



Davidson Oval

DRAFT Master Plan

February 2024



This report has been prepared by:

ROSS Planning Pty Ltd
ABN 32 508 029 959
Upper floor, 63 Bay Terrace
Wynnum QLD 4178

PO Box 5660
MANLY QLD 4179

P: (07) 3901 0730
E: info@rossplanning.com.au
W: www.rossplanning.com.au

Document Control:

| VERSION | DATE | DOCUMENT | AUTHOR | REVIEWER | RECIPIENT |
|---------|----------|----------|--------|----------|-----------|
| 1 | 05.02.24 | Draft | SW | DC | DW |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

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M.A. DAVIDSON
MEMORIAL SPORTS GROUND

Push First
Neighborhood
for Place
of Learning
at Davidson
April 2015

Davidson Oval
Davidson Oval



Executive summary

Introduction

With tenant clubs offering ruby league, cricket and rugby union, Davidson Oval plays an important role to the Bourke and surrounding communities.

The site is used year-round with these and other activities, with the tenant clubs having approximately 260 members in total.

In addition to Davidson Oval, Bourke boasts other sport and recreation facilities such as the Bourke Swimming Pool, Coolican Field, golf club, racecourse, and the PCYC.

The site's sporting facilities are generally in fair condition with ancillary facilities such as club and grandstand facilities in need of more urgent attention.

Existing situation

The Council-owned facility is located in the heart of town, adjacent to the PCYC, swimming pool and Coolican Field.

The site is flat and relatively well embellished with:

- lit (training level) sporting field (with synthetic cricket wicket)
- ruby league/union goal posts
- Keith Martin Memorial grandstand in poor condition
- toilet block
- canteen building
- 2-net cricket practice facility (synthetic grass pitches)
- large storage shed
- site perimeter fencing
- main entry gate
- informal parking areas
- large shade trees.

Demand for upgrade

Demand for upgrades to the site has been established through consultation with Council, user groups, other stakeholders, and with consideration of existing opportunities. Key directions include:

- development of field area to accommodate two rectangular and one oval sporting fields
- replacement of existing grandstand, amenities and canteen structures with new consolidated facility incorporating all
- improved connection between club, PCYC and playing fields
- repositioning practice nets.

Over-arching design principles

Preparation of the Master Plan reflects efforts to:

- increase the multi-use of facilities to allow site to continue to be a community sport and recreation hub
- increase functionality of the site through improvements and connections
- ensure sporting facilities meet current and future needs and guidelines.



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Introduction

Project overview

ROSS Planning has been engaged by Bourke Shire Council to develop a master plan for Davidson Oval.

After a thorough site analysis and a series of engagement activities, the Master Plan has presented opportunities for a refresh of the existing site, providing a clear and strategic vision its future.

The site also functions as a community gathering space for community events and this master plan is intended to increase community use of the site.

What is a master plan?

A master plan provides a vision for a site, identifying what it should look like and how it should function into the future. It establishes a strong and consistent direction by providing a framework for ongoing improvement. It considers the interrelationship between:

- current character and functionality
- public expectations and needs
- emerging issues and trends
- the realities of the economic, social, environmental and legislative context of the time.

The result is a plan that balances needs across a range of often conflicting interests. The master plan does not necessarily suggest that all elements should proceed immediately, or that Council or the user groups should be responsible for all capital costs, in respect of those items that are progressed.

It is important to note that the intent of a master plan is to provide a framework for future development of the site over an extended period of time so that ad hoc improvements are avoided, and community use and long-term viability are maximised. To ensure this intent is achieved, a master plan should be monitored regularly to ensure the outcomes continue to meet community needs in the best possible way.

Hierarchy of planning and processes

It is important to note that the master plan provides a preferred strategic concept for the site. However, further detailed investigation and design is required prior to construction of the individual elements identified. These investigations may include:

- topographic surveys
- geotechnical investigations
- required planning approvals
- detailed design and construction drawings
- bill of quantities
- tenders and procurement processes.

Engagement of professionals with appropriate qualifications will be essential for these tasks.

Project objectives

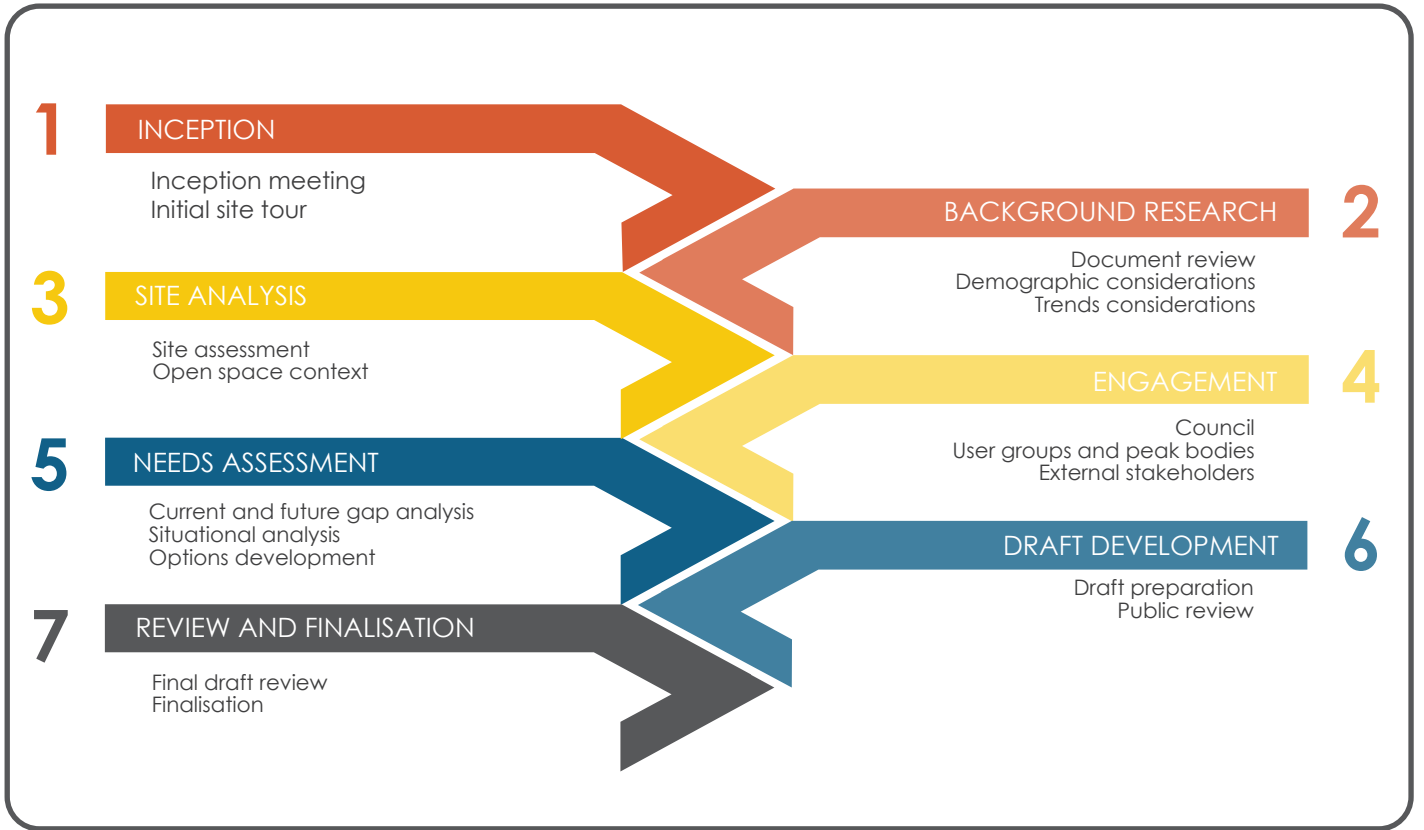
The Master Plan will provide a planning and design framework for the future development and enhancement of the site. The Master Plan will guide the creation of sport, recreation and community facilities to cater for the needs of the community and user groups over the next 20 years. The Master Plan has the following objectives:

- ❑ to provide improved facilities to enhance the sport and recreation use of the site
- ❑ to encourage increased recreation activities to be enjoyed by the general community
- ❑ to create safe access and integrated movement to, and through, the site
- ❑ to promote sustainable development and practical maintenance regimes
- ❑ to foster partnerships for capital development and ongoing management of the site.



Process

The project program spans across seven stages and has been delivered as follows:





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Strategic context

Literature review

In order to present a clear picture of the background issues and opportunities influencing the potential development of the site, a basic literature review has been undertaken. A summary of the most relevant documents reviewed is included below, while key impacts for the development of the Master Plan are highlighted in the summary breakout box.

In particular, the guidance of the following key documents has been applied to the master planning process for the site:

- Bourke Community Strategic Plan 2022
- Bourke Shire Development Plan 2016
- Bourke Future Sporting Needs - July 2017

Bourke Community Strategic Plan 2022

This document articulates the Shire's commitment to provide adequate community services and facilities for the Shire. The objectives which guide the council's planning and management of public sporting reserves include:

- maintain parks and ovals to a high standard
- foster a community that respects the diversity of our population and is supportive of cultural differences, ages and abilities of community members (within a sporting context(s))
- encourage sport and recreation activities.

The Plan acknowledges that the Bourke community requires facilities that provide opportunities to engaged in meaningful outdoor and sporting recreational activities.

Bourke Shire Development Plan (amended 2016)

The Bourke Shire Development Plan 2012 (amended 2016) is a legislative document that informs and depicts provisions concerning development. In regard to this project, section 4.6.14 of the Plan outlines desired aspects of public open space that have been considered in the development of the master plan:

- minimum area of 0.5ha
- buffered from main roads and identified hazards for improved safety
- safely accessible by pedestrian and cycleway links
- connectivity maximised between open space
- walkable access to highest number of the population
- high passive surveillance opportunities
- minimum slope
- provide complimentary uses of open space (drainage, conservation, cycleways etc.) that ensures ongoing usability.

Bourke Future Sporting Needs (2017)

This document summarises the outcomes of community sessions held to discuss various issues regarding the provision of sport and recreation facilities and opportunities in the region. The main outcomes included:

- ❑ there was an identified need for increased cooperation and coordination between sport groups and organisations
- ❑ the community wants increased access to support structures, training and athlete development and volunteer training and recruitment
- ❑ opportunities may exist to seek cost savings through alternate sport participation models
- ❑ continued upgrades and maintenance of the Coolican Field, Davidson Oval and Central Park precinct were the highest priority for the community
- ❑ although identified as costly, significant works for the Pool were strongly supported by the community as the second priority.





STRATEGIES AND PLANS - KEY IMPLICATIONS

When considered together, the literature review highlights a number of key considerations:

- the ongoing development of Davidson Oval remains a priority for the community
- Council recognises the value of providing quality community infrastructure in order to enhance health and wellbeing
- the identified need of increased cooperation between organisations could be supported through the development of appropriate infrastructure at the site.



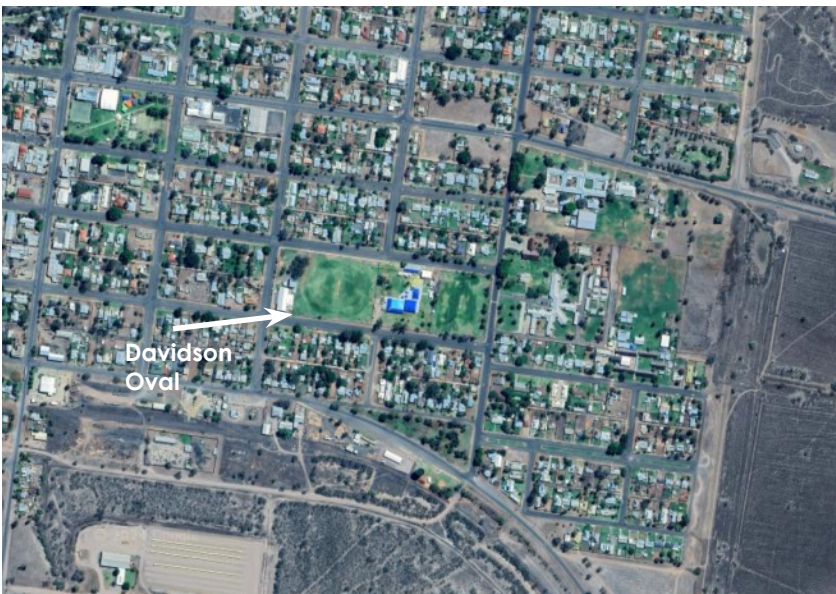
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Site analysis

Site context

Location

Bounded by Mertin, Wilson and Hope Streets, Davidson Oval is located just south-east of the town centre and is adjacent to the Bourke War Memorial Pool which is immediately to the east. Coolican Field, also with a sports field (smaller and rectangular), is on the other side of the swimming pool.



Existing site elements

Buildings and improvements

Canteen

- stand alone structure
- small, but recently refurbished and functional.

Grandstand (Keith Martin Memorial Stand)

- currently unused due to safety concerns
- stand alone structure
- historically significant, but in need of replacement with functional and safe structure.

Toilet block

- approximately 10-12 years old
- stand alone structure
- small but functional

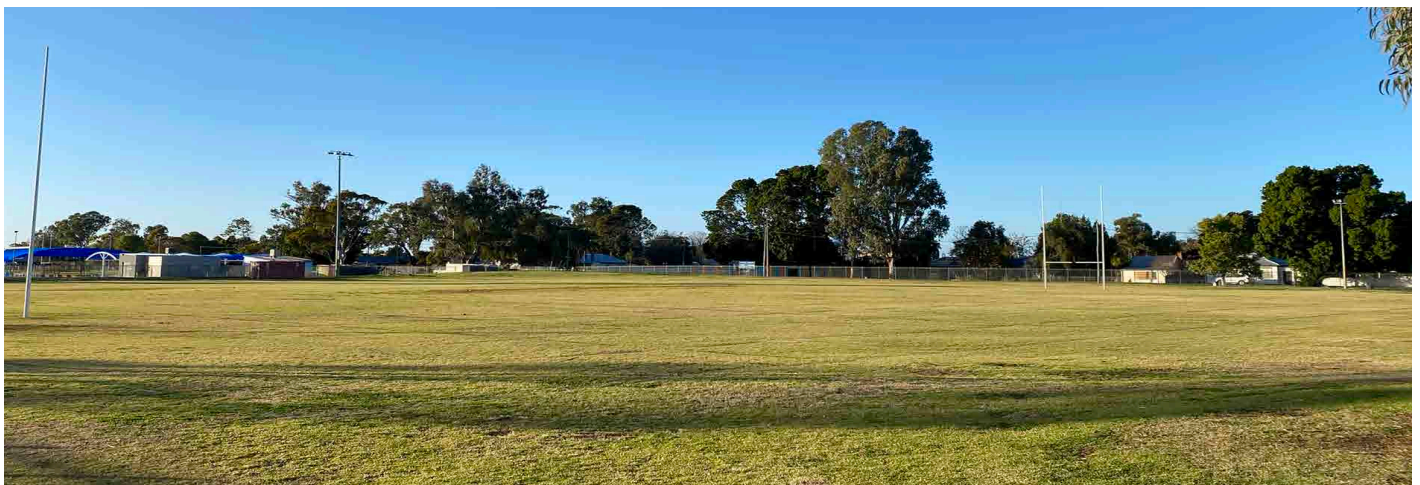
Sporting facilities

Main playing field

- large oval playing area orientated east-west (not desirable)
- synthetic grass cricket wicket
- field lighting
- rugby league/union goal posts.

Cricket nets

In the north-western aspect of the site, there also two cricket practice nets with synthetic grass pitches. While they are in good condition, their alignment could be changed to allow balls to be hit towards the oval and not the buildings and entry road.



Parking

Parking is limited to an informal gravel area in the north-western aspect of the site.

However, there is ample street parking around the perimeter of the site.

Shade and shelter

The site is a large open space, generally lacking significant shaded areas for club operations and community use.

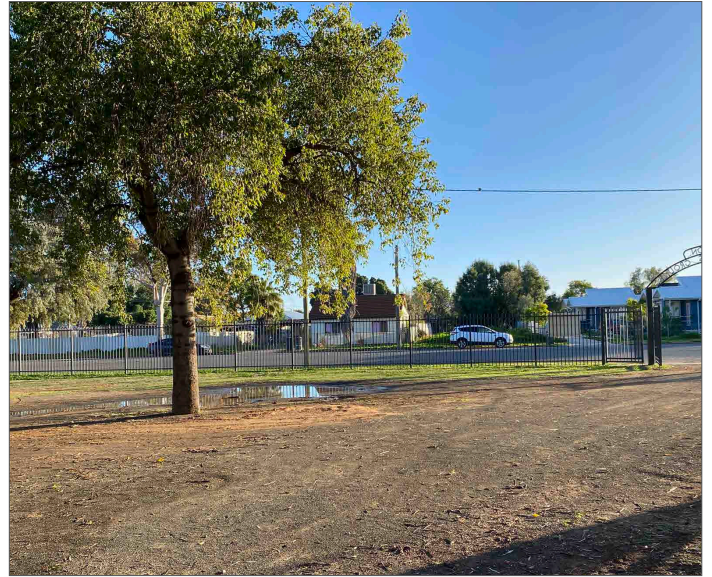
The exception to this is the significant shade trees located around the built infrastructure and informal parking area of the site in the north-western aspect.

There are ample opportunities to plant large shade trees at appropriate places to remedy this, in addition to shelters at key activity nodes.

Signage

Signage is limited across the site.

There is an entry statement on the main gates, but other signage is limited mainly to acknowledgement of funding partners for past infrastructure improvements at the site, and the Keith Martin Memorial Stand sign on top of the existing grandstand.



Other features

- ❑ large storage shed immediately behind the existing grandstand
- ❑ substantial perimeter fencing of entire subject site
- ❑ two movable, small, tiered bench seating structures
- ❑ post and rail fencing between main buildings and playing field.

Adjacent facilities

PCYC

Located to the immediate south-west of the subject site, the PCYC is a popular attraction in the town, hosting a range of activities and sports including a gym, futsal, netball and basketball.

The master plan has identified the need to improve the PCYC's direct access to Davidson Oval.

Bourke War Memorial Pool

While a detailed inspection of the facility was not undertaken, the pool plays an important role in the precinct formed by it, Davidson Oval, the PCYC and Coolican Field.

Any improvements should be the subject of a specific plan for the facility, especially considering the high capital costs of such improvements to aquatic facilities.



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Demand analysis

Community profile

The way in which a community participates in sport and recreation activities is influenced by age and demographic considerations. Understanding the spatial and demographic variations in communities, such as concentrations of older residents or youth, is fundamental to responding to, and planning for, the future provision of public open space.

In order to understand the make-up for the Davidson Oval 'catchment', a snapshot of the population and demographic characteristics has been undertaken.

Located in the heart of the town, the site plays a pivotal role in providing sport and recreation opportunities for the community and surrounds.

Population considerations

Analysis of Bourke's population characteristics¹ reveals:

- ❑ an estimated residential population of 2,340 in 2021. This demonstrates a significant drop since 2006 when the estimated population was 3,095 residents
- ❑ with a median age of 37 years, the average Bourke resident is slightly younger than the median for New South Wales Victoria (39 years). This median age has significantly risen since 2006 when the median age was 33 years
- ❑ Bourke's median weekly household income of \$1,559 is significantly less than the New South Wales average of \$1,829.

COMMUNITY PROFILE - KEY IMPLICATIONS

In terms of impacts for the preparation of the Master Plan these demographic considerations suggest:

- ❑ while a significant growth in population is not expected, the lower average age of the Shire suggests that sport and recreation opportunities will continue to be important
- ❑ demand for additional facilities is unlikely to increase moving forward
- ❑ membership/participation fees will need to reflect the average lower income in the Shire compared to the State average.

¹ ABS Census QuickStats, 2021

Trends in sport and recreation

Participation patterns in recreation are changing at a community level. Factors such as a move toward non-organised or social sport, increased outdoor nature-based recreation and increased use of technology have all had a significant impact on how people recreate and use public open space. Understanding these trends (and their impacts) is important as Council looks to develop a Master Plan that ensures the sustainability of existing groups whilst also encouraging people to further engage in activity in public open spaces.

Participation trends

Since 2015, Sport Australia has conducted a national sport and physical activity participation survey, *Ausplay*. The most recent results of the survey were released in April 2023. In 2011-12 and 2013-14, a similar survey, the *Participation in Sport and Physical Recreation Survey* was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Between 2001-2010, the *Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey* (ERASS) was conducted by the Committee of Australia Sport and Recreation Officials (CASRO).

Overall, participation in physical activity has increased in the last two decades. More adults participate more frequently compared to 2001. Female participation (at least once a year) has remained on par with male participation throughout. However, more women have constantly participated more often.

Participation in sport-related activities has decreased, while non-sport physical activities have increased significantly (by more than 20 percent since 2001). Participation in recreation activities such as walking and fitness/gym have increased the most.

More children participate in organised (out-of-school) sport, than adults. The top activities children participate in changes as children age, with a focus on the life skill of swimming for infants and toddlers and running, fitness/gym, football and walking being the dominant activities by the time children reach the ages between 15 and 24 years old.

National participation rates in organised sport have been declining for a number of years as participants move toward more social (drop-in drop-out) sport and informal recreation. It will be important for Council to monitor participation trends into the future to ensure resources are allocated appropriately to support a broad range of both recreation and sport activities.

Formal sport trends

Busy lifestyles

Shift work, increases in part-time and casual employment and family commitments influence participation as:

- people do not have the time to commit as a regular participant or volunteer
- people seek facilities and participation opportunities with flexible hours.

If membership stagnation or decline became a concern for the user groups based at the site, additional delivery models such as social fixtures or 'pay as you play' approaches should be considered.

Diversification of sport

Modified sports such as T20 cricket and 7s rugby are burgeoning. Changes are placing additional pressure on councils with regard to playing field capacity, facility flexibility and need to plan for additional demand.

Masters sport

There are indications that people may continue to engage in sport later into their old age. The Australian Sports Commission highlights that organisations may need to provide a wider range of products tailored to meet the needs of older Australians.

The development of the preferred layout at the site has clearly considered the need for formal and informal activities that are attractive across the ages. The additional field space at Coolican Field and the flexibility it provides will be particularly useful in this regard.

Field and court quality

Facility providers face an increasing trend to develop and re-develop sporting fields and courts to a higher level in order to increase carrying capacity. Upgrades, such as lighting and field irrigation, allow training and competition times to be extended and increases the ability of turf playing fields to cope with the resulting wear and tear. Further, to achieve ongoing field quality, fields need 'rest periods' (of up to four weeks) where necessary maintenance can be undertaken.

The replacement of turf fields with synthetic fields, however, can significantly increase carrying capacity by limiting maintenance-required field down time. A number of facility providers are moving toward the provision of synthetic fields (particularly for football and hockey where internationally certified surfaces are available). As an oval hosting rugby league/union and cricket, synthetic is not considered an appropriate surface for Davidson Oval. With its current level of use, the playing surface is in good condition, and this is expected to continue to be the case, especially if the irrigation system is upgraded.

Field and court sharing

With many sports extending the lengths of pre-season and season fixtures, sports are no longer classifying themselves as strictly summer or winter sports, this has led to the sharing of field space becoming more difficult. While providers strive to maximise the use of community resources (and State Government espouses field sharing), the reality is that shared use of ancillary facilities (e.g. clubhouses, car parks) rather than fields will be more likely.

In the case of Davidson Oval, the existing field space (and that of Coolican Field) allows relatively easy spread of use across playing areas.

Facility management

Councils across Australia employ various management structures over their sport and recreation facilities. Where resources allow, there is a growing trend towards councils taking on more responsibility for the overall management (and maintenance) of facilities. This involves users (tenant clubs) paying higher user fees, but being able to focus more on their core function of providing the relevant sport/activity, rather than face the burden of maintenance and asset management.

TREND CONSIDERATIONS - KEY IMPLICATIONS

These trends in the provision and use of sport and recreation facilities have been considered in the development of this master plan with the most relevant summarised as follows:

- ❑ clubs and Councils need to recognise that social sport and modified games are becoming increasingly popular, and can increase participation in sport all age groups, and particularly people over the age of 40
- ❑ traditional use and management of sport fields may require review and adjustment to meet the needs of users in the future, and to take advantage of technology (e.g. telemetry systems for lighting and irrigation)
- ❑ demand for higher standard facilities, including playing surfaces (well-drained), field lighting, and all-weather synthetic fields is increasing.

Gap analysis

The supply and demand (gap analysis) has been prepared by considering a range of inputs. Consultation has been undertaken with Council officers, tenant sporting clubs and additional stakeholders identified throughout the project. Further, the team has considered the range of open space available in the Shire and wide-ranging trends.

Council engagement

Council staff have been interviewed throughout the process of developing the master plan. The key issues and opportunities identified during these discussions are summarised as follows:

Issues

- the existing grandstand is not safe for use
- given the age and condition of the existing buildings (grandstand, canteen and toilets), they should be demolished
- the existing perimeter fencing is needed to stop vehicles access the sporting fields
- need to ensure 'responsible development' rather than creating unrealistic wish-lists.

Opportunities

- consideration should be given to constructing one new, large pavilion to incorporate toilets, change rooms, canteen, open/function area and a grandstand
- the sporting field could possibly provide two rectangular and one oval sporting fields
- there may be the opportunity to increase the level of the field lighting (which may involve relocating some towers)
- increased community use of the site is a desired outcome. It is already used for school athletics carnivals, community fun days, movie nights, a mini 'show' (including rides) and ad hoc yoga, boot camps, etc.

Existing user groups engagement

The Davidson Oval Master Plan provides the opportunity to investigate and plan for the needs of existing user groups, as well as consider opportunities to increase the community's use of the site by individuals and community groups.

Bourke Cricket

The Club has over 100 members, utilising the site from October to March each year. The main issues identified in regard to the future development of Davidson Oval were:

- the field is often affected by rain, making it unusable
- the playing surface would greatly benefit from a range of maintenance tasks such as:
 - de-thatching
 - a regular fertiliser and gypsum regime
 - possibly changing grass to a hardy couch species
- the cricket nets could be re-aligned to run onto the fields
- improved field drainage is required
- the irrigation system needs to be upgraded
- the synthetic pitch is covered with sand during football season - it would be good to re-align fields so that the pitch can be avoided
- there is the potential to use Coolican Field for training and use Davidson Oval for competition.

Bourke Rugby League and Union

The rugby league club has between 100-130 members, with the rugby union club having approximately 30 members.

Discussions with representatives from both groups were held with the main outcomes summarised as follows:

- there is limited down-time of the fields due to weather impacts and season cross-overs
- there may be the opportunity in the future for the clubs to undertake some increased maintenance duties
- the lighting is suitable for training but not competition, with lighting at Coolican Field being inadequate
- change rooms were refurbished
- the clubs would support a large, multi-purpose clubhouse
- more gates in the fencing would be good
- there are no major issues with the existing car parking arrangements
- due to the lack of shade, spectators often bring portable marquees.

Other stakeholders

St Ignatius Parish School

Outcomes of discussions held with staff of the school are summarised as follows:

- Davidson Oval is used for an athletics pathway program that has over 100 participants, however, field events are not catered for
- the quality facilities at the swimming pool were noted
- the toilets could be improved.

Bourke PCYC

The main issue identified by the PCYC was the lack of direct access to the sporting field at the site.

Other points raised were:

- the PCYC has the only gym in town
- sports offered at the PCYC include futsal, basketball and netball (social competitions).

DEMAND ANALYSIS - SUMMARY

With the site's tenant clubs having relatively steady memberships and noting the importance of the site to the community, consideration should be given to making improvements to the site that will allow it to better provide sport and recreation opportunities into the future.

Key considerations noted by user groups and stakeholders include:

- the consolidation of existing built infrastructure into one, multi-purpose facility
- reconfiguration of the playing fields into a format providing two rectangular and one oval playing fields
- improved access through the existing site perimeter fence
- minor modifications/improvements such as field drainage, irrigation and lighting, and the re-alignment of the cricket practice nets.





Master Plan

Maintaining a current master plan is a key requirement to guide facility development (to avoid ad hoc and piecemeal progress) and can be a key resource in assisting to attract funding.

The Davidson Oval Master Plan has been developed by considering all consultation, appropriate strategic contexts, previous research, trends analysis and demand. Overall, it provides an ideal opportunity to develop the facility to meet the identified needs of the sporting community and the recreation (and community facility) needs of locals and visitors.

The Master Plan integrates existing facilities with new elements and embellishments to enhance the current sporting activities and provide improved recreation opportunities to establish a quality community hub.

Vision

The medium- to long-term vision for Davidson Oval is:

to ensure quality facilities that not only meet the formal sporting needs of the community but also provide a diverse range of community recreation opportunities and events for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

Master plan elements

Key elements of the Davidson Oval Master Plan are:

| Element | Description | Rationale |
|---|--|---|
| 1. New 'winged' field | Re-align playing fields into two rectangular and one oval playing fields | To increase ability of the site to cater for the sports offered, avoiding the cricket pitch and bringing the main rectangular field closer to the proposed new multi-purpose clubhouse building |
| 2. Demolition of built infrastructure | Demolish existing canteen, grandstand and toilet block | To allow for construction of new multi-purpose clubhouse |
| 3. New multi-purpose clubhouse building | Construct large multi-purpose clubhouse building | To consolidate toilets, change, canteen and grandstand facilities within a single multi-purpose building catering for all user groups |
| 4 Cricket nets | Relocate or demolish/rebuild cricket practice nets | To allow nets to run onto playing field and not buildings or car parking area |
| 5. Perimeter fencing gates | Investigate the addition of access gates at appropriate points in the existing perimeter fencing | To enhance site access at appropriate points, especially from the PCYC |
| 6. Field lighting | Investigate upgrading field lighting at both Davidson Oval and Coolican Field | To increase the playing fields' ability to cater for training and competition events |
| 7. Field drainage and irrigation | Investigate upgrading the sporting fields drainage and irrigation systems | To allow the fields to better cater for increased use and limit the impact of rain events |
| 8. Pedestrian access | Provide pedestrian access from Wilson Street to proposed clubhouse and playing fields | To improve site and facility access |
| 9. Vehicle access and parking | Consider formalising car park and site entries (including entry statements) in the future (subject to demonstrated demand) | To provide formal parking opportunities and improve internal traffic (due to anticipated increased use) |
| 10. Shade trees | Investigate the planting of additional, appropriate shade trees around site | To improve site aesthetics and visitor experience |

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Sport & Recreation Planning by:



Landscape Architecture by:



Notes:

01. Winged-field includes one full size oval and two full size rectangular fields.
02. Main field with 5m runoff shown.
03. Second field with 5m runoff shown.
04. Demolish existing grandstand and canteen structures. Replace with a new clubhouse building that integrates change rooms, a canteen, public amenities and spectator seating.
05. Demolish existing cricket nets. Install new cricket practice nets (x2 bays) as shown.
06. Demolish redundant infrastructure.
07. Provide pedestrian access from Wilson Street and PCYC to new clubhouse, public amenities and fields. Provide breezeway link between new building/s (as shown).
08. Retain existing vehicle access and informal parking. Consider an upgrade (in future) to formalise the off-street car park.
09. Retain existing maintenance sheds.
10. Retain position of existing field lights, where possible. Adjustments may be needed to accommodate the new winged-field arrangement.
11. Retain existing perimeter fencing.
12. Existing trees (approximately 3-4 trees) may be affected by proposed upgrade works and may require removal.
13. Retain existing trees, wherever possible.

Project details:

**DAVIDSON OVAL
MASTER PLAN**

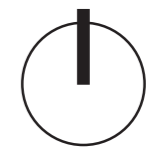
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BOURKE NSW 2840

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