



# HARD COURT FACILITIES STRATEGY 2018-2028

*A plan for the future of Greater Bendigo's netball and tennis facility infrastructure*



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## About this document

The Hard Court Facilities Strategy 2018-2028 has been prepared by specialist sport and leisure consultants insideEDGE Sport and Leisure Planning for the City of Greater Bendigo.

The intent of this project is to provide Council and its stakeholders with a strategic assessment and clear itinerary for the future planning, funding and development of outdoor netball and tennis facilities in the City of Greater Bendigo.

The project delivers a planning and development framework with a clear vision and direction for the future provision and enhancement of outdoor netball and tennis facilities. An assessment of the health, capacity and capability of user clubs and associations occupying Council owned and publicly accessible facilities is also included in the scope of this project.

Four strategic priorities form the basis of the facility planning and development framework:

- 1. Increase access and use of facilities and enable more social and casual use.**
- 2. Support clubs and associations through the ongoing renewal and upgrade of existing facilities.**
- 3. Ensure facilities respond to current and future demand for netball and tennis.**
- 4. Improve the health, capacity and sustainability of clubs and associations through stronger partnerships.**

Key priorities and recommendations in the Hard Court Facilities Strategy have been informed by the Key Findings Report developed in the early stages of this project. The Key Findings Report was developed following consultation with key stakeholders, including peak sporting bodies, associations, clubs and Council, and provides the evidence base from which the priorities and recommendations have been developed.

This Strategy aligns and recognises previous strategic and facility planning work undertaken by Council and the peak sporting bodies. Council's Active Living Census, the Tennis 2020 Facility Development Framework and the recently released Netball Victoria Statewide Facilities Strategy have helped shape the direction of the Hard Court Facilities Strategy.

# Introduction

The City of Greater Bendigo Hard Court Facilities Strategy focusses on the current and future provision of outdoor netball and tennis venues across the City, and provides strategic advice in the following key areas:

- **Asset auditing** – facility condition, compliance, capacity, ownership, management and lifecycle.
- **Club / Association Health** – participation, affiliation, viability and governance.
- **Hierarchy and provision framework** – supply and demand, user needs, service levels, population growth and catchment.
- **Prioritised recommendations** – investment / divestment plan including renewal, upgrade and consolidation of facilities or services.

The City of Greater Bendigo is a key regional City with 85% of the 114,000 residents living in urban areas and 15% living in rural areas. Greater Bendigo is an active community where participation in sport, recreation and leisure activities is highly valued and frequently undertaken.

Netball and tennis are popular sports. The City's 2014 Active Living Census identifying netball as the ninth and tennis the eleventh most popular activity among Greater Bendigo residents.

The responsibility for delivering sport and recreation facilities is shared across a range of stakeholders to ensure demand for facilities is met. Predominantly, local facilities being used by clubs and associations are planned and delivered by the City, with some sites owned by the Crown and the Department of Education.

Community netball and tennis competitions are organised and managed by two local netball associations, three football netball leagues and four tennis associations. Local leagues and associations are responsible for delivering the sport to approximately 50+ netball clubs and 32 affiliated tennis clubs. Club, leagues and associations are supported by the state bodies – Netball Victoria and Tennis Victoria.

Netball and tennis competitions are played at 66 different venues across the City (20 netball and 46 tennis). These venues combine to provide a total of 246 separate courts or playing areas. Detailed audits and lifecycle assessments of these facilities were completed as part of the development of this Strategy.

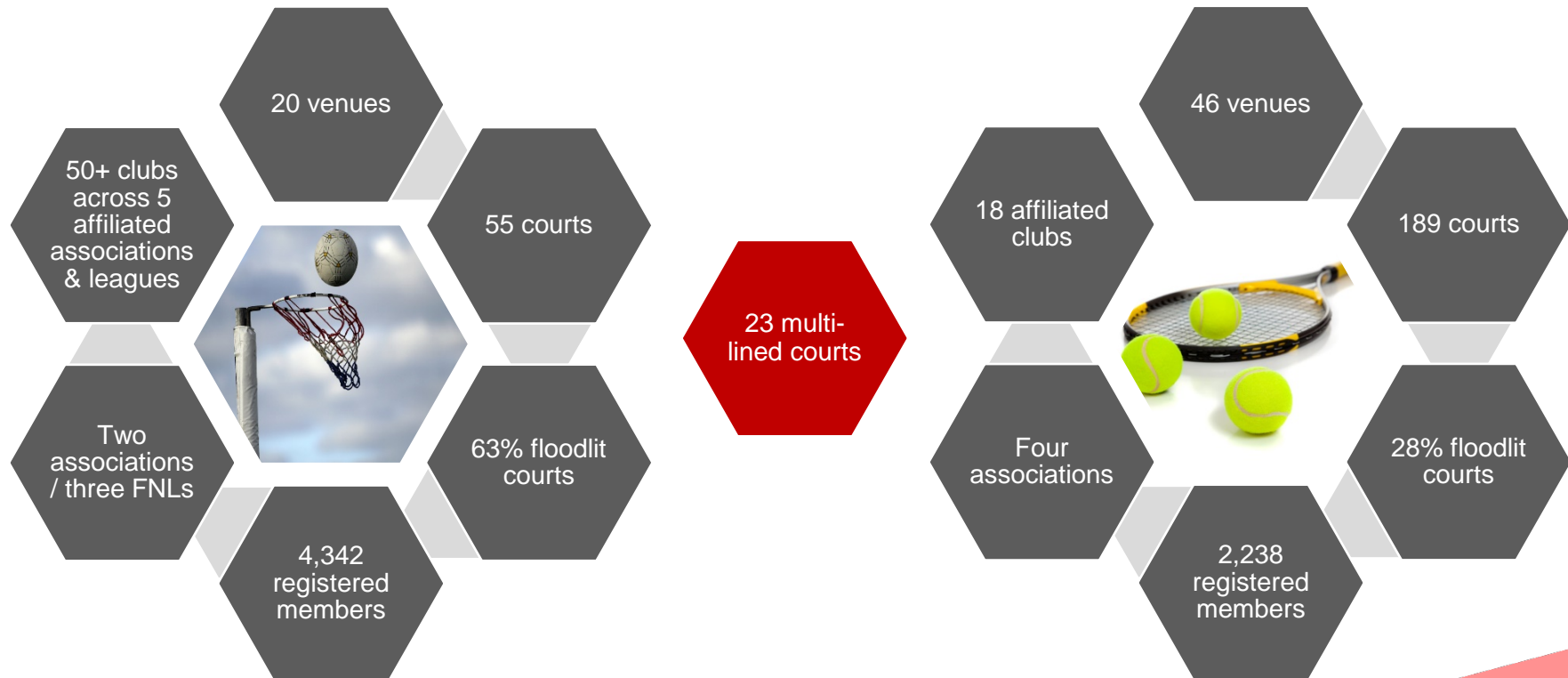
The facility audits, research and stakeholder consultation undertaken for this project identified a range of gaps, issues and challenges that will need to be addressed to ensure netball and tennis is adequately supported by Council in the future.

## Summary netball and tennis facility findings:

- There is a shortage of lit courts to support training and night competition.
- There is an increasing shortage of skilled volunteers to deliver local competitions and manage and maintain facilities.
- There is a preference for acrylic courts due to playability, multiuse and reduced maintenance.
- Facilities lack adequate player and spectator amenities, especially for females.
- There is an oversupply of courts in low population areas (Elmore/Rural North and Long Gully/West Bendigo/Ironbark) and an undersupply of courts in key growth areas (Maiden Gully, Kangaroo Flat and Strathfieldsaye).
- Single and two court tennis facilities located in outer suburbs and townships are locked up, have limited use and are not being maintained.
- There is a shortage of tennis coaches making it difficult for clubs and the sport to thrive.
- Not all clubs are affiliated with their state body which creates challenges around facility usage, insurance and club development.

# Netball and tennis in Greater Bendigo

The diagrams below provide a brief overview of netball and tennis in Greater Bendigo, including the number of affiliated and audited venues with the number of courts, members, associations and clubs. Information does not include courts that were unable to be audited and non affiliated members and clubs. According to Tennis Victoria there are 13 clubs located in Greater Bendigo who are not affiliated.



# Strategic facilities framework

The diagram below outlines the strategic framework for the future planning and provision of outdoor hard court (netball and tennis) facilities for the next 10 years. Strategic priorities are informed by the vision and guiding principles which should be considered for all future planning and development projects. Priorities are supported by key recommendations provided in the implementation section of this report.

**VISION ► PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR HARD COURT FACILITIES**

**► GUIDING PRINCIPLES – SPORT AND LEISURE FRAMEWORK**

Recognise the social value of local facilities in small townships and rural areas

Realistic and practical recommendations that align with long term financial plans

Localised population characteristics determine service priorities

Economic and social return on investment

Effective and transparent stakeholder engagement

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ► THE KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL FACILITY DEVELOPMENT**

## PRIORITY 1

Increase access and use of facilities and enable more social and casual use.

## PRIORITY 2

Support clubs and associations through the ongoing renewal and upgrade of existing facilities.

## PRIORITY 3

Ensure facilities respond to current and future demand for netball and tennis.

## PRIORITY 4

Improve the health, capacity and sustainability of clubs and associations through stronger partnerships.

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS ► FOLLOWING PAGE**

# Key focus areas

## Priority 1 – Improve access and use

- Consider Tennis's Book a Court system in the future planning and upgrade of facilities and highlight its benefit to clubs and the local community.
- Partner with Netball Victoria and local netball associations on the use of the 10 indoor courts at the Bendigo Stadium.
- Enhance existing court lighting and install new lights at club venues where participation will be maximized.
- Increase the number of multi-lined courts where appropriate – consider public courts or where smaller clubs exist.
- Provide an appropriate level of 'off-court' amenity (access to toilets and shelter) to enhance user and spectator experience.
- Ensure courts can be accessed by the community outside club times and support recreational and competition pathways and player development.

## Priority 2 – Renew & upgrade facilities

- Continue to invest in facility renewal and upgrade projects over the next 10 years in line with the developed criteria for prioritising projects.
- Where appropriate convert asphalt netball courts to acrylic to improve the playability and longevity of the asset.
- Ensure future renewal and upgrade projects consider blended court lines for Hot Shots, NetSetGo and other social based programs.
- Undertake a lighting audit of all netball and tennis facilities to identify future works schedule and budget requirements.
- Budget for the re-auditing facilities every 5 years to update baseline data and inform revised capital program.
- Use both netball and tennis sports facility hierarchy, guidelines and service levels to assist in scoping and delivering future projects.

## Priority 3 – Respond to demand

- Plan for future population growth in Huntly, Strathfieldsaye and Maiden Gully and provide a suitable level of provision.
- Align future projects with priorities from Council's Sport and Recreation Framework.
- Identify external funding or resourcing opportunities and provide a clear framework and criteria for funding (i.e. financial capacity, strategic planning and diversity).
- Continue to investigate opportunities to partner with schools and the Department of Education for community access to existing and new school facilities.
- Recreation based facilities such as hit up walls, netball rings and Hot Shots courts in parks and open space areas should be supported where appropriate.

## Priority 4 – Club & association health

- Encourage all clubs and associations to be affiliated and make it mandatory to receive Council funding support.
- Engage with Netball Victoria and local netball associations to explore opportunities to address court shortage and amenity issues.
- Engage with TV and the BTA to investigate the possible reduction or relocation of grass courts at Barnard Street.
- Investigate a potential site for clay tennis courts to support player development.
- Encourage all tennis clubs to undertake annual Operational Health Checks.
- Partner with Sports Focus to ensure club development and education programs are delivered in line with recent clubs survey responses.
- Share facility audit findings with clubs and collectively identify priority projects that improve access and increase participation.

# Prioritising projects

The City of Greater Bendigo and its stakeholders will be required to invest significant resources and funding to address identified need in the provision of netball and tennis facilities over the next 10 years.

Optimising the use of existing facilities through renewal and upgrade programs, developing additional facilities where demand is identified, and establishing strategic partnership to deliver facilities for the community is a high priority.

However, consideration will also need to be given to whether a facility should be renewed at the end of its asset life or whether it should be returned to public open space. The condition of the facilities, existing usage, the provision ratios and community engagement will all need to be factored in to any decisions to not renew a facility. This will ensure that resources are used efficiently and directed to facilities where there is a clear need and demand.

A set of criteria has been proposed to assist Council in prioritising and assessing projects and to guide funding and decision making. The proposed criteria enables a fair and equitable assessment of projects by applying a scoring system that allows Council to identify those projects that are of high priority.

It is understood that each project will still be subject to Council's standard budgetary process and the scale of the project may require a detailed business case. The criteria set out in the adjacent table has been developed in accordance with the vision and principles established as part of this project, to guide the future provision of netball and tennis facilities.

The City will work with relevant Clubs, Associations and Leagues when prioritising projects to ensure that the overall priorities of the affected Association or League are also considered along with those of the clubs in assessing the proposed project.

Criteria	Score	Reference points	Aligns with
<b>Inadequacy of current facility to meet State Sporting Association standards</b>	Out of 30	Refer to facility audits.	Priority 2 – Renew & upgrade facilities
<b>Number of participants that will directly benefit</b>	Out of 30	Refer to current player / team numbers and other uses (schools, clubs etc.).	Priority 1 – Improve access and use & Priority 3 – Respond to demand
<b>Policy and club development</b>	Out of 15	Meeting SSA service levels, attendance at club development workshops, club planning, diverse participation opportunities.	Priority 4 – Club & association health
<b>Value for money</b>	Out of 15	External funding opportunities and savings in maintenance costs.	Guiding Principle – Economic and social return on investment
<b>Geography</b>	Out of 10	Considers distance between venues and access to quality facilities. Considers relative socio-economic disadvantage.	Priority 3 – Respond to demand & Guiding Principle – Economic and social return on investment