playground.

² Council is in the unique situation where it is responsible for three full size Olympic swimming pools. A decision was taken to retain the three pools and upgrade facilities as opposed to investigating the feasibility of renationalisation of swimming pools in order to facilitate the capital investment in a 25m indoor facility. This is not to say that the development of a year round swimming facility could not be considered in the longer term and as the population base increases.

1.2 Purpose and scope of the review

The purpose of the strategy is to reinforce the direction provided in the 2005 GHD Strategy and continue to offer direction to Council and the community on the planning and development of recreation opportunities and facilities over the next 10-15 years.

Mid-Western Regional Council owns or controls significant recreation assets, including major facilities, ovals, parks and buildings. Council has a responsibility to its ratepayers to ensure that these assets are used and maintained efficiently and effectively.

The allocation of scarce resources (including funding and staffing) across numerous competing recreational priorities is an ever-increasing challenge for local Councils. In an environment of high level of scrutiny, community involvement and requirements in terms of accountability, there is a need to ensure adequate strategic (or forward) planning.

As outlined above, Council has been active in the delivery of recommendations of the 2005 strategy largely through the 2007 Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan and many of these are ongoing (Glen Willow, cycleways, local park upgrades). The review aims confirm the direction of Council in terms of open space planning and set a range of new targets and recommendations for the going management and development of open space and recreational facilities across the LGA.

1.3 Methodology

In order to determine the ongoing needs of the community in terms of open space and recreations it is important to understand the current situation and the overview of action predicated from the 2005 strategy as outlined above provide a grounding. In addition it is necessary to understand both facility supply and community demand.

Understanding **facility supply** involved a review of existing facilities, their location, current function and types of opportunities offered. This was used to develop a good understanding of the current situation with respect to facility supply (ie. their condition, level of use, facility types, user groups etc) and information on the alternatives available. Facilities include both areas of open space, fields, parks etc, and buildings used for sport/recreation purposes.

An understanding of **community demands** with respect to recreation and cultural activities was gained through consultation with facility users, sporting and community groups, local schools, interested residents and a review of current trends and demographic data. Information gathered during the supply and demand assessment phase was analysed to determine priority needs, develop management strategies, and prepare the Recreation Strategy.

1.3.1 Facility supply assessment

An evaluation of the region's recreation and open space assets was undertaken to determine the existing supply of sport and recreation resources. It involved preparation of an inventory of facilities available to the public throughout the LGA. In summary Council maintains 55 parks, gardens and

ovals/playing fields across the town and villages in the region. The complete inventory is included in Appendix A. Further, the Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan classifies the recreational facilities as follows:

- Regional Parks – A reserve that residential and visitors are willing to travel to and from the community that they live in.
- Neighbourhood Parks – A developed urban reserve designed for ease of pedestrian access.
- Local/Pocket Parks – A local reserve within the urban community that may be partly developed for amenity purposes.
- Reserves – Includes Crown land for which Council is the Trust Manager and other undeveloped reserves.
- Regional Sports Grounds - A sports ground that is designed and used for active sport on a regular basis.
- Local Sports Grounds - A reserve that has been primarily developed for activities within the town.

REGIONAL PARKS

The reserve may enjoy a particularly advantageous location or have recreational assets of a higher quality than a neighbourhood reserve. It is likely to have recreational appeal together with providing a high amenity value through landscape features and planting. Shade trees will be prevalent. Quality toilets, regional scale playground, well maintained amenity planting, paths, lighting, family picnic facilities (barbecue, picnic tables etc) and developed car parking facilities will all be provided. The visitor impact on this type of reserve will be significant. Lawson Park and Robinson Parks in Mudgee, Anzac Park in Gulgong and Coomber Park in Kandos are in this classification.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

The reserve will be easily accessible, probably from more than one road frontage. The reserve will be well maintained, free draining, have flat or gently undulating grassed areas, be safe and provide an attractive welcoming ambiance to the immediate local community within a fifteen minute walking distance. Neighbourhood reserves will host children's play equipment, seating, may include amenity lighting, paths and attractive planting.

LOCAL / POCKET PARKS

Likely to provide a green buffer and possible amenity mitigation against development, be planted with trees (where possible) and have a lower level of maintenance to a neighbourhood park. Probably suitable for dog walking with reasonable pedestrian access and possibly providing a "green" link to other reserves or open space. A local park may be a drainage reserve and is likely to have only basic assets such as seats and bins. Play equipment will generally not be required but may be provided in some cases. Not all parks need to be 'developed' to provide benefits to the community and the simple provision of open space and a green buffer may justify the existence of the park.

RESERVES

Council is Trust Manager for a number of Crown Reserves throughout the region, and has traditionally provided limited funds to undertake any works on these areas. Similarly there are a number of large reserves that provides for informal leisure experiences.

REGIONAL SPORTS GROUNDS (MIXED USE)

This is more than a sports ground, rather a facility. It will have formally maintained sports turf for a mixture of winter and/or summer sport. The sports turf areas are maintained to an appropriate standard for the sports code use. It will include grandstand seating, multiple amenities buildings catering for the range and number of sports accommodated. Car parking will be extensive and the facility will be suitable to attract competition at a local, regional, state and national level. Glen Willow in Mudgee is the only such facility in the region.

LOCAL SPORTS GROUNDS

These reserves will have formally to semi-formal maintained sports turf for a mixture of winter and/or summer sport. The sports turf areas are maintained to an appropriate standard for the sports code use. Informal recreation may be restricted to certain parts of the reserve. Toilets, changing facilities and car parking are likely to be available and some reserves may have sports club facilities. Clubs (or Council) may have constructed floodlights to enable evening training.

1.3.2 Assessment of community needs/demands

An understanding of the community's demands for sport and recreation facilities and activities was gained through a number of sources.

Council has recently undertaken Community Plan process (2011) which included a significant community engagement process. The results of the community engagement for the Community Plan have been utilised as they relate to Open Space and Recreation.

In addition specific survey work was undertaken by Micromex Research in the form of surveys with sporting groups and schools (Appendix B).

Targeted engagement was also undertaken with family day care and other identified users of playgrounds including parents with young children.

2.0 Context

The Mid-Western Region is located 250km from Sydney in the Central West of NSW, the area covers over 9,000 square kilometres and has a population of 22,318.

The Mid-Western Region includes the towns of Gulgong, Kandos, Mudgee and Rylstone in addition to the rural villages of Birriwa, Bylong, Charbon, Clandulla, Goolma, Hargraves, Ilford, Lue, Pyramul, Ulan, Windeyer and Wollar.

2.1 State/national planning context for the study

2.1.1 Relevant legislation

There is a range of legislation relevant to Council's planning for, and management of, recreation and open space facilities. The main acts relevant to the planning and management of Council's open space reserves are as follows:

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING & ASSESSMENT ACT 1979 (EP&A ACT)

The EP&A Act and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 provide the basis for the preparation of statutory land use planning instruments (including local environmental plans and state environmental planning policies) as well as the assessment of development proposals.

CROWN LANDS ACT 1989

A significant proportion of the open space within Mid-Western Regional LGA is gazetted Crown reserves, under the 'care, control and management' of Council. The Crown Lands Act governs the planning, management and use of Crown land, including its reservation or dedication for a public purpose. Crown land must be managed and used in accordance with the following:

- The principles of Crown land management;
- The reservation; and
- Any conditions and provisions within the specific zoning in the Council's local environmental plan.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1993

The management of land owned by Council ('public land') is guided by the requirements of the Local Government Act, in particular the *Local Government Amendment (Community Land Management) Act 1998*. Public land is defined to mean any land vested in or under the control of Council (excluding Crown land). Land management requirements under the Act include:

- Land identification - Councils are required to identify and maintain a register of all land under their control;
- Land classification - Councils are required to classify all public land as 'operational' or 'community' land; and
- Plans of management - Councils are required to produce plans of management for all community land.

OTHER LEGISLATION AND REQUIREMENTS

There are numerous other acts and regulations relevant to the planning and management of Council facilities and open space reserves, including those relevant to environmental management (such as Water Management Act, Heritage Act, Noxious Weeds Act etc), management/development of buildings (such as various Australian Standards) and other guidelines and requirements.

2.1.2 Policies and standards

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING GUIDELINES

The (then) Department of Planning in December 2010 released an update of the 'Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Planning: Guidelines for Local Government'. The purpose of the guidelines is to encourage Councils to prepare open space and recreation plans. Through these guidelines, the Department encourages Councils to adopt a needs-based approach to open space planning, in preference to use of standards (such as the old 2.9 ha of open space per 1000 people standard). The guidelines:

- Recommend Councils move towards a system of open space classification based on what experiences users gain (i.e. community demands or needs) from a visit, rather than on what facilities are present (i.e. supply);
- State that the use of the terms 'active' and 'passive' to classify open space is no longer supported, and recommends alternative terms such as structured/organised and non-organised/casual; and
- Recommend open space quality goals, including:
 - minimum open space size of 0.5ha;
 - each area greater than 1 ha to be linked to at least one other area;
 - each household should be within 400m of open space of at least 0.5ha;
 - a diversity of settings is encouraged;
 - sports fields should primarily be playable;
 - terrain should provide an alternative to that prevailing in the area; and
 - linear open space should have capacity for good pedestrian and bicycle movements and have houses facing and side on.

2.1.3 Local Planning Context

Community Plan – Council has a community Plan which acts as the highest level strategic document and directs the allocation of resources. The Community Plan recognises the importance of open space and recreation in *theme 1: Looking After the Community*. Allocation of resources towards open space and recreation, including funding for particular items has to be linked back to and meet the priorities set in the community plan and articulated through the four year Delivery Program and annual Operational Plan.

Local Environmental Plan 2012 – the Mid-Western Regional Local Environmental Plan 2012 (LEP) governs land use within the LGA. Open Space is typically zoned RE1 Public Recreation in the LEP. The RE2 Private Recreation zone applies to privately owned open space areas typically clubs, golf courses and race courses.

The LEP also functions as a mechanism for the classification and reclassification of open space as either “community” or “operational” land for the purposes of management under the Local Government Act.

Development Control Plan 2013 – Council adopted a new Development Control Plan (DCP) in February 2013. The DCP provides guidelines for Council, the Community and developers on a range of issues. In terms of open space and recreation, the subdivision provisions of the DCP now require that any development of equal to or greater than 20 lots include access to a park, playground or passive open space area.

2.2 Management of recreation activities and facilities

2.2.1 Overview

Local Government plays an important role in the management and coordination of sport, recreation and open space. This typically encompasses:

- Direct provision/development of sport and recreation facilities, such as playing fields and swimming pools, together with supporting infrastructure such as changing rooms, public toilets and lighting etc.;
- Providing assistance to sporting organisations for the development of facilities through land grants and loans etc.;
- Allocation of land and control of development through the land use planning system, including zoning, development contributions and strategic land use planning;
- Management and maintenance of parks and facilities; and
- Advocacy and support, including lobbying and discussions with other agencies, providing information and advice to user groups and individuals.

Local plans, strategies and reports relevant to the management of recreation activities and facilities include:

- Council's corporate planning - including the Community Plan - provide an overall guide to the management of Council's activities and responsibilities
- Strategic land use plans guiding land releases and the form and location of future development - these are linked with requirements in terms of the allocation of facilities and the nature of these facilities.
- Management planning for specific areas of responsibility (such as Community Services, Works, open space planning etc) and/or individual reserves (plans of management for particular parks/reserves).

2.2.2 Council's management role in terms of facility provision

Councils own or control substantial recreation assets, including major sports facilities, ovals and local and regional parks. Typically, local government areas (LGAs) have a range of facilities that can be used by the public as the location/venue for a variety of sport and recreation opportunities. These usually include:

- Sports fields (either multi-purpose or single purpose e.g. cricket ovals, football fields) and associated clubhouses;
- Other sporting facilities, courts and courses (usually single purpose, but increasingly, new facilities feature multi-purpose playing spaces e.g. tennis courts, squash courts, indoor facilities, etc);
- Swimming pools;
- Parks, gardens and environmental reserves;
- Showgrounds and racecourses.

These facilities are usually supplied and managed by local Councils, but can also be developed and managed by community and sporting groups (including local clubs and service organisations/community groups).

Funding for the development and maintenance of facilities (other than school facilities) usually originates from a number of sources:

- Council funds;
- State Government grants;
- Fund raising by local community/service groups;
- Sponsorship by private companies/organisations etc; and
- Club membership fees.

Traditionally, local Councils play a major role in managing, maintaining and funding sport and recreation facilities.

In the region all facility types listed above are provided. Council manages the majority of facilities (with the assistance of the Sports Councils - see section 2.2.3), although numerous sporting groups assist to varying degrees. Council provides support to facilities and sporting clubs throughout the LGA, ranging from annual funding grants, to assistance with maintenance and provision of support infrastructure / amenities (eg. children's playground equipment).

2.2.3 Section 355 Committees

Mid-Western Regional Council has a strong tradition of local community involvement in the development, maintenance and management of its recreation and sporting resources. The Mudgee and Gulgong Sports Councils, and local sporting groups, have and continue to play a very important role over a number of years with respect to sports administration, coaching, organisation, facility management and fund raising.

Management of recreation facilities is assisted by a number of what are referred to as 'Section 355 Committees'. These are committees of Council, enabled by section 355 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. This section of the Act enables Council to delegate functions to a committee. These committees include:

- Mudgee Sports Council;
- Gulgong Sports Council;
- Rylstone/Kandos Sports Council; and
- The Showground Management Committee.

The Sports Councils are made up of two Councillors appointed by Council and a representative of each of the sporting organisations that are financial members of the Sports Councils. The Sports Councils collect annual fees from sports groups for use of grounds, and respond to requests for assistance and funding from groups and individuals in relation to sporting activities.

Responsibilities include (as identified in the 'Delegation of Authority for the Mudgee and Gulgong Sports Council', Mid-Western Regional Council):

- Allocation of sporting grounds to any sporting organisation or person;
- Ensuring that the groups using them look after the grounds and associated facilities;
- Formulating a list of priorities (with costing) for ground improvements, to be submitted to Council annually for consideration;
- Preparing and submitting annually a list of recommended fees and charges for the grounds and collecting fees and charges; and
- Promoting active participation in sport by the widest possible cross section of the community.

Council is responsible for maintenance of facilities (in response to works requests from the Sports Councils), upkeep of grounds, and major items of capital expenditure.

2.3 The role of other levels of government

2.3.1 NSW Department of Sport and Recreation

The Department seeks to provide and facilitate sport and recreation services. Its role is to assist and encourage all sectors of the NSW community to participate in sporting and recreation activities, with the aim of improving the wellbeing of the residents of NSW.

The Department provides:

- Financial assistance to local governments, sporting organisations and groups and individuals through the administration of government grants and scholarships, available to develop sporting infrastructure, nurture sporting talent and assist coaches, officials and sports administrators.
- Advice and information on sports and recreation in NSW via their website www.dsr.nsw.gov.au;
- Education, awareness programs and guidance on sport, recreation and associated administrative issues;
- Training of coaches, sporting associations and clubs and talented athletes; and
- Sporting activities through their sports and recreation centres and academies.

3.0 Recreation facilities and opportunities

This section provides an overview of the supply of public sport and recreation facilities and opportunities in Region. The results of the facilities inventory are presented.

3.1 Facility supply

3.1.1 Overview of Council's open space

An evaluation of Mid-Western Regional Council's recreation facilities and resources was undertaken to determine the existing supply of facilities and recreation opportunities within region. It involved preparation of an inventory of facilities available to the public throughout the area.

Council currently administers open space areas covering approximately 458ha of land zoned RE1 Public Recreation. The majority is Crown land and includes natural areas such as Avisford Reserve. Approximately 80 ha is owned by Council and classified as community land under the Local Government Act and these are typically the parks and sports fields. This strategy is focused to land classified as community land and reserved for public recreation purposes of which there is in the order of 112ha in 55 separate parks/reserves/sports fields (Table 3).

TABLE 3 PARK ASSET CLASSIFICATIONS

Asset class	Total area
Regional Parks	31.4
Neighbourhood Parks	20.6
Smaller urban parks/pocket parks	3.7
Reserves	49.2
Regional Sports Facilities	9
Local Sports Grounds	12.7
Total Area	126.6

* Note: excludes linear open space and cycleways eg along railway line at Bellevue

3.1.2 Results of facility inventory

The facility inventory is provided as Table A1 in Appendix A.

Each facility has been categorised in this table, in accordance with its principal function, namely:

R – General recreation	Venue for non-structured leisure activity, such as a park or barbecue/picnic area. This category covers the larger urban parks, and the region's 'premier' parks.
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P - Pocket parks	Smaller urban parks generally < 0.5ha in size.
S – Sport	Facility for organised sporting activity (i.e. competition and training). Includes sports fields and courts.
E – Environmental reserve	Area reserved for environmental/conservation purposes.
O - Other	Other facilities, including those unable to be classified.

Education

The following are the main education facilities located in the Mid-Western Region:

- TAFE NSW Mudgee Campus;
- Australian Rural Education Centre Co-operative, Mudgee;
- Mudgee High School (years 7-12);
- Gulgong High School (years 7-12);
- Kandos High School (years 7-12);
- St Matthews School, Mudgee (years K-10);
- All Hallows School, Gulgong (years K-6);
- Gulgong Public School;
- Cudgegong Valley Public School;
- Rylstone Public School;
- Kandos Public School;
- Ilford Public School;
- Goolma Public School;
- Hargraves Public School;
- Lue Public School;
- Bylong Public School.

Facilities available at the schools (not all facilities are available at all schools) include:

- Cricket nets/pitches;
- Basketball courts;
- Multipurpose oval/sports fields;
- Netball courts;

- Volleyball courts; and
- Play equipment

3.2 Sporting/recreation opportunities supplied by organised groups

Groups active in the Mid-Western Region include but are not limited to the following:

Mudgee	
Mudgee Cycle Club	Mudgee District Indoor Swimming Club
Mudgee Triathlon Club	Mudgee Golf Club
Hockey association	Mudgee Swimming Club
Little Athletics	Mudgee Tennis Club
Mudgee Amateur Swimming Club	Netball Association
Mudgee Basketball club	PCYC
Mudgee Bowling Club	Pony Club
Coutryfit gym	Rugby League Senior
AFL Black Swans	Rugby league Junior
Mudgee Bushwalker and bike riders	Rugby Union Club
Mudgee District Cricket Association	Softball
Mudgee District Junior Cricket Association	Touch Football Association
Mudgee District Motorcycle Club	Triathlon Club
Gulgong	
Gulgong Armature swimming club	Touch Football
Gulgong district cricket association	Gulgong Rugby League
Gulgong Junior Rugby League	Gulgong Bowling and Sporting Club
Pony Club	Gulgong Netball Club
Kandos/ Rylstone	
Henbury Sport & Recreation Club	Kandos Rylstone Touch
Kandos Rylstone Junior Rugby League	Kandos Rylstone Swimming Club
Kandos Rugby League	Kandos RSL Bowls Club

The diversity of clubs and associations serves to highlight the high demand placed on facilities accessed on a regular and ongoing basis.

Other activities available include those offered by private organisations, such as dance/ballet, karate, shooting, motor cross, physical culture and gymnastics.

In the course of the consultation for the recreation strategy, Council appointed Micromex research to undertake three separate surveys; a survey of sporting clubs and groups, schools and a random telephone survey throughout the LGA.

Mircomex Research under took a survey of the sporting groups within the region (see also section 4 and Appendix B). The survey was sent to 37 sporting groups and 18 responses were received. Despite the limited response, the survey results provide useful data in terms of the range of

facilities used and the numbers of participants. The table below provides an indication of the level of membership for those clubs who responded. Generally, the average total membership of sporting clubs is 250 indicating a strong emphasis on organised sports within the region.

TABLE 4 CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Membership	Average per club	Total
Active Adult Member	129	1936
Active Junior Member	110	1873
Social/administrative/life/ non-active	63	698
Total Members	250	4504

3.3 Regional Facilities

3.3.1 Glen Willow

The Glen Willow Regional Sporting Complex is Council's regional sporting venue and includes five (5) full size multi-use fields for both summer and winter competitions, netball courts, a synthetic cricket pitch, two additional amenities buildings, off-leash dog area, two playgrounds and parking for over 500 vehicles.

The Glen Willow Regional Sports Stadium component was completed in February, 2012 and offers;

- 10,000 capacity stadium
- 1,000 seat undercover grandstand
- 500lux lighting
- Additional fields available for use
- Media and broadcast facilities
- Change rooms (4) & coaches boxes (2)
- Canteen and bar facilities
- BBQ facilities
- Corporate hospitality/meeting spaces (2)
- Elevator

Since completion the stadium has hosted a number of major events including:

- 2013 NRL Game Parramatta v Gold Coast
- 2012 AAMI Country v City Origin
- 2012 Open Trans Tasman Touch Football Test Series
- Annual Grassroots Rugby Festival

- U12/13/18 Junior Country Rugby Championships
- Local rugby league and football (soccer) home fixtures.

NETBALL COURTS

The netball complex has 20 courts and amenities -

- Courts 1-4 are surfaced with cushioned acrylic plexicushion material, bringing it up to professional standards.
- Courts 5-8 are coated with durable acrylic/latex plexipave material, developed to the unique requirements of netball
- Courts 9-12 have painted asphalt surfaces.
- There are an additional 8 grassed courts
- Courts 1 – 8 have flood lights for night competition and training
- Facilities include:
 - Control room
 - First Aid Room
 - Change Room
 - Canteen
 - Club Room
 - Public toilets
 - Playground facilities

Netball continues to be the region's biggest participation sport with 655 registered members in 2012.

SOCCER/TOUCH FOOTBALL

The Glen Willow sporting complex features multi-use fields which are widely utilised by clubs and school groups and is also home to our local Football (Soccer) Club the Mudgee-Gulgong Wolves and the Mudgee Mudcrabs, our local Touch Football Club. Facilities include³:

- 4 full size fields with flood lights for night time play
- Club house and canteen facilities
- Change rooms
- First Aid room

³ Fire destroyed the Soccer/Touch amenities building in June 2013 and Council is currently in the planning phase for the re-development of this building with construction due for completion later this financial year.

- Public Toilets
- Kitchen
- Storage facilities
- Playground facilities
- BBQ facilities

The Masterplan for Glen Willow includes scope to accommodate additional playing fields and change room, club house and canteen facilities as well as car parking.

Facilities outside the LGA – The larger towns of Dubbo, Orange and Bathurst provide facilities including indoor swimming and synthetic hockey fields, however, other than or competition and organised events distances make access to these facilities difficult.

3.4 Duplication of Facilities

3.4.1 Swimming Pools

The Council is responsible for the operation and maintenance of three Olympic pools at Gulgong, Mudgee and Kandos. In 2012/13 Council undertook extensive works at all three pools including upgrades of the filtration systems and replacement of change room and amenities. This capital investment signals the intention of the Council to continue to operate all three sites. All three pools are outdoor heated pools which enables the seasonal to extend to 7 months. The 2005 Recreation Strategy highlighted an indoor pool as desirable for a community of the size of the Mid-Western Region, however, the priority in terms of spending has been in the maintenance of the existing facilities. The latest surveys also suggest an indoor pool as something that the community would see as desirable and this remains an option that Council could consider into the future and is discussed further in part 6.

3.4.2 Sports Fields

The Regional Sporting facility at Glen Willow was opened in 2012. The facility, as described earlier, caters for a range of sports including soccer, rugby league and rugby union. Unfortunately, despite the improvements undertaken to date, the complex cannot cater for all football codes. The master plan for Glen Willow includes the provision of cricket, softball, rugby, AFL and hockey grounds, the long term strategy being that all field based activities will ultimately be catered for at one multi sports facility.

In order to achieve the subsequent stages of the Glen Willow complex over time, rationalisation of the existing facilities in Mudgee will need to occur. The facilities being considered are Cahill Park, currently the home of junior rugby and located on Crown land managed by Council and West End which includes Jubilee Oval and caters for hockey, softball and rugby union with netball having relocated in 2012.

CAHILL PARK

Cahill Park in Mudgee continues to be the home of Junior Rugby League. Junior League has a participation numbers around 260 registered players and officials anticipated in the 2013 season. The facilities at the ground include change rooms, canteen and club house. There are four fields, one full size, one modified field and two small fields. The land itself is owned by the Crown. Given the facilities at their current location, there is currently no incentive for Junior League to relocate to Glen Willow.

WEST END (MUDGEE)

West End includes Jubilee Oval, netball courts, softball and hockey fields, canteen and amenities as well as car parking. With the opening of Glen Willow as a Regional sports facility, Council need to address the ongoing need for duplication of recreation facilities at West End. There are obstacles to the relocation of the remaining sports that use West End and these are discussed below.

Netball

The development of Glen Willow included a new state of the art netball facility, therefore the courts at West End which are now redundant. The netball courts at West End include both hard stand and grass courts that are no longer use for competition and continue to place a maintenance burden on Council. The relocation of netball has relieved pressure in terms of sharing the toilet, storage and canteen facilities at West End with hockey in winter.

Hockey

Mudgee Hockey Club has 120 members and uses the West End playing fields for the winter competition. In their response to the Micromex Research survey (refer Appendix B) the Hockey Club expressed satisfaction with both the facility and location, however noted problems with the condition of the surface following the softball season (Summer).

Softball

Mudgee Softball Association share the West End fields with hockey. They have 250 members and were positive about the canteen and toilet facilities. They would like to see lighting for evening competition and more permanent back nets on all 8 diamonds, dugouts and seating (Appendix B).

JUBILEE OVAL

Jubilee Oval, also located as part of the Westend complex includes an football ground, covered grandstand, bleachers, home and away change room and toilet facilities and an adjoining rugby clubhouse (on a separate parcel of land owned by the Mudgee Rugby Club). Since the development of Glen Willow, the ground is now predominately used for Rugby Union both Senior and Junior competitions during winter.

3.4.3 Opportunities for relocation

As discussed above, Glen Willow has the capacity to ultimately accommodate the field based sports, however, will need to realise the expansion into Stages 2 and 3 to achieve this. The Micromex research community survey canvassed the wider community view in terms of the support or otherwise for one regional sporting complex at Glen Willow accommodating the sports currently played at West End and Cahill Park. Overall the results showed that 73% of respondents were supportive with those that were not supportive sighting the cost and that this would be conducted at the expense of other sports as their reasons. An overview of the survey results is provided in section 5.

Generally, in terms of ongoing maintenance and resourcing the rationalisation of facilities should be considered further. Any relocation would need to be undertaken in consultation with the sporting groups affected. It is likely that should the plan to development Glen Willow as a multi sport facility, such development would have to be staged. For example, it may be possible to relocate say rugby union and junior league in the short term and look at maintaining hockey and softball at the current location. Discussion would also be required with the wider community in terms of the future use of abandoned sports grounds.

3.4.4 Duplication of Facilities in other towns

It should be noted that as a Regional Facility, Glen Willow also retains the opportunity to provide a venue for sport currently played at facilities outside Mudgee. In practical terms given the travel distances involved and lack of public transport the application of this would be severely limited. Further, there were no specific duplications identified in the strategy. Gulgong, Rylstone and Kandos are well served in terms of the area of dedication open space per head of population. Similarly, the size of the towns and location of open space relative to residential areas is positive in terms of walkable distance.

At this stage, the focus should remain on embellishment and maintenance of existing facilities in these towns, rather than looking to rationalise playing fields.

4.0 Assessment of Community Demands

This section provides an analysis of the Shire's demographic characteristics and trends in recreation participation, to provide a basis for preliminary assessment of potential community needs and demands.

4.1 Socio-economic analysis

4.1.1 Population Snapshot

Based on the 2011 census, the total population of the Mid-Western Regional LGA was 22,318 (11,284 males and 11,034 females) an increase of 5.1% since 2006. This follows a continuing trend over the past 10 years of higher than average (for regional areas) levels of population growth. This can be at least partly attributed to the boom in the resources sector. The median age of the population in 2011 was 41. Table 6 shows a breakdown of age cohorts between 2006 and 2011 both total number and as a proportion of the total population..

TABLE 5 CHARACTERISATION BY AGE

AGE CATEGORY	2006	% of population	2011	% of population
0-4 years	1,284	6.1	1,489	6.7
5-14 years	3,145	14.9	2,919	13.1
15-19 years	1,385	6.6	1,406	6.3
20-24 years	882	4.2	1,035	4.6
25-34 years	2,019	9.6	2,217	9.9
35-44 years	1,606	7.6	3,044	13.6
45-54 years	2,935	13.9	3,124	14.0
55-64 years	2,982	14.1	2,955	13.2
65-74 years	1,939	9.2	2,283	10.2
75-84 years	1,058	5.0	1,260	5.6
85 years and over	222	1.1	462	2.1

Source: ABS 2006 and 2011 Regional Profile

As can be seen in Table 5, the most significant change is in the 35-44 year age group with a 6% jump in the demographic as a proportion of total population. This is well above the next largest

change which was a 1% increase in both the 65-74 bracket and 85 + bracket. The trend reflects the migration within the region of the mine related workforce. In terms of the implications for the Recreation Strategy, the sustained growth would indicate a need for the ongoing development and maintenance of facilities within the region generally.

A further breakdown of the demographic data reveals a decline or limited growth within the other towns and villages outside the main centre of Mudgee as can be seen in Table 6.

TABLE 6 DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BETWEEN TOWNS

Town	2006	2011	% of population 2011
Mudgee#	8,249	9,830	44%
Gulgong	1,906	1,866	8%
Kandos	1,307	1,284	6%
Rylstone	616	624	3%
Rural & Villages	9,007	8,714	39%
Total	21,085	22,318	

Mudgee total excludes all residential land north of the Cudgegong River which was included in the rural area in the ABS census data.

Source: ABS 2006 and 2011 Regional Profile

Estimates of future population, although they can only be indicative, are important in recreation planning to determine community needs. In 2012, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and Mid-Western Regional Council jointly requested a study of the impacts of mining proposal in the region. This study, undertaken by Manidis Roberts, included a review of population trends and likely scenarios for future growth. As well as expected growth rates, the study assumed a 65% workforce migration rate (consistent with the developing trend in the 35-44 age cohort see above). The resulting prediction in population by 2020 is 30,875 and 33,160 by 2030. This is a significant growth in population and will place increasing pressure on the existing and demand for additional open space infrastructure.

ETHNICITY

The 2011 census indicated that 86% of the population were Australian born, representing a lower level of ethnic diversity than the NSW state average of 701% Australian born. Of the population who were born overseas in the 2011 Census, the United Kingdom was the main country of birth (3.1% of the population). The main language spoken at home was English.

MOBILITY

The level of mobility of people in the Mudgee LGA is very high for both the 1 and 5 year timeframes (22% were at a different address 1 year ago, and 47% five years ago). This can be attributed to the growth in mining and the migration of the workforce.

4.1.2 What the snapshot is telling us

Increased demand for open space and recreation facilities will occur because of an increase of up to 8,557 people in the next 7 years and 10,842 between now and 2030. Based on the current trends the main user groups influencing demand will be:

Seniors: will require a diverse range of facilities and activities to suit a range of abilities including cycling and walking tracks and passive recreation opportunities provided in parks and gardens that are safe and accessible.

Families with children: will predominately require facilities for structured recreation such as playgrounds, organised sport and cycling.

Couples without children: will require a mix of structured and unstructured activities.

People living alone: will require opportunities for social interaction through organised sport as well as unstructured opportunities.

Youth: have a distinct set of recreational needs. They require safe, acceptable places to interact such as skate parks and well as structured recreation such as organised sport and opportunities for higher level competition and coaching.

Visitors: will require access to parks and gardens and cycling.

4.2 Summary of current recreation trends

In order to determine the current level of participation in recreational activities and current trends it was necessary to look at national participation data as well as local trends.

National Trends

The Australian Sports Commission's Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) collects information on the frequency, duration, nature and type of physical activities participated in for exercise, recreation or sport by persons aged 15 years and over. ERASS has been collecting this information since 2001. It was conducted quarterly in 2010, with an annual total of 21,603 respondents across Australia. The following findings on participation are directly from the results of the 2010 survey.

- In 2010, an estimated 82.3% of the population living in occupied private dwellings, participated at least once annually in physical activity for exercise, recreation or sport.
- An estimated 69.4% of the population, participated at least once per week, on average, in physical activity.
- Almost half of the population participated at least three times per week, on average, in physical activity.
- Participation rates were more frequent amongst females in all age groups other than 15-24 and 85+ where it was males

- The 2010 regular participation rate remains unchanged from 2009 (47.7%). Between 2001 and 2004 the rate increased to 47.2%, then declined slightly between 2004 and 2006, before increasing again in the period 2007 to 2008. The overall trend appears to be a slowly increasing regular participation rate.
- This increase was slightly greater for females (11 percentage points) than males (ten percentage points).
- Except in the youngest and oldest age groups, females had higher regular participation rates in any physical activity. Regular participation rates in any physical activity were also higher among the university-educated and those still at secondary school.
- The top ten physical activities in 2010, in terms of total participation rate, were;
 - walking
 - aerobics/fitness
 - swimming
 - cycling
 - running
 - golf
 - tennis
 - bushwalking
 - outdoor football
 - netball
- An estimated 35.9% of the population, participated at least once in walking for exercise, recreation or sport in 2010.
- In terms of the top ten physical activities, the largest increase in total participation between 2001 and 2010 was for aerobics/fitness, increasing steadily by 110% since 2001. Participation in running, outdoor football, cycling and walking also increased in the ten-year period.
- Activities experiencing declines in participation between 2001 and 2010 included tennis (down 24% compared to 2001 and now at its second lowest participation rate since 2001), swimming (down 6% since 2001) and golf (down 5% between 2001 and 2010). Total participation in golf declined steadily between 2002 and 2007, but recovered somewhat in the period 2008 to 2010.

Local Trends

Local trends in recreation and participation in sport we collected in a difference manner in a survey undertaken by Micromex Research. A full copy of the survey results is in Appendix B. The key objectives of the survey, which was conducted in August 2012 were:

- Building a profile of the community's recreational behaviour and facility use
- Measuring community attitudes to the current provision of recreation infrastructure
- Identifying key areas of opportunity to improve the provision of recreation infrastructure

- Better understanding the community's expectations with infrastructure provision
- Identifying opportunities to improve and increase infrastructure usage

The survey tended to focus on the use and frequency of use of Council managed facilities, however, in terms of participation the top ten physical activities undertaken were:

- Walking
- Swimming
- Cycling
- Jogging
- Golf
- Dancing
- Netball
- Tennis
- Rugby league
- Cricket
- Horse riding

By way of comparison to the national trends, excluding Aerobics/fitness, the top five are the same and in the same order.

4.3 Implications for Mid-Western

Based on a comparison of the demographic characteristics with current trends and participation characteristics

Population and age structure

The Region's growth has important implications when planning for future facilities. Unlike many rural and regional areas in Australia, the LGA is experiencing positive growth (mainly in the town of Mudgee). As a result, there is less pressure on Council to rationalise facilities than there would be if the area was experiencing negative growth. However, although this requirement is not as pressing as it is in some areas, rationalisation still needs some consideration for reasons of efficiency in terms of funding allocation. Further, the investment in the development of a regional sporting complex at Glen Willow leads to question the on-going viability of the West End and Cahill Park sports grounds in terms of maintenance and management.

The LGA's age structure is an important consideration in identifying the types of recreation opportunities required in the future. The high proportion of young people mean that the following activities will be important into the future:

- Organised sport for children in the 5-14 year age;
- Opportunities for family oriented informal recreation (including parks with barbeque/picnic areas, natural areas with picnic facilities, and children's play facilities);
- Opportunities for informal recreation for young people in the 14-19 year age, including swimming, bicycle facilities, settings for informal, unstructured recreation where they can 'hang out' with friends.
- Opportunities for safe independent (i.e. not relying on parents) transport and access to facilities is also important for the 14-19 year age group. This includes public transport and well linked bicycle and pedestrian paths to major facilities.

The proportion of older people (greater than 60 years of age) is likely to continue to increase, meaning that recreation opportunities for this age group will become increasingly important (particularly given that older adults are likely to be fitter and more active than previous generations). This includes:

- Opportunities for informal recreation and general fitness type activities, including walking trails and pedestrian paths, and swimming for fitness;
- Similar to young people, access to public transport becomes increasingly important for older age groups.

Facility supply implications

The importance of facilities/programs providing opportunities for the most popular activities should be recognised in terms of future management and maintenance priorities. For sport/active recreation, the top five most popular activities include in the LGA almost mirror that at the nationwide level and are walking, swimming, cycling, jogging and golf.

The more popular activities for adults are generally well provided for in terms of facilities. It is recognised that recreation activities such as walking, running and cycling do not necessarily require formal facilities. However, there is a need for on-going recognition of the popularity of these informal activities in terms of opportunities for future facilities. Council has, over the past 5 years continued to develop and extend dual cycle/pedestrian ways and these initiatives should continue.

Popular organised activities also well provided for (in terms of either the number of dedicated facilities, supporting facilities/amenities and/or organised programs) include netball, football (including soccer and touch). This has largely been as a result to the development of Glen Willow, however, there is a level of satisfaction across the whole LGA as demonstrated in the surveys.

Popular activities, which, although they are provided with facilities, may not be able to respond to likely increases in the level of demand, include year round swimming and basketball without significant capital investment in new facilities.

To ensure adequate flexibility in the future to cater for changing needs and priorities, it will be necessary to continue to emphasise the provision of a range of facilities at consolidated locations

that accommodate flexible use (i.e. a wide range of needs/different user groups and a variety of activities). This supports the continuation of Stages 2 and 3 at Glen Willow.

Both traditional 'male sports' (eg cricket, rugby league and union) and popular 'female sports' (mainly netball) are well provided for in terms of facilities.

Access to Facilities

The centralisation of the regional facility at Glen Willow in Mudgee means that transport and improved access to these facilities from other areas of the LGA needs to be considered. The absence of public transport services indicates that transport/mobility could be a concern, particularly for teenagers located outside the town of Mudgee. However, the duplication of facilities across the region is prevalent, the most obvious example being swimming pools, but also sports grounds and premier parks means that access is generally good.

Given the likely population scenarios which see significant growth in Mudgee, it is reasonable to assume that this town in particular is likely to experience increased demand for safe access to local sport and recreation facilities, via pedestrian and cycle paths. Linkages between residential areas, schools and sport/recreation destinations will be a priority for transport and leisure related travel. Limitations on public mobility and access to sport and recreation opportunities should be recognised in future facilities planning and a benchmark of 400m from a park or recreation area for every new residential dwelling in the urban area should be maintained.

Similarly, although based on population trends, perhaps to a lesser extent, will be equivalent demands in Gulgong, Kandos and Rylstone as urban growth occurs and the needs of the community change over time. Again, mobility and access to recreation facilities within 400m of dwellings is pertinent.

5.0 Needs and Priorities Identified by the Community

The section provides a summary of the outcomes of community consultation activities undertaken as part of the study, including the input received during the public exhibition process. Issues and needs identified by the community during consultation activities are summarised.

5.1 Overview

The focus of the survey work undertaken by Mircomex Research on behalf of Council as part of the Recreation Strategy is to understand the current level of satisfaction with recreation and open space facilities within the region and determine both benchmarks for the supply of open space into the future and target areas for improvement in terms of existing facilities. It also canvassed the issue of the establishment and continuing development of a single multi use regional sports facility in Mudgee at Glen Willow.

The aim of the consultation activities was to seek community input with respect to:

- Building a profile of the community's recreational behaviour and facility use
- Measuring community attitudes to the current provision of recreation infrastructure
- Identifying key areas of opportunity to improve the provision of recreation infrastructure
- Better understanding the community's expectations with infrastructure provision
- Identifying opportunities to improve and increase infrastructure usage

The survey was in two parts being a community survey and a survey of sporting clubs, groups and schools.

In this context, the findings of the survey are found in Appendix B and summarised below.

Individual targeted consultation was also undertaken by staff of playground users through Family Day Care. Further, comment was sought on the Draft Recreation Strategy during a 28 day exhibition period which further highlights a number of issues. A summary of the issues raised in submission is attached in Appendix C.

5.2 Community Survey

Engagement in sporting and recreational activities

Households within the Mid-Western Regional Council LGA are identified as likely to engage in a variety of sport and recreational activities, the predominant being 'walking for recreation', which 63% of households engage in 'frequently' (at least once per week).

Swimming (24% frequently), cycling (16% frequently) and jogging (14% frequently) are the next most popular activities. It is relevant that swimming was second despite the survey being undertaken in winter (August) and the public pools not being open during this period.

It should be noted that softball and touch football were NOT included as "option" from a list of sports from which to select participation over the preceding 12 month period. This may have altered the outcome, although, overwhelmingly the community survey found that the majority of respondent participated most frequently in passive/unstructured activities such as walking, swimming, jogging and golf. Based on the participation levels in softball and touch football compared to activities with similar active members, we may have seen a "frequently" participation rate of between 6-8%. What was clear in the survey and through the strategy process is that there is a strong emphasis on sport and recreation in the region and the support of Council in assisting sporting groups and organisations remains essential.

Overall satisfaction with sport and recreation facilities

Overall, the research identifies moderately high levels of satisfaction with sport and recreation facilities from residents for the local area that they live in, as well as across the whole of the Council area. Dissatisfaction levels are low when considering their local sporting facilities (11%) and particularly low when considering the facilities offered across the whole of the Council area (5%).

Improving sport and recreation facilities

Approximately 1 in 3 (31%) respondents stated that they believed there was a specific sport or recreation facility lacking in the area, however, when asked to state the type of facility needed responses were broad, with no single facility dominating.

This result reflects the satisfaction outcomes identified within the research and indicates that there is no widespread belief within the community that the area requires a specific (new) sporting facility. Resident responses are more focused on improving the maintenance of existing facilities.

Level of support for a regional sporting complex

Overall, the research identifies moderate levels of support for a plan to have 1 key regional sporting complex at Glen Willow. 51% of respondents are identified as being 'supportive' or 'very supportive', 22% are 'moderately supportive' and 28% are 'not very supportive' or 'not at all supportive'.

A review of those residents who are not supportive of the plan identifies concerns around the cost of the project and that this development would be conducted at the expense of other sporting facilities.

5.3 Sporting Groups and Schools

A survey was mailed to 37 groups and clubs in September 2012 and despite a follow up in October only 18 sporting clubs and groups responded to the survey.

Problems associated with the facilities utilised by clubs/groups

Of the 18 respondents, 15 identified problems associated with the facilities utilised by their clubs/groups, with the large majority of these not of an urgent nature. Predominant concerns related to the overall condition of facilities and the need for maintenance/upgrades to be conducted.

Other problems expressed include:

- The seasonal opening times of local swimming pools
- The costs associated with the use of facilities
- Lack of Government funding for facilities

Positive features of the facilities utilised by clubs/groups

Respondents identified a wide range of positive features, or best things about, the facilities utilised by their clubs/groups. The key themes in relation to the positive features of the facilities used included:

- The location of the facilities
- The canteen and amenities available
- The maintenance and condition of the grounds

Future facilities and facility upgrades

Respondents suggested many improvements and upgrades which they believe will be needed in the future. These suggestions varied significantly and focused on the needs of their individual club/group. Overall, respondents wish for continued improvement of existing facilities and forward planning for further facilities which they believe will be required in the future.

Sports or activities Council should be providing facilities for

Respondents suggested multiple sports or activities that Council should be providing facilities for. These included:

- An indoor swimming facility
- Multi-purpose indoor sports centre
- Support for motorcycle clubs
- General improvements to all facilities

Other comments about sport and recreation facilities

Respondents expressed satisfaction with the current facilities provided by Council, particularly the Glen Willow Sporting Complex. Overall, respondents wish for Council to continue improving all facilities and their consideration of a variety of sports.

Schools

Feedback from the schools across the region was very positive with 14 schools responding to the survey (refer Appendix B for results). Schools indicated that they use a wide range of facilities the predominant being the pools. The level of satisfaction with Council facilities was high and there was support for Council to continue to improve facilities and focus on the infrastructure around facilities to ensure the safety of students. Generally the use of these facilities was free or a small fee was paid ranging from \$1.50-\$3.00.

Issues with facilities

The problems associated with the facilities utilised by the schools were few and related to the cost of hire and communication issues relating to hiring. Other concerns were:

- Lack of a variety of facilities in the local community (outside Mudgee)
- Cricket pitch requiring upgrade at Simkins Park
- Rylstone Showground has no goals or field markings

Positive features

There were a number of positive features identified including the ease of access, free or low cost and maintenance of facilities.

While 11 of the 14 schools stated they were well catered for, the following upgrades were suggested;

- A new cricket pitch and the Rylstone Showground and Simkins Park; and
- Marked soccer field at Simkins Park

Generally schools offered their facilities for use to outside groups, including dance groups, local sports clubs and after school sport and training. This was typically free of charge for non profit

groups. Half of the schools indicated that there was an opportunity for increased use of their facilities.

5.4 Playground Users

In addition to the survey work undertaken by Mircomex Research, a number of informal interviews were undertaken with playground users. This group were targeted as a means to determine the type of facilities Council might look at in new and upgrades to equipment.

The group supported the fencing of playground equipment as a means of managing young children and expressed satisfaction with the equipment provided in the premier parks. In terms of the usability of parks and playgrounds, shade, seating and a tap or bubbler were sighted as important features.

5.5 Submissions

The Draft Recreation Strategy was publicly exhibited for a period of 28 days from 24 May 2013 concluding 21 June. During this period Council received 12 submissions with a further 2 emanating from the Community Plan process and an additional comment through Council's normal general enquiries process.

The submissions, which were received from both sporting groups/associations and the general community, are identified in Appendix C. The main issues raised are discussed below.

Central Booking System – there were a number of concerns about Council becoming responsible for administering a centralised bookings system, like a web based portal, for sports grounds. This has been illuminated as a specific recommendation, however, there is merit in a central portal for bookings giving users an opportunity to gain access to a list of facilities that may be available on any particular date and this is an idea that could be discussed with the Sports Councils, Council staff and the schools.

Glen Willow – there were various comments as to the merit or otherwise of continuing with further stages of Glen Willow and the importance of balancing this with ensuring that the user groups for the existing playing fields are not disadvantaged. Rugby and Hockey both support a move provided that they are not disadvantaged by being worse off than they are currently in terms of facilities, in particular Rugby who have access to their own licensed clubhouse and function room. Further, access to large tract of open space, such as West End and Cahill Park, have community benefit for passive users as well as amenity value. Any rationalisation of open space will require a robust community consultation exercise and include a land re-classification process.

Swimming Pools – submissions from two local swimming clubs supported the development of an indoor facility but not at the expense of a 50m pool. It is recommended that the proposition of year round swimming be investigated and options considered. Again, this will involve community and stakeholder input.

Other facilities – a submission from the Softball Association raised the need for additional seating at West End, dugouts and additional back nets. A water Park at Lawson Park, upgrades at Peoples Park in Gulgong and the development of an Adventure Playground were included in the

submissions. The adaptation of 2-4 of the existing netball courts to accommodate basketball was also suggested.

Overall, the community indicated that they were satisfied with the existing facilities and Council should focus on maintenance and upgrades of these. The Strategy supports improvements to facilities as part of the ongoing management of parks, and open space and these can be accommodated within the work program over time.

6.0 Analysis of supply and demand

A summary of the findings of the study in terms of supply and demand is provided in this section. Based on a synthesis of these findings, this section then assesses the existing gaps (or shortfalls) in supply.

6.1 Summary of supply

Given the relatively small population base, Mid-Western is generally well provided for in terms of the range of recreation facilities and opportunities available. The majority of facilities are concentrated in the town of Mudgee, being the LGS's main population centre. There is also a concentration of facilities in the other towns of Gulgong, Kandos and Rylstone. Some facilities (mainly a sports grounds and local parks/playgrounds) are available in the rural areas and villages.

The region is well provided for in terms of both the total area of open space, and the actual number of parks/open space areas. These include recreation reserves, parks and sportsground managed by Council, as well as National Parks/nature reserves and school facilities.

Facilities are generally spread throughout the towns, with only a limited amount of co-location/multi use of facilities occurring, other than in Mudgee with the Glen Willow complex which caters for a multiple of sports. In other cases individual sports are generally served by their own clubhouses/amenity blocks, which is an inefficient form of servicing. Many sports fields are used mainly by a single sport.

Although there were a few issues raised (mainly in relation to maintenance and the quality of the supporting facilities), traditional sports are generally well provided for, both in terms of the amount of open space available, and the availability and standard of facilities.

With regard to the supply of sporting activities/opportunities, there is a wide range of sports played, with a large number of clubs. Most popular sports are represented. Groups report that one of the main concerns is keeping the numbers up, and ensuring the availability of enough volunteers to assist.

The following table represents the issues associated with supply of typical recreational facilities.

Typical facility type	Name of facility	Comment/Issues
<i>Sports Fields</i>		
Cricket fields/wickets	Victoria park, Mudgee	Cricket, particularly junior cricket, is a popular sport. There are a number of facilities located across all of the towns and some villages in the Region with cricket played on a variety of fields.
	Billy Dunn Oval Gulgong	
	Walkers Oval Mudgee	

	<p>Showground Rylstone</p> <p>Glen Willow Mudgee</p> <p>Racecourse Mudgee</p>	<p>The key issue is the ongoing funding for curators and the need for additional wickets.</p> <p>The master plan for Glen Willow includes cricket</p>
Football fields	<p>Cahill Park (junior league)</p> <p>Glen Willow (senior league, touch, soccer)</p> <p>Jubilee Oval (ruby union)</p> <p>Victoria Park Mudgee (AFL)</p> <p>Victoria Park Gulgong</p> <p>Billy Dunn Oval Gulgong (League, touch)</p> <p>Simkins Park Kandos (League)</p>	<p>Football (all codes) is a very population sport in the Region with high levels of participation.</p> <p>Recent upgrades to the soccer fields and touch football at Glen Willow, including change, amenity and canteen has been of benefit to these activities.</p> <p>A new grandstand and associated infrastructure in Kandos and additional lighting at Billy Dunn Oval are amongst improvements that benefit football codes and extend to other users.</p>
Multi-purpose fields	<p>Glen Willow</p> <p>Sports ground in villages</p>	<p>Glen Willow has provided a Regional facility that is both multi use and multi purpose. Consolidation of other football and field based spots grounds in Mudgee will see better utilisation of the Glen Willow facility in terms of ongoing maintenance and management</p>
<i>Other sporting facilities, courts and courses</i>		
Swimming Pools	<p>Olympic Pools in Mudgee. Gulgong and Kandos</p>	<p>Outdoor public Olympic sized pools are located in the three main population centres. The majority of the population of the Shire is within 30km of a swimming pool.</p> <p>The pools, particularly the Mudgee pool, are among the most popular facilities for all ages in the Region</p> <p>The pools are heated and while not available in Winter, area opened from September to April.</p> <p>Recent upgrades to filtration and amenities has been undertaken at all three pools</p>

Netball Courts	Glen Willow Mudgee West End Mudgee Kandos	The Glen Willow upgrade including a new netball facility capable of supporting state level competition. The former site of netball at west end need to be decommissioned
Tennis Courts	Gulgong Mudgee Kandos Schools	The supply of tennis courts appears to be adequate. There may be a need to look at the continued upgrade and maintenance
Basketball Courts	PCYC indoor facility (Mudgee) and school courts	Basketball facilities are limited to those available at PCYC and the schools including the new facility at St Matthews in Mudgee There is no autonomy and no office/equipment storage space Possibility of adaptation of 2-4 netball courts for basketball joint use
Indoor Facilities	PCYC and High Schools	There are limited indoor facilities in the Region, however feedback from ST Matthews Catholic School indicates that their new indoor facility could be better utilised.
Golf Courses	Mudgee Kandos Gulgong	Golf is a popular and well catered for sport in the Region
<i>Parks, gardens. reserves</i>		
Premier Parks	Lawson Park Mudgee Robinson Park Mudgee Anzac Park Gulgong Coomber Park Kandos Bicentennial Park Rylstone	These are popular facilities used by both locals and tourists An ongoing maintenance and improvement program has seen improvements to playground equipment in these areas
Children's Play facilities (Playgrounds)	Located in various pocket parks throughout the Region.	An ongoing maintenance and improvement program has seen improvements to playground equipment in these areas. A tailored works program is required similar to that which was developed as part of the Open Space Strategic Plan in 2007 to provide a strategic approach to upgrades and maintenance of playgrounds.

Pocket Parks	Located throughout all four towns	<p>Mudgee in particular has a number of pocket parks many of which are too small to be particularly useful or attractive to the surrounding community. As a result many of these are underutilised.</p> <p>28 parks are less than 1ha and the average size of these is 0.3ha. As with playgrounds, a maintenance strategy is required including where necessary prioritising parks for decommissioning and rationalisation while concentrating on the provision of useable spaces within 400m of residential dwellings in urban</p>
Natural Areas	<p>Avisford and Redbank Creek Dam Reserves, Munghorn Gap Nature Reserve</p> <p>Goulburn River; Wollemi and Coolah Tops National Parks, Dunns Swamp, Fern Tree Gully</p> <p>Windamere and Burrendong Dams</p>	<p>The region is abundant with natural areas. The main issue with these is and the provision of facilities catering for recreation activities within these areas, particularly where they are adjacent to Mudgee ie Avisford Reserve including picnic facilities, signage, access and parking.</p>
Other parks, reserves & open space	<p>Peopls Park in Gulgong, Flirtation Hill in Gulgong and Mudgee</p> <p>Dewhurst Reserve Mudgee</p> <p>Railway corridor shared pedestrian/cycleway Mudgee</p> <p>Pedestrian/Cycleway along Cudegong River</p> <p>Pedestrian/Cycleway between Rylstone and Kandos</p> <p>Use of public roads for cycling</p>	<p>The region is well supplied with areas of underutilised open space without a particular dedication of use including drainage reserves which function as green corridors and have in Mudgee provided the opportunity for shared pedestrian/cycleways.</p> <p>Duplication of use in this manner is cost effective and should be encouraged to continue.</p> <p>Opportunity to link to Glen willow</p> <p>Road cycling is a growing activity and popular in the region. Better delineation of on road cycleway in the towns should be considered. Signage warning motorists on local roads outside the towns and beyond the dedication cycleway is necessary.</p>
<i>Other</i>		
Racecourse	Mudgee	Supply is adequate.

	Gulgong	
Showgrounds	Mudgee, Gulgong Rylstone	The region is adequately supplied with these facilities which serve a multi use function.

6.2 Summary of Demand

Many community demands expressed during the consultation process related to the overall condition of facilities and the need for maintenance/upgrades to be conducted. This issue is often raised during studies such as this. Many demands expressed related to requests for improved maintenance to various facilities. There was no clear demand expressed for any single new facility in the community survey.

It was felt that funding has recently favoured the development of Glen Willow and further development of that facility is generally supported (73% supportive, very supportive or moderately supportive). Those respondents who did not support the continued development of this facility identified concerns around the cost of the project and that development would be at the expense of other sporting facilities. Assuming that Council could demonstrate that facilities in other areas would not suffer, support for the following stages of Glen Willow would likely increase even further.

The most popular sports in the Region (based on current levels of participation) are (in order of popularity) netball, soccer and swimming. Allocation of funding and facilities should reflect this and in fact resent funding allocation to Glen Willow for netball and soccer together with the upgrades at the three pools support this.

Access to year round swimming continues to be raised as a supply issue. Currently the region is well supply with swimming facilities for 7 months of the year with three Olympic pools. Provision of a year round facility would be a significant capital investment in the region. Options for consideration include the replacement of an Olympic pool at either Gulgong or Mudgee with a multipurpose aquatic centre including a 25m pool and hydrotherapy pool and gym for example. This would be a regional facility and leave the two remaining Olympic pool to cater for outdoor swimming and competition.

Many groups assume responsibility for maintenance and management of individual facilities themselves, to varying degrees. A number of sporting groups identified that this facility maintenance role was becoming increasingly difficult for them, mainly as a result of competing demands on volunteers time.

Throughout Region, there is a strong tradition of local community involvement in the development, management and maintenance of facilities. This has been the case, for example, in Gulgong, which has traditionally had an active sporting community. The Gulgong golf course, for example, was developed and is maintained by the local community.

Other general overall demands included:

- Improvements to and/or expansion of existing facilities including year round swimming;
- Facilitating access to and signage of natural areas;
- Facilitating access to facilities in all of the towns (including access by public transport, and cycling/walking); and
- improved signage on local road for cyclists
- Development of an Adventure Playground in the region
- The need for higher levels of Council involvement in activity coordination, integration and funding allocation.

A summary of the main demands emulating from the consultation activities and relating to the various facility types is provided in the following table.

Typical facility type	Main Demands
Cricket fields/wickets	Change rooms at Victoria Park (Gulgong), improvements to drainage at Billy Dunn & Victoria Park, disabled facilities at Victoria Park, Turf wicket at Billy Dunn Oval to enable night games, curator for Victoria Park wicket Toilet facilities at Mudgee Racecourse (3 turf wickets) are run down Improvements to lighting at Victoria Park (Mudgee) Development of cricket facilities at Glen Willow
Sports fields	Change rooms and showers at Victoria Park (Gulgong) Improvements to lighting at Victoria Park (Mudgee) for AFL Alternate playing field for AFL Synthetic hockey playing surface Lighting at Walkers Oval for athletics, speaker sound system, additional seating and shade Seating and lighting for West End Dug outs and back nets for Softball at West End
Swimming Pools	A year round facility, improvements to change room facilities
Indoor Facilities/Basketball courts	Need for a multi -purpose indoor sports centre, partnership opportunities for Council and PCYC Outdoor basketball courts
Multi-purpose fields	Further development of next stage of Glen Willow
Bush Walking	Interpretative signage for walking activities

Children's Play facilities	Fencing of equipment, provision of a bubbler or tap to fill drink bottles Water Park, Adventure Playground
Cycleways	Dedicated and marked where on road, link through to Glen Willow from existing pathway along Cudegong River, continuation of shared pathways in all towns
Parks	Additional playground equipment in some parks to achieve a playground within 400m of dwellings in urban areas Upgrade of Peoples Park in Gulgong; including toilets, signage, BBQ, seating
Natural areas	Picnic facilities, seating, signage
Netball Courts	Seating and additional shelter
Pony Club	Permanent practice cross country jumps, fence off drainage area at Mudgee showground. Full size cross country course.
Tennis Courts	Resealing of courts at Henbury Sport Club and Mudgee Tennis Club

6.3 Gap Analysis (Supply verses Demand)

In terms of catering for the range of demographics, most age groups are well catered for in terms of facilities, particularly when consideration is given to privately operated facilities as well as those under the stewardship of Council.

Based on the comparison of facility supply with community needs and demands (including analysis of current trends), the following gaps in supply have been identified:

- Walking/running/cycling – billed as the most popular activity by participation and across a range of age cohorts, these activities, although not necessarily needing specific facilities the continued development of shared pathways provide valuable, alternative and safe opportunities for these activities. In addition they provide a form of access and transportation for both young people (local trips or travelling to facilities) and tourists/visitors (eg visiting wineries close to towns, cycling as a tourist)
- Swimming – upgrades to the three swimming pools should stimulate use, however, given the popularity of swimming pressure for year round access to a swimming pool will remain constant and should continue to be considered (refer comment in 6.2 above)
- Additional fields/facilities/amenities for sports such as AFL, softball and hockey
- Children's Play Equipment – upgrades to selected facilities
- Opportunities for recreation on natural areas – particularly close to Mudgee and greater promotion of these areas as providing opportunities for recreation. Support for non-traditional uses such as mountain bikes

- Glen Willow – continued staging and development of Glen Willow as a regional multi-purpose facility and ultimately catering for softball, hockey and cricket.

7.0 Recommendations

This section provides a guide to the priorities for future management of recreation facilities and opportunities within Mid-Western Regional LGA.

7.1 Overview

It is intended that the recommended management strategies and actions would support the broader management responsibilities defined by other Council plans, including the Mudgee Community Plan and Council's Land Management Plans. The section commences with a 'strengths weaknesses opportunities and threats' (SWOT) analysis as an overview to the findings of the study. This is followed by a discussion of what are considered to be the priority issues with respect to future management.

Priorities have been identified based on the analysis of shortfalls and surpluses in facility supply, identified community needs, population and participation characteristics, future trends and other study findings. It is not intended that this section include specific detailed actions to address every individual issue identified during the study (for example, the need to install new bins in a particular park). Nor does it intend to detail actions covering the day-to-day responsibilities of Council. Rather, it is intended that the recommendations be more strategic in their focus. This enables Council and the community to focus on the priorities for future management. The preparation of specific actions for individual facilities should form part of the Council's normal annual works planning and asset management plans, as well as responses to individual requests.

7.2 SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis brings together the data collected in the development of the Recreation Strategy and allows Council to develop a series of recommendation that address the strengths, minimise weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities and minimise threats.

Strengths

- Residents have access to a wide range of existing community facilities and opportunities and many of these are well used and very popular;
- Experienced Council staff, dedicated resources and funding allocation;
- Committed volunteers who give up their time to organise, coach and administer sporting and cultural activities. These include representatives on the Mudgee and Gulgong Sports Councils and sporting/community groups;
- Many of the local clubs have strong membership bases, and are responsive to the needs of their members;
- Residents also have access to a variety of facilities and opportunities provided by schools and education institutions, by the voluntary, church and community sector (eg PCYC facility, church halls) and by the private sector (eg Mudgee golf course, bowling greens);

- Council provides a number of programs to meet the needs of identified target groups (eg youth programs) and services in support of the voluntary sector;
- As a result of its strong economy and lifestyle opportunities, unlike many rural/regional areas, the region is likely to experience sustained population growth in the immediate future. It is also predicted that tourist visits to the area will continue to increase in the future. These factors will provide continued strong demand for various recreation facilities and opportunities.

Weaknesses

- Duplication of facilities in particular at Cahill Park and West End and swimming pools resulting costs of maintenance and management
- Condition of some amenities and change rooms or lack of
- Limitation of Glen Willow to accommodate hockey, softball, cricket, junior league and rugby
- Limited pedestrian access to Glen Willow
- Communication in booking facilities
- Many schools identified that they had facilities available that were not fully utilised. Lack of coordination or central database of all facilities
- Public transport to and from facilities between towns
- Availability of funding and resources including Council staff and volunteers

Opportunities

Opportunities in respect to future management include:

- Funding/loans available from the State and Commonwealth governments;
- Policies and programs in the areas of marketing, funding, facility and service provision used by various local governments include (it is noted that these are opportunities only, and not all of these are necessarily appropriate in every area):
 - Establishing minimum standards for facility provision and providing facilities only after user groups have raised a pre-determined contribution;
 - Increasing fees to recover higher proportions of ground maintenance/cleaning costs and requiring user groups to meet the full cost of services;
 - Providing discounts for user groups which have a high proportion of priority groups (eg those that encourage participation of women, the disabled, older people etc);
 - Changing facility provision (new and existing facilities) from single use and single purpose to multi-use and multi-purpose;
 - Developing larger public/private facilities,
- Accepting the need to continually update facilities in response to participation trends and community needs, and ensuring that new facilities maintain the flexibility for this to occur.
- Partnership arrangements with:

- The private sector;
 - Community/sporting groups;
 - Private clubs; and
 - Schools/Department of Education - shared development of facilities.
- Rationalisation of duplicated facilities which could both reduce the management burden and provide funding for the continued development of the facilities at Glen Willow without placing additional pressure on the general rate base.

Opportunities in terms of existing supply include:

- Supply of large amounts of open space, and availability of recreation reserves throughout the region provides significant flexibility to respond to existing and future needs;
- Ability to take advantage of Regional, State and National competition at Glen Willow for both football code and netball.
- Sufficient space at Glen Willow, and no 'ownership' by a particular sport, provides opportunities for the continued development of a multi-purpose facility;
- Opportunity to replace one of the Olympic pools with a regional aquatic centre (25 m pool and associated facilities) and retain the other pools as 50m.
- Potential opportunities to extend the shared pedestrian/cycleway along the Cudgegong River in Mudgee to allow better access to Glen Willow and accommodate recreational walking and cycling.
- Potential nature based recreation area at Avisford Reserve in Mudgee in conjunction with the Mountain Bike and Bushwalking Clubs;

Threats

- Availability of adequate funding and resources;
- Continuing decrease in participation in traditional organised sports may lead to under utilisation of existing single purpose facilities;
- Decline in the involvement of volunteers may:
 - place increasing responsibility on Council in terms of management, maintenance and coordination; and
 - result in lower levels of expertise in terms of management by the community sector, as there are fewer volunteers for groups such as the Sports Councils to draw on.
- Costs to traditional voluntary organisations of equipping, insuring and managing activities may continue to increase; and
- Complexity of management and demands placed on voluntary organisations may continue to increase.

7.3 Summary and discussion of priority issues

As an outcome of the study, a large number of issues were identified. Many of these are summarised in the preceding sections of the report. By analysing and integrating these issues, a number of 'high priority' were identified (based on their strategic importance, their relationship to other issues, identified gaps and/or their significance in terms of the level of community need/demand expressed).

The priority issues for Council's future management of recreation facilities are listed below:

Management practices and Council's role

There is a need for councils to regularly review management approaches in terms of their areas of responsibility. One of the purposes of this study is to provide input to such a review. It is suggested that the priority issues requiring Council consideration in this regard include the role and responsibilities of the Sports Councils.

The Mudgee and Gulgong Sports councils have played an important and valuable role in supporting Council in the discharge of its responsibilities with respect to organised sporting activities in the LGA. Revival of the Rylstone/Kandos Sports Council should also be a priority. Council need to ensure that the Sports Council's continue to be supported and provided with the guidance necessary to fulfil their respective roles in terms of organised sporting activities and the promotion of active participation in sport across the region.

The issue of communication and coordination, between various groups, and between groups and Council, is an important issue. Coordination/communication issues raised included:

- The large number of clubs/groups makes communication and coordination between groups difficult;
- Issues have occurred in terms of the timing of activities (including conflicts in scheduling of major events, and a lack of awareness of events coming up and opportunities to coordinate activities - eg coordinating sporting events to maximise participation);
- The decline in volunteers willing to participate in the organisation of sports can make communication difficult;
- There is a lack of awareness of funding opportunities, and how to access these opportunities;
- A need to encourage greater community participation and awareness of recreation and opportunities; and
- Need for enhanced communication in relation to availability of school facilities.

The Sports Councils play a key role in assisting and promoting communication and coordination, however they can only do so much. As noted above, there is an important role for Council with respect to coordination and communication. This role includes establishing appropriate protocols, ensuring the availability of adequate resources, and facilitating communication. Communication tools could include better use of Council's web site with information on events, facilities, key contacts and funding opportunities and better utilisation of Community News and Facebook.

Recommendation: That Council continue to support the Sports Council's, including the revival of the Rylstone/Kandos Sports Council in their role in the management and organisation of sport in the region.

Efficiency of management and maintenance

The management and maintenance of facilities was continually raised as an issue during consultation activities and has been an on-going issue for Council since the development of Stage 1 of Glen Willow.

To improve management and maintenance efficiency, and achieve the best allocation of expenditure, new local government sporting/recreation facilities are now typically collocated (for example, touch football and soccer at Glen Willow) and multiuse/shared (fields and associated facilities are used by multiple sports), in the one location. This is a direction to which Council has moved with the development of Glen Willow as far as practicable. While the new facilities are now in place, there is an opportunity to continue with Stages 2 and 3 at Glen Willow. This requires priority to be given to the relocation of rugby, junior league, softball and hockey. This would be difficult to achieve in the short term and will require consideration as to staging.

There are a number of options that Council can consider in moving forward at Glen Willow and addressing the duplication of facilities.

Glen Willow/West End

Option 1 – Relocate rugby union to Glen Willow, in consultation with stakeholders and the community. Funding of additional playing fields could be in part from the redevelopment of Jubilee Oval and the old netball courts for urban purposes. The Mudgee Rugby Club own their club house adjacent to the Jubilee Oval and this site could also be included in a reclassification to an urban zone. In the short term this would leave the canteen, storage shed and toilet facilities and the West End playing fields for Hockey and Softball as well as maintaining an area of open space adjacent to the residential area in Lang Street. A further stage at Glen Willow could, at a later date, look at incorporating softball and hockey as per the current masterplan.

Option 2 – Essentially option 1 in reverse, that is, relocate softball and hockey first and leaving rugby union at Jubilee in the short term. One of the issues with this option would be the loss of warm up area for rugby.

Option 3 – Relocate all of the activities from West End/Jubilee to Glen Willow and reclassify the entire area (apart from a local park) residential.

Glen Willow/Cahill Park

Option 4 – Junior league are currently at home at Cahill Park behind the hospital in Mudgee. The site is Crown Land and redevelopment would require the approval of the State Government, however, there is an opportunity to relocate junior league to Glen Willow either instead of or in conjunction with the relocation of rugby union. Junior league have indicated that they are happy

with their current facilities and the autonomy of the site, however, ideally at least in the longer term it would be desirable to have all football codes at Glen Willow.

Recommendation: The Council undertake the necessary consultation to relocate rugby union to Glen Willow and redevelop Jubilee Oval, the Rugby Clubhouse site and former netball courts for urban development in the short term. A longer term concept plan be prepared for the option to relocate hockey and softball from West End and junior league from Cahill Park in the future.

The other priority issue that needs to be considered in relation to management efficiency is the large amount of open space owned and managed by Council. The total area of open space (both developed as recreation facilities and undeveloped open space) significantly exceeds demand (based on population levels within the LGA). An example is the large number of pocket parks in residential areas, particularly in the town of Mudgee. Many of these are under-utilised. It will simply not be possible for Council to provide and maintain facilities within all of these areas of open space.

The potential to rationalise the number and location of ovals and playing fields/facilities needs to be considered. It is recognised however, that the disposal of areas of open space is usually unacceptable to local communities. Open space provides a valuable role as green space, even if it is under-utilised. It will however be important to prioritise the provision of facilities across the LGA as a whole. For example, it will simply not be possible to provide high quality children's playing facilities in every pocket park. Priority parks could be identified at various locations within the LGA on a basis of one within 400m of a dwelling in an urban area. These parks should receive priority in terms of facility provision and upkeep.

Recommendation: That Council develop that a strategy for the ongoing upgrade and maintenance of play grounds at a rate of one within 400m of a dwelling.

Recommendation: That consideration be given to the disposal of pocket parks that represent a duplication of space or are not contributing to the overall open space network.

Recommendation: Developer contributions (via the Section 94 Plan) should be directed towards the provision of equipment or facilities and embellishment of facilities as a whole, rather than the provision of land.

External Promotion of Sporting Facilities

There are sport and recreation facilities in the Region that are of a standard sufficient to cater of events at a regional, state and national level. The hosting of Australia and New Zealand Trans Tasman Touch and Australian Rugby League at Glen Willow, together with the NSW Cycling Mark Dwyer Event and Bike Muster in conjunction with Mudgee Cycle Club and AREC, and the NSW Junior Triathlon Series are examples of sporting events with a significant flow-on effect. Council is in a position to work with the community and other organisations such as AREC, the Sports Council's and individual Sporting groups to capitalise on the facilities available and look at ways of promoting the use of these assets for sports related tourism and events.

Recommendation: That Council, through organised sporting groups, the Sports Council's and Mudgee Regional Tourism Inc, investigate opportunities for the promotion of the region's sporting facilities for sports related tourism.

Equity of opportunity

Taking into account the needs of the various demographic groups (eg young people, elderly) within the community is an important issue. These groups have specific needs, not all of which are being adequately addressed by current management approaches.

The LGA has a reasonable proportion of young people. Their needs should be considered in the future development of improvements to facilities, and in terms of any new facilities.

Areas of attention include:

- Promoting bicycle access throughout the main towns (network of bicycle paths) and between popular facilities. Better linkages to Glen Willow.
- Promoting youth representatives in the management and coordination of sport, recreation and culture (for example, ensuring a youth representative on the Sports Councils) - Mudgee Council and the Sports Councils often make decisions on facilities for young people based on what they think they want, without the benefit of detailed consultation;
- Improving access to better quality coaching and regional/state level competitions;
- Investigating the need for, and form of, additional facilities (eg skate facilities, basket ball half courts etc) in consultation with young people; and
- Provision of high quality children's play facilities.

Recommendation: That Council encourage participation of youth in decision making in regard to open space and recreation planning and management through the youth council.

The LGA is likely to experience an increase in the proportion of older people over the next 10 to 20 years. Securing appropriate and accessible opportunities for participation in recreation for older people should be considered in the future development of new facilities, and improvements to existing facilities.

Areas of attention include:

- Parkland, reserves and natural settings provide important passive recreation for older people - the role of the premier parks in the LGA should be considered in this regard;
- Public transport to and within Mudgee and to and from the outlying towns;
- Need for accessible walking tracks/trails - walking is one of the most popular recreation activities for older people, and opportunities for interesting tracks in scenic areas should be considered (this could include the continuation of the walk through the open space along the Cudgegong River from Lawson Park, and walks within natural areas within the LGA); and

The recognition of local Aboriginal culture is also an increasingly important issue for the LGA. There has been very little emphasis given to local Aboriginal heritage in the past, and there are opportunities to enhance this through the provision of interpretation, signage and other forms of recognition in natural areas under Council's control in consultation with local groups.

Recommendation: The Council continue to develop shared pedestrian/cycleway networks throughout the towns including cycle warning signage on local roads adjacent to the urban areas.

Facility development and improvement

Sport plays a significant role in the community. The overwhelming majority of people surveyed and including sporting groups and school were satisfied with the provision of and quality of facilities across the region. This is testament to the commitment of Council towards the provision of high quality, functional facilities and open space areas not least of which is the facility at Glen Willow.

There were some areas of improvements suggested, most of which came from outside the town of Mudgee and Council does need to remain mindful of the need to ensure the smaller towns are well catered for in terms of facilities. . The suggested priorities for upgrading existing facilities are provided below. Other improvements/issues identified by the community should be addressed as part of Council's normal works and maintenance program.

Improvements/upgrades

- Lighting at Victoria Park in Mudgee
- Change rooms at Victoria Park in Gulgong
- Improvements to wickets and Billy Dunn Oval, Rylstone and Mudgee
- Shade and seating at the netball courts at Glen Willow, Walkers Oval & West End
- Dugouts and back nets at West End
- Field marking and goals at Rylstone Showground
- Continued replacement/upgrade of playground equipment and fencing
- Access to drinking water at select parks

Kew facilities/infrastructure

- Stages 2 and 3 of Glen Willow
- Year round swimming pool
- Mountain bike facility at Avisford Reserve
- Picnic facilities in natural areas
- Adventure Playground
- Extension of pedestrian/cycleways

- More support for non-traditional sports for example motocross, mountain biking and equestrian.
- Indoor and outdoor basketball

At this stage Council is well catered for in terms of recreation facilities and open space with numerous opportunities for participation. The Council is constrained in terms of funding available for new facilities, however, given the popularity of walking and swimming in particular, the notion of additional opportunity for walking/cycling (refer recommendation above) and swimming should be considered.

As discussed in section 6, in order to maximise the current facilities, the option for a year round swimming facility would be to investigate the development of a regional aquatic centre with a 25 m pool and associated facilities replacing one of the existing 50 m pools. This would leave two outdoor Olympic pools for competition as well as providing an indoor facility in the region.

Recommendation: That Council focus on the maintenance and embellishment of the existing infrastructure and delivery of Stages 2 and 3 of the Glen Willow facility in conjunction with rationalisation of duplicated facilities.

Recommendation: That Council investigate opportunities which would facilitate access to swimming year round.

Strategic Asset Management and Planning

The strategic direction set in terms of recreation and open space planning should be reflected in broad terms in the Community Plan and accompanying Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

The work undertaken in the Open Space Strategic Plan in 2007 was instrumental in enabling Council to achieve the recreation outcomes set in 2005. The document set levels of service that could be achieved within the operational budget as well as providing options for Council and the community if additional funds were to become available. The development of a similar operational document will again assist in the delivery of the recommendations outlined herein and will be a valuable tool for staff responsible for setting budgets and priorities as well as forming the basis for a Developer Contributions Plan and Voluntary Planning Agreements into the future.

Recommendation: That Council prepare a detailed capital works plan to set priorities for the ongoing management of Open Space and Recreation throughout the region.

Appendix A - Open Space Inventory

MUDGEE													
	Park	Rubbish bins		Seating		Public Toilets		BBQs		Playgrounds			
		Open	Enclosed	Open	Covered	M & F	Disabled	Open	Covered	Play	Exercise	Soft fall	Fenced
R	Admin Building			2 T				1					
P	Apex Pk	1		1 B						1			
P	Bellevue	1		2 B						1		✓	✓
P	Blackman Pk	5		2 T						1		✓	
P	Blackman Pk			4 B									
P	Dewhurst Reserve	1		1 T						1		✓	
P	Dewhurst R			2 B									
P	George Campbell			1 T						1		✓	
P	Gilbey Pk	1		1 B						1		✓	
P	Interact Pk	1		1 T						1		✓	
P	Interact Pk			2 B									
R	Lawson Pk	9	10	16 T	3 T	✓	✓	2		2		✓	✓
R	Lawson Pk			8 B							6	✓	
R	Lawson Pk										2		
P	Lions PK	1		1 B	1 T					2		✓	
R	LPW		5	5B	2 T				1		1	✓	
R	LPW												
P	Memorial Pk		1	1 B									
P	Moufarrige Pk	1	1	1 T						1		✓	
P	Percy Nott	2	4	1 T	2 T	✓	✓	1		1		✓	
P	Redbank Pk	1		1 T						1		✓	
R	Robertson Pk	12	2	9 T		✓	✓	1		1		✓	✓
R	Robertson Pk			13 B									
P	Village Green		2		2 T								
P	Weemaran Res			1 T				1		2		✓	

MUDGEE cont.

Park	Rubbish bins	Seating	Public Toilets	BBQs	Playgrounds
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		Open	Enclosed	Open	Covered	M & F	Disabled	Open	Covered	Play	Exercise	Soft fall	Fenced
P	Weemaran Reserve			4 B									
P	Wells Pk	1		1 B									
S	Cahill Pk		5		G stands	✓	✓						
S	G.W		✓	✓	G stands	✓	✓						
O	G.W Dog off leash		2										
S	G.W Netball courts		✓			✓	✓			1		✓	✓
S	Jubilee		✓	✓	✓	✓							
S	Victoria Pk	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	*		
S	Walkers Oval		✓	✓		✓	✓						
S	Westend		✓	✓		✓	✓						
E	Avisford Reserve												

T = Picnic
Table
B = park
bench

* Skate park

R-Regional Park

P –Pocket/Local Park

S – Sports

E Environmental

O - other

GULGONG

Park	Rubbish bins		Seating		Public Toilets	BBQs		Playgrounds			Exercise	Soft fall
	Open	Enclosed	Open	Covered	M & F	Disabled	Open	Covered	Play			
ANZAC Pk	6		6 T			✓	✓		1	1		✓
Apex Pk	3		2 T	3 T		✓				1		✓
Apex Pk			3 B									
Coronation Pk	✓		4 B	4 T		✓	✓					
Frank Holloran Pk	1		1 T									
Frank Holloran Pk			1 B									
JH Stahl Pk	1		2 B									
Pearl Pk			1 T							1		✓
Peoples Pk + Dog		✓	2 T									
Peoples Pk + Dog			2 B									
Redhill	1		1 T						1			
Rotary Pk	1		2 T							1		✓
Rotary Pk			1 B									
Theresa Lane	3		1 T					1				
Theresa Lane			3 B									
Unnamed Pk	1		1 T							1		
Billy Dunn	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			1 *	3	✓
Victoria Pk	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			1		✓

T = Picnic Table * Skate pk

B = park bench

R-Regional Park

P –Pocket/Local Park

S – Sports

E Environmental

O - other

Kandos & Rylstone

	Park	Rubbish bins		Seating		Public Toilets		BBQs		Playgrounds			
		Open	Enclosed	Open	Covered	M & F	Disabled	Open	Covered	Play	Exercise	Soft fall	Fenced
	KANDOS												
O	Community center		✓	5 B									
R	Coomber Pk		✓	1 T						✓		✓	
R	Coomber Pk			3 B									
P	Noyce PK		✓	1 T						✓			
P	Noyce PK			2B									
P	Rotary Park		✓		2 T	✓				✓			
P	Rotary Park										✓	✓	
P	White Cr.		✓	3 T		✓	✓	✓					
P	White Cr.			3 B									
P	Williamson PK		✓							✓			
S	Darton PK		✓	1 T						✓		✓	
S	Simpkins Pk		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓						
	RYLSTONE												
	Jack Tindal		✓	3 T		✓		✓ Open pit		✓			
	Pioneer PK		✓	1 B	1 T					✓		✓	✓
	Showgrounds		✓			✓	✓		✓ Rotary	✓		✓	✓

T = Picnic Table

B = park bench

R-Regional Park

P –Pocket/Local Park

S – Sports

E

Environmental

O - other

Appendix B - Micromex Research - Survey

