

Stringer Road Reserve Concept Plan

Final Report



May 2022



**MORNINGTON
PENINSULA**
Shire

Mornington Peninsula Shire acknowledges and pays respect to the elders, families and ancestors of the Bunurong/BoonWurrung people, who have been the custodians of this land for many thousands of years. We acknowledge that the land on which we meet is the place of age-old ceremonies, celebrations, initiation and renewal; and that the Bunurong/ BoonWurrung peoples' living culture continues to have a unique role in the life of this region.

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Introduction

The Stringer Road Reserve Concept Plan has been prepared to provide direction for the long-term development of the reserve.

Preparation of the concept plan was initiated by the:

- Need for a playground (as identified in the Shire's 2015-2020 Playspace Strategy)
- Recommendations from the Shire's 2019 Sports Capacity Plan Volume 1- Sports Fields

The preparation of the Stringer Road Reserve Concept Plan has been a collaborative undertaking with ongoing involvement and input throughout the study from User Group Representatives, Councillors, Council Officers and Specialist Planning Consultants.

The Concept Plan sets a vision for the reserve as a multi-functional, high quality and integrated sporting and recreation venue, set within significant bushland.

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1. Background

This section provides information about the location, function and the open space context of Stringer Road Reserve.

1.1 Site Description

Stringer Road Reserve is one of 34 of the Shire's active sports reserves.

The reserve is approximately 5Ha in size and is situated in Blairgowrie, which forms part of the Southern Planning area of the Mornington Peninsula. The reserve is owned and managed by the Mornington Peninsula Shire and has a number of functions:

- Provides for local level community sport and informal play.
- Provides a wildlife habitat corridor integrated with surrounding remnant coastal vegetation
- Provides for passive recreation and leisure where the community can walk, ride, spectate, relax and socially interact
- Is a dog off leash area
- Is used as a thoroughfare by people walking from east to west and north to south
- Currently a location for community group facilities

The facilities offered at the Reserve to support the functions include:

- AFL/Cricket oval (undersized)
- 1.5ha (hectares) of bushland
- Two asphalt tennis courts
- Former tennis clubhouse
- Community garden
- Men's Shed
- Walking tracks through the indigenous vegetation
- Car parking areas and sealed access road
- Public toilet block
- Dog off leash area
- Telstra Communications Tower

The reserve is identified as a site with Aboriginal Cultural Heritage. A small section of the Reserve – around the main entrance, off Stringer Road is on a Heritage Watchlist. This is due to the Moonah trees (*Melaleuca lanceolata*) in this area being on the National Trust Register of Significant Trees.

The reserve also has bushfire and flood prone areas.

Stringer Road Reserve: Aerial View



Stringer Road Reserve: Flood Prone Areas



1.2 Open Space Context

Stringer Rd Reserve is zoned Public Park and Recreation (PPRZ) with vegetation protection and design and development overlays.

This reserve is unique, as it is one of the largest and the only sport and recreational open space of this size within Blairgowrie (see below Site Context Map). The importance of the reserve to the community is significant, as it is the only parcel of land that is zoned PPRZ and suitable for development of sporting facilities between Rye and Sorrento.

Council's 2003 Open Space Strategy classifies this site as a Sports and Bushland Reserve.

The AFL/Cricket oval at Stringer Road Reserve is the only sports field in Blairgowrie. The nearest ovals are at David MacFarlan Reserve in Sorrento (3.8 km from Stringer Road Reserve) and the R.J Rowley Reserve in Rye (5.9km from Stringer Road Reserve).

Stringer Road Reserve also provides dog off leash areas (the oval and the central area of the reserve). The closest dog off leash area is Cameron's Bight (with restricted access) located along the beach 1km from the reserve.

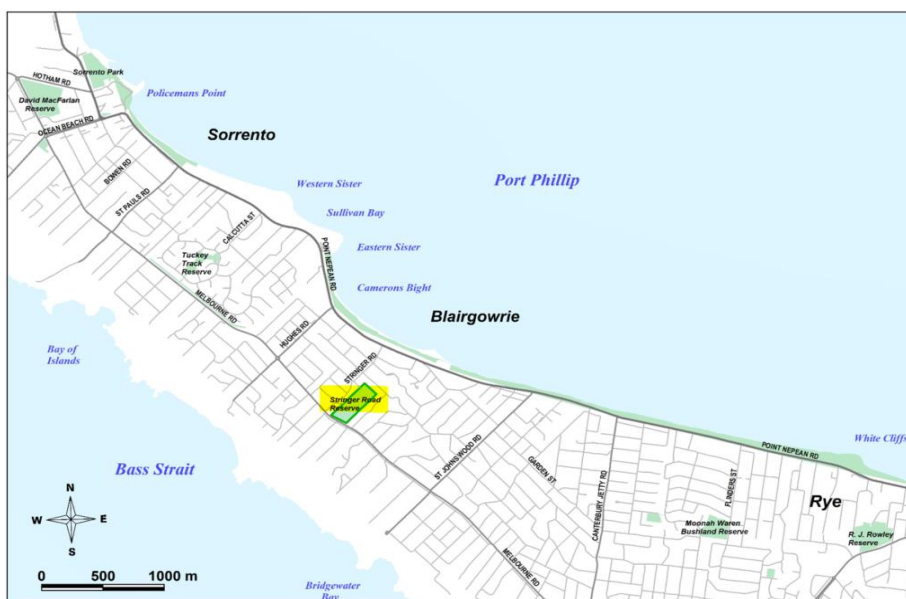
The recreation tennis courts at the reserve are the only public accessible courts located in Blairgowrie. The closest public access tennis court is located at Settlers Cove Reserve in Sorrento (1.7 km). The closest playspace is at Penman Reserve in Blairgowrie (1.5 km). The nearest community garden and men's shed are in Rosebud (14 km) and Rye (7 km).

There are four bushland reserves located within a 600-metre radius of the bushland area at Stringer Road Reserve. These include SLIPS Bushland Reserve, MacFarlan Ave Bushland Reserve (connects SLIPS Bushland Reserve to Stringer Road Reserve), Fawkner Street Bushland Reserve and Ocean Road Bushland Area. The Blairgowrie Foreshore Reserve (front beach) and the Mornington Peninsula National Park (back beach) are also located within 600 metres of the Reserve.

Some local groups have indicated interest in using the Reserve in the future. They include:

- Rye Auskick and Junior Football Club for its junior teams.
- Rye-Sorrento Football Club for its junior girls and women's program.
- Rye Cricket Club for its junior teams.
- Friends of Stringer Road Reserve (formed in 2022)

Stringer Road Reserve: Site Context Map



2. Strategic Context

The preparation of the Stringer Rd Reserve Concept Plan considered a number of research and planning findings relevant to the reserve and its core function as a site for sports and recreation. This section outlines contextual factors that were assessed and considered during the study.

2.1 Background Reports

The following reports and strategies provided important context, background and direction for the concept plan.

- Our Peninsula 2021: Council Plan 2017-2021
- Open Space Strategy 2003
- Sports Capacity Plan Volume 1- Sports Fields ('Our Game Plan') (2019)
- Playspace Strategy 2015-2020

Our Peninsula 2021

Our Peninsula 2021 outlines the direction for Council to 2021, and specifically how it will achieve its vision - *To value, protect and improve the unique characteristics and way of life on our peninsula* "Valuing our unique peninsula"

The vision is underpinned by four key themes: Our Place, Our Connectivity, Our Prosperity, and Our Wellbeing. Each theme is supported by community outcomes, strategic objectives, strategies, and strategic indicators. The following themes, strategic objectives, and strategies are relevant to the development of the reserve concept plan.



Theme: Our Place

Strategic Objective 1

Through strategic planning we improve and protect the unique characteristics of the Mornington Peninsula Strategies:

- (c) Design and deliver well-planned townships with adequate capacity for housing, infrastructure, employment, business activity and recreational areas
- (d) Enhance the character of our townships and villages through the development and maintenance of public spaces, reflecting local character, conditions and community preference

Strategic Objective 2

We create thriving, accessible and inclusive places to live, work and visit

Strategies:

- (a) Invest in, manage and renew community infrastructure according to community need and asset condition
- (b) Promote multipurpose use of the Shire's spaces and infrastructure where feasible

Theme: Our Wellbeing

Strategic Objective 9

Facilitate and promote connected and active lives

Strategies:

- (a) Encourage increased participation in active and passive recreation
- (b) Develop programs and facilities in conjunction with sporting clubs and community partners, to provide access to a range of active sports and passive recreation opportunities.

Climate Emergency Plan- Ensuring our future 2020 to 2030

The Climate Emergency Plan outlines the objectives and targets set to address climate change and its impacts on Council and the community. The plan includes 7 summits and 21 actions to deliver our sustainability outcomes. The following key summits are relevant to the development of Stringer Road Reserve.



Summit 3: Zero Carbon Energy

The Peninsula will be powered by zero-emissions energy thanks to an increase in renewable energy such as solar and wind power, phasing out gas and improving efficiency in our buildings

Summit 4: Resilient and Adaptive Community

Our community works together to care for the environment and each other. Our buildings, infrastructure and services will be adapted to our future climate.

Summit 6: Sustainable Land Use and Environmental Restoration

We will protect and improve our natural landscape, waterways and bays, support and create biodiverse habitats, improve ecosystem resilience, practise

regenerative farming and sequester carbon in the landscape; balanced with housing and urban needs.

Open Space Strategy 2003

The Mornington Peninsula's 2003 Open Space Strategy was prepared to identify the planning and development issues and prioritise the diverse number of competing open space demands. The vision for Open Space for the Mornington Peninsula Shire is: "A unique, well planned and integrated open space environment that is highly valued and offers a range of opportunities". The Strategy outlines 5 Principles to guide the planning and management of open space, these were considered as part of the preparation of the Stringer Rd Reserve Concept Plan, in particular access, equity and provision of Open Space.



Open Space provides for a diverse range of needs and interests. Planning priorities established priorities and criteria will ensure that open space is developed responsibly and rationally. Community involvement and information a community that is engaged in decision making for the future of open space will be more committed to positive outcomes.

The Open Space Strategy outlines 7 forms of open space, Stringer Rd Reserve comes under two classifications as a sporting reserve and bushland area. Sporting reserves are defined as; "These are reserves that provide for the needs of a range of outdoor sporting and recreation needs in the community.

Reserves may be multi-purpose and cater for a range of activities including playing fields, courts, bowling greens, hockey pitches etc., or they may cater for only one activity as in the case of Golf Courses, Equestrian facilities, with associated vehicle parking and access carriage ways".

Bushland areas are defined as "areas that have a primary function and priority of preserving the natural environment and enhancing the quality of native bushland. These areas have a secondary priority relating to recreation use and access. Include natural areas such as waterways, wetlands and natural areas within parks and reserves.

The recommendations outlined in this document and the concept plan prepared for Stringer Rd Reserve are in line with the classification for a Sporting Reserve & Bushland Area.

Sports Capacity Plan Volume 1 – Sports Fields 2019 (Our Game Plan)

The Sports Capacity Plan outlines a strategic approach for the upgrade and provision of new field-based sporting facilities and associated infrastructure to ensure the current and future sporting needs of the shire community can be met.



This Plan contains overarching sports planning principles to guide the provision and standards of sporting facilities across the Peninsula, along with a series of recommendations for upgraded and new facilities to meet identified needs.

The Sports Facility Principles are:

Adequate Provision	Council will provide a sufficient number, range and distribution of sporting facilities to meet demand.
Multiuse and Shared-Use	Council will create sport hub facilities and multi-use facilities.
Accessible and Inclusive	Sporting facilities will be accessible to and encourage people of all ages, genders, abilities and cultural backgrounds.
Consolidation and Co-Location	Council will aim to consolidate built infrastructure within reserves to maximise economic efficiencies and to improve the visual amenity of reserves.
Open and Inviting	Sporting facilities will encourage and optimise community use by incorporating non-sporting infrastructure, such as BBQs, playgrounds, and walking paths, to encourage informal recreational use.
Quality and sustainable	Sporting facilities will be sited, designed, constructed and managed in accordance with sports facility development standards and embrace ecologically sustainable development (ESD) principles.
Financially Responsible	Financial viability and cost effectiveness of sporting facilities will be developed and managed.
Partnerships	Council will maximise opportunities for partnering with other public and private sector organisations, agencies, clubs and groups for the provision and management of sporting facilities.

To meet the increasing demand in Junior AFL (male and female) the Sports Capacity Plan identifies the AFL/Cricket oval at Stringer Road Reserve to be upgraded to a local level overflow ground to complement the District Level AFL/Cricket facilities offered at RJ Rowley Reserve in Rye.

The Sports Capacity Plan states, “Upgrade Stringer Recreation Reserve to enable it to become the designated second oval to supplement the usage of RJ Rowley Reserve for the Rye Junior Football Club”.

The recommendations outlined in this document and the concept plan prepared for Stringer Rd Reserve are in line with the Sports Capacity Plan.

The Sports Capacity Plan document supersedes Council’s previously developed 2011-2016 Active Sports Strategy.

Sports Capacity Plan Volumes 2 (indoor sports) and 3 (non-field sports) are currently being drafted.

Playspace Strategy 2015

The 2015 Playspace Strategy revises and updates the 2008 Strategy to further guide playspace improvements through to 2020. It provides a framework for the ongoing planning, design and management of the Shire’s public playgrounds. The Strategy identifies that Stringer Rd Reserve is a high priority for a playground.



It also recognises and details information on Dogs in Playspaces. This is relevant as areas within the reserve are nominated as dog off leash.

Section 3.5 Dogs in Playspaces-

The Shire recognises the importance of dogs and their owners accessing the use of public open space and leash free areas. It is the responsibility of dog owners to supervise their animals in public open space especially in areas such as playgrounds where children are at play.

The Shire has designated open space areas, in various locations, providing fenced off leash dog parks for owners and their pets. Fencing around playspaces for the sole reason of separating dogs from children is not supported by this strategy. Gates can be left open and dogs may be tied up within the playspace. Children should not feel threatened by dogs off lead in their play environment.

Incorporating a playspace and an off-leash dog area in the same park prevents children using the open space for other activities such as ball games and

running around. Marking an area as a ‘dog park’ tells the children they are not welcome in the area. Providing clear visible signs in playspaces advises owners of dogs that dogs are not permitted in public playspaces and must be kept on a leash in public open space unless in a leash free dog park.

2.2 Population and Sports Participation

Stringer Road Reserve is located in the Shire’s Southern Planning Area.

★ Represents Stringer Rd Reserve in below map



As identified in the 2019 Sports Capacity Plan Volume 1, the Southern Planning Area:

- Experienced growth in population over the past 10 years and is projected to continue to grow from 49,964 residents (2016) to 58,581 residents by 2036.
 - Anecdotally, as a result of Covid-19 and with more people working remotely a growth in permanent residents is anticipated.
- Has the Shire’s second largest populated area (second to the Northern Planning Area) with 49,564 residents (2016). However, the Southern Planning Area is projected to increase by the greatest number of residents to 2036 (8,617) compared to Northern Peninsula (7,844) and Western Port (6,651).
- The area has the highest number of residents aged 60+ years, and a significantly higher proportion of its community aged 60+ years (38.9%), compared to Northern Peninsula (29.4%) and Western Port (25.2%).
- Will experience the largest growth in the sports active age cohort (5-39 years age group) to 2036 with an increase of 3,252 residents or an increase of 21%, which is significantly higher than the average growth across the Shire for this age group (14.9%).

In relation to Sports Participation:

- The nearest football clubs are the Rye and Sorrento Football Clubs. Both clubs run Auskick programs and field junior and senior teams. In 2020, they had 847 playing members, up from 457 in 2015. The majority of the increase was in Auskick and junior programs – 143 and 178 players, respectively. The number of female players increased by 133.
- The nearest cricket clubs are the Rye and Sorrento Cricket Clubs. Both clubs' field junior and senior teams. Sorrento also offers a sub-junior blaster program. In 2020, the clubs had a total of 218 playing members, up from 202 in 2015. Most of the increase was in the Rye junior program.
- There were 450 player visits to the public tennis courts in Stringer Road Reserve in the 8-month period from April to December 2019. The players used the courts for 172 hours. Usage increased significantly in the following 6-month period in 2020, where there were 808 visits and 304 hours of use.

The implications of the demographic and local sporting club participation numbers for the Stringer Road Reserve Concept Plan are as follows:

- 1) The population in the Southern Planning area is expected to grow over the next 15 years. The number of residents in the sports active age cohort is expected to increase.
- 2) Both Sorrento and Rye Football Clubs have growing player numbers, particularly in the junior and female programs. These numbers confirm that if Stringer Road Reserve were upgraded it would get significant use for junior football and will supplement the high level of usage at RJ Rowley and David MacFarlan reserves. The growth in female player numbers at the football clubs also confirms the need to provide female friendly/multi-use facilities at the reserve.
- 3) The player numbers of the cricket clubs that use the reserve (Sorrento and Rye) are strong. These numbers suggest that if Stringer Road Reserve were upgraded, it would be used more for cricket.

- 4) Usage of the public access tennis courts is growing quickly. This growth provides a justification for upgrading the courts to a higher standard and for multipurpose use.
 - Therefore, the above further supports that demand for local level sporting infrastructure upgrades to occur in the future development of this sports reserve.
- 5) The mature age profile of the local Community and the growing popularity of activities such as walking for relaxation, walking the dog and walking and running for exercise will underpin a strong demand for the passive recreation and informal recreation facilities in the Reserve.

Therefore, this heightens the need for improvements to the informal passive recreation spaces - the provision of more shade and shelter, potential upgrade of walking paths etc, provision of family picnic facilities and a playspace.

Existing Site Conditions Plan



3. Existing Conditions & Usage of Reserve

This section provides an overview and imagery of the existing conditions at the reserve – signage, fencing, roads, parking, paths, playing field, dog off leash area, tennis courts, building structures and vegetation. (Existing Site Conditions Plan can be found on page 8)

3.1 Sports and Recreation Facilities

3.1.1 AFL/ Cricket Oval

The oval is located in the southern portion of the reserve. The oval has residential boundaries on the north-western and south-eastern edges.



The north-western edge rises sharply to the residential properties. The northern edge of the oval is fenced by a black 1.1-metre-high cyclone fence with two pedestrian gates, one at the northern end, the other midway along the fence. An eight-metre-wide grassed embankment skirts the northern edge of the oval. The remaining perimeter to the oval to the western side is a low constructed grassed berm (mounding).

The oval is comparatively small and measures 94 metres goal to goal and 99 metres across the oval (not including run-offs). The synthetic cricket wicket is in poor condition. The grass surface of the oval is also in poor condition.

The oval does not have any associated sporting infrastructure, irrigation and drainage systems and is signed as a dog off leash area.

Due to its poor condition, there is currently no football played at this oval, it is occasionally used in summer by the Rye Cricket Club for the home games of its 3rd grade senior team and some junior games.

3.1.2 Tennis Courts and Former Tennis Clubhouse

Two fenced tennis courts are in the northern section of the reserve. The Shire completed a condition audit in 2019 which found that the courts surface is in poor condition and the fencing needs improvement.



The clubhouse was built in 1980 to occupy the local Blairgowrie Tennis Club, which voluntarily folded in 2017. The building is clad in weatherboards



and comprises of a social space, basic kitchenette and a storage room. It also features a book street library. The pavilion measures approximately 12m x 6m. The clubhouse is in sound structural condition and has a long-life expectancy.

The clubhouse is no longer used for its core function to service a local level tennis club and is currently occupied by the Blairgowrie Community Garden and is utilised by the group as their meeting/social space.

The 2x asphalt tennis courts at the reserve are frequently used by the Community for casual tennis.

3.2 Community Facilities

3.2.1 Community Garden

In 2018 the Blairgowrie Community Garden was created in a section of space, which was formally used by the Blairgowrie Tennis Club.



The Community Garden occupies two former tennis courts and the clubhouse for meetings. The garden is enclosed by the old tennis fence and consists of several above ground plots and a potting shed.

The Community Garden built water tanks at the back of the pavilion to harvest water for use on the garden.

The Community Garden has approximately 143 individual members who can access the garden at any time.

3.2.2 Men's Shed

The Point Nepean Men's Shed was recently constructed in the greenfield area adjacent to the Community Garden. The shed is a metal garage of approximately 17 metres x 7.5 metres with three doorway entrances and associated water tank and unsealed road.



The main purpose is to store the Pt Nepean Men's Shed Outreach Program Truck and assembly of selected projects.

The Point Nepean Men's Shed has approximately 130 members.

3.3 Landscape Amenity

3.3.1 Topography and Vegetation

A noticeable feature of the reserve is its contrast of exposure. The openness to Melbourne Road, in contrast to the subtle enclosure of surrounding vegetation to three sides of the reserve abutting residential properties.



The other subtle element is the visual and physical separation of the oval and entrance road to the other facilities by a gentle inclined grassed spur extending from the access road to the Telstra Communications Tower.



This area is also signed as 'Dog off leash'

The northern end and western edge rise to the residential boundaries. These two edges are defined by large indigenous trees of Moonah, Drooping Sheoak, Coastal Tea Tree and Banksia. The northern end has substantial indigenous vegetation.

Note: there are significant weed infestations of Polygala and Cape Ivy. The spur and the surrounding area to facilities is grassed.

A small section of the reserve around the main entrance off Stringer Road is on a Heritage Watch List, due to the Moonah trees in this area being on the National Trust Register of Significant Trees.

Visitors frequently use the reserve for walking, jogging and dog walking.

3.4 Access and Carparking

Stringer Road Reserve is surrounded on its southern edge by Melbourne Road and on its eastern, northern and western edges by residential properties. Vehicle entry is via the main access to the reserve off Stringer Road.



The main entrance to the reserve is on the curve of Stringer Road defined by signage and a break in the coastal vegetation. The sealed access road is 5.2-

metres-wide and skirts around the central spur in the reserve to access the community garden, tennis courts, former tennis clubhouse and the recently constructed Men's Shed.

The sealed access road leads to an informal parking area on the lower span of the spur between the public toilet and the oval. This area could accommodate in the vicinity of 30-40 cars.



At the end of the sealed road beside the tennis courts, there is a 15-car space carpark, not line marked.

An informal network of 5-8-metre-wide earthen paths is located within the indigenous vegetation at the northern end of the Reserve. The access road, carparks and paths are in fair condition.

3.4.1 Pedestrian Movement

Pedestrian connectivity is via the sealed access road and two sand tracks in the northern portion of the reserve linking Seaview Street and MacFarlan Avenue. These tracks connect to SLIPS Bushland Reserve (a large valuable habitat area), only 100 metres northwest off Stringer Road Reserve.



3.4.2 Signage and Perimeter Fencing

There is no directional signage off Melbourne Road or Point Nepean Road to Stringer Road Reserve. Signage is located at the Stringer Road entrance advising of the reserve name and user groups. There is a routed timber sign acknowledging the Roy Tapson Oval and the reserve is signed as a dog off leash area.



The boundary fences of the reserve with residential properties are post and wire. The northern boundary which provides access to MacFarlan Avenue is partially unfenced. The embankment at the oval's north side has a 1.1-metre-high black cyclone mesh fence and two gates.

3.5 Other Structures

To the eastern boundary between the oval and access road, there is a water tank, one small shed and a shipping container utilised for storage of maintenance machinery and sports equipment.



Park furniture consists of two timber bench seats located in a grassed space to the south side of the tennis courts, near the copse of large Drooping She-oaks.

The seats were constructed and installed by the Point Nepean Men's Shed Group. They are in good condition.

There are no shade structures in the reserve.

3.5.1 Toilets

A brick toilet block is located midway along the centre line of the spur, extending down from the Telstra Tower to the access road. The toilet block is approximately 4 metres x 12 metres. It is ageing however, in good structural condition.



4. Stakeholder Engagement

The key stakeholders in the master planning study were the six reserve key user groups, local and state sporting associations, councillors and shire staff. The two workshops provided an opportunity for the key reserve user groups to confirm issues and opportunities from the perspective of their groups.

The key items raised are summarised below.

Rye Cricket Club

- Strongly indicated that they would like to use the oval at the reserve more often for juniors. If the oval provided a better oval surface including new cricket pitch and access to a storage area and changerooms.

Rye Junior Football Club

- Strongly indicated that it would like to resume its use of Stringer Road Reserve for lower age junior teams training and competition and as a venue for senior women's teams.
- The club's facility needs were an improved oval surface, training lights and a basic pavilion (player and umpire changerooms, small social room, storage area, toilets and undercover spectator areas).
- Both the football and cricket clubs indicated that a larger playing field was desirable.

Local and State Sporting Associations

- Supportive of measures that would make the oval more usable and enhance capacity. As, the demand is increasing and there is a shortage of playing fields in this region.

Blairgowrie Community Garden, Community 3942, Friends of SLIPS Bushland Reserves and the Point Nepean Men's Shed

- Stated that the garden area and shed at Stringer Road Reserve meets current and future needs.
- Recommended that a playspace (preferably all abilities) and picnic facilities be provided at the reserve.
- Supported enhancements to the oval including provision of lights and a pavilion.
- Improve/enhance path connectivity through the reserve to SLIPS Bushland Reserve.

- Retain the former tennis club clubhouse to continue to service both groups as a meeting/social space.

4.1 Council Officers

Key items for the concept plan to address were:

- Alignment of the development of the reserve with the sports planning principles and facility recommendations adopted by Council in the Sports Capacity Plan Volume 1 – Sports Fields (2019).
- Provide sporting and recreational facilities and opportunities as per Council's strategic directions.
- Development of female friendly facilities.
- Development of multipurpose facilities.
- Improve the traffic management throughout the reserve, and the safety of pedestrians.
- Improve/enhance path connectivity throughout the reserve and through to SLIPS Bushland Reserve.
- Minimal impact to the significant bushland.

The key user groups contributed to the development of the concept plan by attending meetings and providing verbal and written feedback on concept plans.

This feedback is incorporated into the discussion and analysis of opportunities and constraints described in Section 5.

5. Analysis and Recommendations

The following section outlines the opportunities and constraints for the site and based on this recommends future improvements and additions to the reserve.

5.1 Sports and Recreation Facilities

5.1.1 AFL/ Cricket Oval

The Roy Tapson Oval at Stringer Road Reserve is 100 metres x 107 metres edge to edge and is 94 metres x 99 metres boundary to boundary. It's size for AFL football is only suitable for lower age juniors.

This oval is designated as a dog off leash area.

The oval just meets the minimum size requirements for senior cricket (100m diameter edge to edge). The condition and lack of facilities at the oval limits its use by sporting clubs– poor drainage, no irrigation, uneven surface, no floodlights, no pavilion and no shade and shelter for spectators.

The size of a senior oval as per Sports Capacity Volume 1 standards is 135 metres in length by 110 metres in width with a 3m run off.

A full size senior standard oval cannot be achieved at this site.

Opportunities

Increase the size of the oval to optimise its use and capacity to accommodate up to under 12s junior football, women's AFL football training, Auskick and lower level senior cricket.

The upgrade of this oval with associated amenities will also support the high level of usage at RJ Rowley Reserve and David MacFarlan Reserve ovals.

Constraints

Due to topography, indigenous vegetation and proximity to residential housing, there is no space for major expansion for a higher age junior (13 years and over) senior size oval, which is 135 metres by 110 metres boundary to boundary.

Lack of open space opportunities within the local catchment to cater for dog off leash activity.

Recommendations

- Upgrade the oval as per Sports Capacity Plan Vol 1
 - Increase the size of the oval, North South orientation to 100 x 100 metres (cricket) 100 x 80 metres (Australian Football) with 3m run off. This is to accommodate up to under 12s junior football, women's AFL football training, Auskick and lower level senior cricket.
 - Include additional runoff of 3.5m for spectator/maintenance vehicle access
 - Resurface/reprofile the oval. Include stormwater/flooding considerations
 - Provide suitable drainage and irrigation
 - Erect 50 lux level flood lighting (training standards). To be designed as per current Australian Standards. Nearby residents will not be affected by the new lights as they will meet Australian Standards for obtrusive lighting.
 - Installation of 1.1m high (black cyclone mesh) oval perimeter fencing
 - Oval to be the designated dog off leash area (outside of match times, training hours or other organised activities) for this reserve. Include provision of signage and bins.
- Construct a local level pavilion with external publicly accessible toilets, integrated social space and changerooms, storage, first aid room and spectator shelter.
 - Provide multi-use female friendly facilities.
 - When new pavilion is constructed (or at end of life, whichever comes first) assess the use, condition and the primary strategic purpose of the existing former tennis clubhouse.
 - When the oval pavilion is built the on-site shipping containers are to be removed.

The core function of the new pavilion is to service the AFL/Cricket oval; however, it will also have the capacity to act as a meeting / social space for local community groups.

5.1.2 Tennis Courts, Playspace, Barbeque and Seating Areas

Stringer Road Reserve offers two recreational asphalt tennis courts that are in regular use. However, as identified in the Shire's condition audit of the courts completed in 2019 the surface is in poor condition and requires upgrading.

The reserve does not provide a playspace, barbeque area and has minimal seating.

The reserve is currently a dog off leash area.

Opportunities

Activate the reserve to provide the community with multipurpose recreational opportunities/activities. The Shire's Playspace Strategy identifies the need for a playground at this site as a high priority. This was a key driver in initiating the development of the concept plan.

Recommendations

- Upgrade the 2 tennis courts– resurface acrylic and refence the courts
 - Truncated fencing installed on the one side closest to the existing clubhouse.
 - Multi-use one of the tennis courts to provide a basketball shooting hoop at one end and a netball shooting hoop at the other end of the court (with shooting circle line markings). Both shooting hoops to be placed outside of tennis court run offs.
 - Installing a tennis hit up wall may not be feasible due to the limited space available and the cost to construct, however provision of a hit up wall will be explored as part of the detailed design phase of the tennis court redevelopment.
- Construct a district level playground and barbeque area near the tennis courts.
 - Realign the road (also see section 5.4) to create a larger open space that is ideally suited for a playground and barbeque area. This will connect the existing active and passive spaces within the reserve.
 - The Playspace Strategy recommends a local level playground. However, with the high need and level of accessibility required it is proposed that the playground be built to district level to cater for children of all ages.
 - Provide more picnic/ seating areas.
- Open up the alcove area near the tennis courts to provide a picnic/ viewing area of the tennis court/ multipurpose court.
- Review the dog off leash area (refer to Shire's Playspace Strategy section 3.5- Dogs in Playspaces). As, the proposed playground and barbeque area forms part of the existing dog off leash area.

5.1.3 Former Tennis Clubhouse

The former tennis clubhouse was built to service the Blairgowrie Tennis Club, which voluntarily folded in 2017.

Currently this clubhouse is occupied by the Blairgowrie Community Garden and is used by the group as a meeting/social space. It comprises of a

small social space, basic kitchenette and a storage room.

Council's 2014 Community Garden Information Kit (*Section 19. Site Selection Criteria*) does not stipulate the need for an exclusive use of a building for meetings/social gatherings, however it does recommend a sheltered area be accessible.

Opportunity

The building is in good condition and has a long-life expectancy. Therefore, it should be retained to continue to support the community groups as well as potential future sporting / club-based activities at the reserve.

Recommendations

- Retain the clubhouse and allow it to continue to service the community groups.
- Provide a public toilet facility in the vicinity of the clubhouse to better service the recreational area of the reserve (also see section 5.5).
- Consider refurbishment of the clubhouse to the required facility standards of future sporting groups, when the need arises.
- When the new oval pavilion is built or when end of life is reached (whichever comes first) an assessment of the use, condition and the primary strategic purpose of the clubhouse should be undertaken.

5.2 Community Facilities

5.2.1 Community Garden and Men's Shed

In 2018 the Blairgowrie Community Garden was created in a section of space which was formally used by the Blairgowrie Tennis Club. The community garden occupies two former tennis courts and the clubhouse for meetings.

Additionally, the Point Nepean's Men's Shed was recently constructed (in 2021) in the greenfield area adjacent to the Community Garden. The group utilises the large shed for storage of their Outreach Program Truck and assembly of selected projects.

Both facilities provide fantastic social opportunities and activities for the community. It is however noted that this use of the reserve for these activities is not consistent with the Shire's strategic direction for the development of sporting reserves.

Specifically, the Shire's Open Space Strategy identifies Stringer Road Reserve as a sport reserve and bushland area. The strategy identifies that the

primary purpose of sporting reserves is to 'provide for a range of outdoor sporting and recreation needs for the community'.

Opportunity

Stringer Road Reserve does have the capacity to accommodate additional sporting related uses. It is however noted that the existing Community Garden and Men's Shed both provide valuable opportunities and outcomes for the community. Should additional sporting uses be identified for Stringer Road Reserve, a suitable alternative location would need to be provided for the Community Garden and Men's Shed.

Constraints

Stringer Road Reserve is one of the few limited spaces in the area that is both large enough and appropriately zoned (PPRZ) for the development of sport and recreation facilities. Given the limited availability of suitable land and the future demand for sporting facilities in the Southern Peninsula, the provision for sport needs to remain the core function for Stringer Road Reserve.

Recommendations

- That both the Community Garden and Pt Nepean Men's Shed continue to reside at the reserve.
 - Lower the fencing around the community garden to provide a more appealing community space.
 - Consider installation of spotlights for security.
- Where possible, utilise the Shire's Community Capital process to engage the community groups such as the Men's Shed to be able to contribute to the development.
- Should these spaces in the future be required for sporting infrastructure, a suitable site for the relocation of the community facilities will need to be determined in partnership between the Community Groups and Council.

5.3 Landscape Amenity

5.3.1 Vegetation

Approximately 1.5Ha of Stringer Road Reserve contains coastal canopy tree vegetation. Much of the lower storey of Coast Beard Heath and Bower Spinach, is seriously compromised within parts by rampant undergrowth of environmental weeds of Cape Ivy, Polygala and some woody weeds of Cotoneaster.

The reserve has a Vegetation Protection Overlay under the Shire's Planning Scheme. A minimal amount of vegetation removal would need to occur with the construction of the new oval pavilion and opening the alcove picnic area near the tennis courts to improve visibility and sight lines in this area.

Council's 2019 Biodiversity Conservation Plan identifies strategic directions and actions to protect and improve the resilience of the Mornington Peninsula's natural environment and biodiversity. These strategies have been recognised and considered as part of protecting and enhancing the natural beauty, vegetation and landscape of Stringer Rd Reserve.

Opportunities

There is a wonderful opportunity to market the importance of the remnant coastal vegetation in terms of biodiversity and sustainability, through interpretive signage and story boards.

The reserve is an important corridor for bird and insect life and should continue as such.

This strongly aligns with the Shire's 2019 Biodiversity Plan Strategic Direction 1: Engaging with the community and building stewardship.

Constraints

The vegetation does impact on the amount of space available for development for active and passive recreation opportunities.

Recommendations

- Retain the existing indigenous vegetation and establish annual maintenance budgets for Council to assist volunteers in the removal of environmental weeds that smother and outcompete indigenous vegetation.
- Given the limited amount of recreational space, it is recommended that the vegetation is not expanded.
- Provide interpretive signage throughout the reserve and nearby SLIPS Bushland Reserve.

5.4 Access and Carparking

The reserve's entrance is at the apex of the rounded loop of Stringer Road, bounded by elevated and well-treed residential properties to either side and is approximately 7 metres wide.

The entrance is on a Heritage Watch List due to the surrounding Moonah trees being on the National Register of Significant Trees.

A 5.2-metre-wide sealed access road provides vehicular ingress and egress to the reserve. Within the reserve, the access road runs close to the oval's north-eastern fence-line and embankment and turns sharply as a curved road around the feature landform of the spur line cutting the reserve in half. A 15-space car park is located west of the tennis courts and former tennis pavilion.

An unformalised road for maintenance vehicle access to the Telstra Tower is located up a steep embankment adjacent to the tennis court carparking area. It is evident that due to the steepness of this area that this is not used, and maintenance vehicle tracks were found cutting across the middle of the reserve behind the existing toilet block.

Opportunities

Realignment of the road, so it does not cut through the middle of the reserve dividing the active and passive spaces.

Enhance the level of capacity by improving the road/carparking. Therefore, complementing the increased use of the reserve.

Constraints

Topography, in the central area of the reserve leading to the Telstra Communications Tower is steep and does restrict where the road can bend through. If the road is to cut through to close to the Telstra Communications Tower this would require significant ground works and a large retaining wall. Thus, will have a negative impact on the visual amenity of the reserve.

Recommendations

- Widen the entrance to the Reserve (without impacting the Moonah trees).
- Re-route the sealed access road near the existing toilet block area. Therefore, creating a larger open space, which will connect the active and passive areas offered within the reserve.
- Provide new sealed car parking for 58 cars and an area for potential overflow parking for busy game days.

5.4.1 Pedestrian Movement

Stringer Road Reserve is located approximately midway across the 1.6 kilometres wide spit of land. The reserve is only 350 metres from the Port Phillip Bay foreshore and 800 metres to the rugged coastline of Bass Strait. Pedestrians can access Stringer Road Reserve at three points – the primary entrance off Stringer Road and the secondary points off MacFarlan Avenue and at the Seaview Street and Stringer Road intersection. The secondary entrance points are not signed or prominent.

There is no pedestrian access to the reserve off Melbourne Road.

Pedestrian connectivity within Stringer Road Reserve is from three sources: the sealed access road from Stringer Road to the tennis carpark and the two sand tracks in the north-western portion of the reserve, linking to Seaview Street and MacFarlan Avenue. The tracks are situated within fairly open coastal vegetation. Both Seaview Street and MacFarlan Avenue connect to the SLIPS Bushland Reserve, that is only 100 metres from Stringer Road Reserve.

Opportunities

Improve the reserve's pedestrian connectivity within and through to surrounding areas including SLIPS Bushland Reserve.

Provide safe pedestrian access into and within the reserve.

Enhance view lines through the reserve.

Stringer Road Reserve is a long linear reserve, therefore with improved pedestrian connectivity the park can form as a key open space connection/network between Blairgowrie front and back Beaches.

Constraints

There is limited directional signage and formalised pedestrian access into the reserve and through to SLIPS bushland reserve (a large valuable habitat area) located 100 metres away.

Recommendations

- Enhance the existing linkages/tracks within the reserve and through the reserve, including SLIPS Bushland Reserve.
- Provide a sealed entrance pathway to the south side of the reserve to connect Melbourne Road to the oval, proposed sports pavilion and recreational areas.
 - Consider a buffer between the southern pathway and adjacent properties.

5.4.2 Signage and Perimeter Fencing

Signage is located at the Stringer Road entrance advising of the reserve name and user groups. There is a routed timber sign acknowledging the Roy Tapson Oval and areas within the reserve are signed as dog off leash.

There is no directional signage to the reserve off Melbourne Road.

The boundary fences of the reserve with residential properties are post and wire. The northern boundary

which provides access to MacFarlan Avenue is partially unfenced. The embankment at the oval's north side has a 1.1-metre-high black cyclone mesh fence and two gates.

Opportunities

Provide new signage that will inform visitors of the location of the reserve and its facilities.

Recommendations

- Provide directional, information and interpretive signage through the reserve and nearby SLIPS Bushland Reserve.
- Consider prior to construction upgrading the existing boundary post and wire fencing to Council standards for properties that directly back on to the oval and the southern pathway where the new playground and BBQ area is to be developed.
- Address existing residential boundaries that are encroaching on to the reserve's land.
- Improve dog off leash signage for the oval and review the remaining dog off leash area signage as part of the playground/ BBQ area upgrades.
- Fence oval perimeter with 1.1m high black cyclone mesh fencing (also refer to section 5.1.1 AFL/Cricket Oval)

Other Structures

5.5.1 Toilet Facilities

Stringer Road Reserve currently has one public toilet facility. This is a large brick structure located in the middle of the reserve.

Opportunities

Removal of the existing toilet block will open up the central area and allow opportunity to realign the road and carparking to improve connectivity through the reserve.

Opportunity to improve public toilet amenity to service both the active and passive areas of the reserve.

Recommendations

- Provide an accessible public toilet facility next to the existing clubhouse to service the recreational and community facilities.
- Provide externally accessible public toilets in the new pavilion servicing the oval.

6. Concept Plan

This section outlines the objectives of the Concept Plan and provides a detailed implementation plan.

6.1 Objectives

The implementation of the Concept Plan will achieve the following objectives:

- Enhance the reserve's capacity to be used for active sport.
- Increase the scope and quality of residents' passive/informal recreation experiences in the Reserve.
- Enhance the safety and appearance of the reserve.
- Enhance pedestrian and traffic movement
- Enhance view lines through the Reserve.
- Enhance internal connectivity within the reserve and to surrounding areas.

6.2 Concept and Implementation Plans

A Concept Plan which shows the recommended actions for the Reserve is provided on page 21. Page 22 shows a zoomed-out version of the Concept Plan that includes the connectivity from the reserve through to SLIPS Bushland Reserve.

An implementation plan listing the priority level and which body is responsible for advancing the works is outlined in Table 1. The works are described as high, medium or low priority.

The probable costs will need to be further determined through the detailed design and tendering stages.

Several works may be eligible for external funding from State or Federal Government or other external sources. Potential grant sources are as follows:

- VicHealth Grants.
- Cricket Australia and Cricket Victoria Club Grants.
- SRV Minor Facilities Grant Program, SRV Planning Grants, SRV Cricket Facilities Program.
- Building Better Regions Fund (Federal Department of Infrastructure and Transport).
- Community Sports Infrastructure Fund (SRV).
- Stronger Communities Program (Federal Department of Infrastructure and Transport, Local Federal MPs).

Table 1 –Implementation Plan

Action	Priority (High, Medium or Low)	Responsibility
Provide directional signage of the existence of the Reserve to motorists and cyclists using Melbourne Road. Includes artwork and fabrication.	H	Council
Provide wayfinding and interpretive signage within the Reserve and similar signage to Slips Bushland Reserve. Includes artwork and fabrication.	H	Council
Widen the entrance to the Reserve at the junction to Stringer Road to allow greater visibility for motorists. No vegetation is to be cleared as this area is under a Heritage Watch List due to the significant vegetation.	L	Council
Provide a new section of sealed access road close to existing Telstra tower with access to the tower and the existing car park. Provide additional car parking to the new pavilion. The new access road and car parking areas to provide WSUD solutions.	H	Council
Increase the size of the sports oval slightly to 100 metres in a north south orientation and 100 metres in width for use by junior and women’s matches and training. Retain the oval at the Reserve with north-south orientation for cricket and tilt the football oval by 15° to north-west and maintain size of 100 x 80 metres excluding run off. Upgrade the surface to winter grass with an appropriate drainage profile and irrigation. Provide 50lux training lights. Install 1.1m high (black cyclone mesh) oval perimeter fencing with public and maintenance vehicle access gates. Sign oval as the designated dog off leash area for the reserve, include provision of bins.	H	Council
Provide a sports pavilion with female friendly change facilities (players and umpires), kiosk, first aid room, storage, undercover spectator area and internally and externally public toilets. (325m2) Includes services of sewer, water, power and specific design.	H	Council
Remove the existing sealed access road and the public toilet facility within the central area of the Reserve to allow for the establishment of a sports pavilion addressing the oval and future active recreation activities within the central spaces.	H	Council
Control vehicle access by the installation of bollards at key sections. (372Lm)	H	Council
Realign the access road further north across the spur and provide right angle parking on the outer radius and to the inner radius. A total of 58-line marked car spaces.	H	Council
Upgrade the septic tank system to reticulated sewerage to toilet facilities within the Reserve.	H	Council
Replace the existing fence and resurface of the two tennis courts. Provide one court as multi-purpose with a basketball hoop at one end of the court and a netball hoop at the other end. Provision of a tennis hit up wall to be explored as part of the detailed design phase of the tennis court redevelopment. Lower the fencing around the community garden and provide security lighting in this passive area.	H	Council
Provide pedestrian access path from Melbourne Road along the southern boundary to the Reserve close to the future sports pavilion.	M	Council

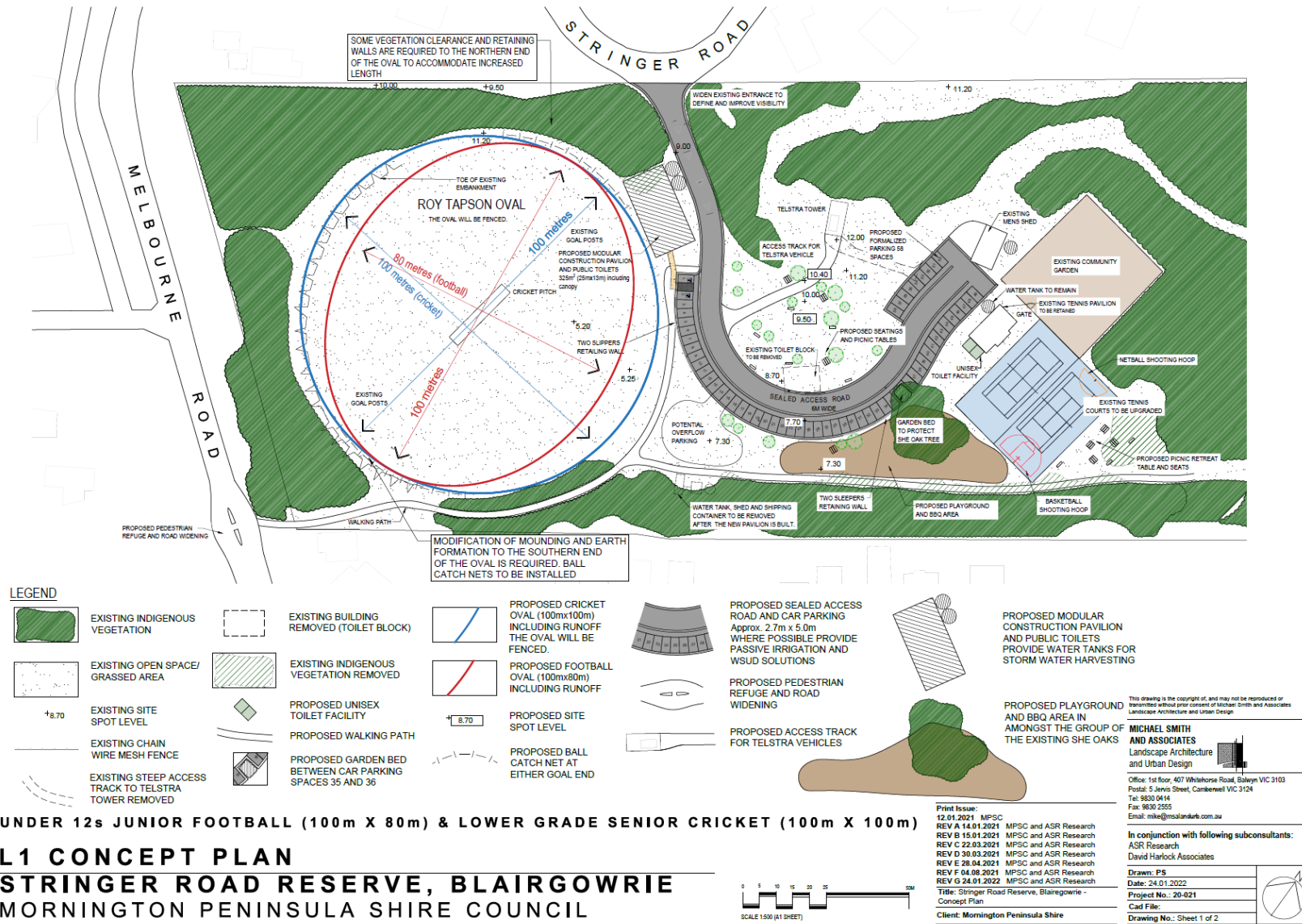
Action	Priority (High, Medium or Low)	Responsibility
Retain the former tennis clubrooms and water tank. Provide a unisex toilet facility to south of the clubroom. Add security and lower the community garden fencing	M	Council
Consider the upgrade of water and electricity to the Reserve.	M	Council
Provide additional seats and some picnic tables within the open green space areas of the Reserve	H	Council
Enhance the open clearing to the immediate east of the tennis courts to become a picnic retreat.	M	Council
Remove the existing water tank, shed and shipping container to the east of the oval after the new pavilion is built.	L	Council
Market the importance of the remnant coastal vegetation in terms of habitat value and biodiversity. See signage component. Allow Council time in preparation of brochure.	M	Council
Increase the maintenance component in maintaining the oval's surface and the eradication of environmental ground storey weeds in the northern half of the Reserve.	M	Council
Provide a district playspace and BBQ area near the group of Sheoaks include additional seats and picnic tables.	H	Council
Consider prior to construction upgrading the existing boundary post and wire fencing to Council standards for properties that directly back on to the oval and the southern pathway where the new playground and BBQ area is to be developed.	M	TBD
Define a gravel track for Telstra access.	H	Council
Investigate the potential to improve legible connections and access to and from the Reserve within the broader neighbourhood of Blairgowrie. Council officer time	M	Council
Additional Planning and Management		Responsibility
Council's ongoing project management and co-ordination.		Council
Detailed design and documentation of the access road and car parking, playspace/BBQ area, service connections and sports field improvements.		Council

Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposed Stringer Road Reserve Concept Plan

Appendix 2: Proposed Concept Plan including Connectivity Plan

Appendix 1 Proposed Stringer Road Reserve Draft Concept Plan



Appendix 2 Proposed Draft Concept Plan including Connectivity Plan



LEGEND - REFER TO L1 CONCEPT PLAN

- ● ● ● PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS ON EXISTING SAND TRACKS BETWEEN SLIP RESERVE AND STRINGER ROAD RESERVE
- ● ● ● — PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN PATH

L2 CONNECTIVITY PLAN STRINGER ROAD RESERVE, BLAIRGOWRIE MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE COUNCIL



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