

FINAL REPORT

Biggenden Shire Sport and Recreation Plan



June 2000



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1 Summary and Recommendations

1.1 Summary

Biggenden Shire Council with the assistance of the State Government's Local Government Recreation Planning Program, contracted Strategic Leisure Australia to undertake a Sport and Recreation Plan for Biggenden Shire.

The purpose of this study has been to:

“...provide direction to Council in the allocation of resources to sport and recreation development in (the) shire.”

Detailed below is a summary of the findings and the recommendations.

1.1.1 Demographics

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimated that the population of Biggenden Shire (June 1998) was 1,574 persons. Over recent years the population has decreased, though it is expected to remain relatively stable with the projection for 2011 being 1,580 persons.

Biggenden Shire's age profile is similar to that of the broader Wide Bay-Burnett population – it is under-represented in all age categories between 15 and 49 years. The population is ageing with the median age of residents being 41 years, which is considerably higher than Queensland as a whole (33 years).

The median family income of Biggenden residents aged 15 or older was \$435 per week in 1996. This is lower than Kolan Shire (\$499) and substantially lower than Gayndah Shire (\$563) and Queensland as a whole (\$688).

1.1.2 Consultation

Consultation took place with sport and recreation groups through a survey. As well, focus groups were held with:

1. School, community, business and tourism groups
2. Sport and recreation organisations

Sport and Recreation Survey

Surveys were forwarded to 20 known sport and recreation organisations. Twelve responses were received.

Only three organisations showed an increase in membership in the past three years with most showing a decline or remaining stable at best. The main reasons stated for declining membership in recent years included economic conditions, ageing memberships, declining youth numbers in the community, loss of jobs and the attraction of other sports.

Overall, the majority of organisations who responded to the survey indicated satisfaction with the facilities used. However, in a number of cases e.g. the tennis club and Showground, there were definite facility needs.

School, Community, Business and Tourism Focus Group

The issues that came to light in this focus group concerned both sport and recreation for the community as well as using sport and recreation assets, principally natural assets, to generate economic activity.

A summary of the issues is:

- The Chamber of Tourism and Development wants to see increased use of the surrounding National Parks and State Forests for tourism use.
- The Showground has potential for greater use for sport, recreation and camping.
- The seasonal influx of fruit pickers brings a number of backpackers and others who are looking for activities to fill their leisure time.
- Memorial Hall's acoustics are bad and the Council is considering ways to fix them.

Sport and Recreation Organisations Focus Group

A well-attended meeting spoke about the issues facing the conduct of sport and recreation in Biggenden Shire. A summary of the issues is:

- There is a change in the population structure with the population ageing. The junior ranks are dropping, as there are fewer children in the Shire.
- Struggling clubs are finding it difficult to maintain facilities.
- Biggenden does not have an indoor multi-purpose sporting facility. Mt Perry, a smaller Shire, does have such a facility.
- The Biggenden and District Tennis Association is struggling with worn courts.
- The Shire is generally well catered for with sporting opportunities but is struggling to maintain them.
- There is little communication between clubs about events and activities.
- Transportation to visit neighbouring towns for sport is a significant issue.
- The swimming club wants gas assisted heating of the pool so that swimmers can continue training over winter.
- The rifle club is strong with an increasing membership and range of shooting activities.
- Junior Cricket's main issue is the cost of travel (paying about \$400 per year).
- Insurances paid to State bodies, particularly for juniors, is a significant financial burden for families.
- There was some criticism of Council's support for sport and recreation.

Biggenden Shire Council

Biggenden Shire Councillors, at an ordinary meeting (21 March 2000) gave input to the study. The Councillors cited as their concerns:

- The decline in community voluntarism.
- Disparities in Council's support to different sport and recreation groups.
- The airstrip is under-utilised.
- There was some support for more use of the natural environment of the National Parks.
- Could use Memorial Hall in a modified way for indoor sport.

Consultation with Youth

Focus groups were conducted with Year 6 and Year 10 students at the Biggenden State School.

Popular suggestions were:

- A skate bowl with a small jump (both Yr 6 and 10).
- An area where BMX bikes can be ridden (Yr 6 and Yr 10).
- An indoor sports facility with a range of activities (Yr 6 and 10).
- A social activity such as a disco about once per month (Yr 10).
- Being able to hire video games.
- Would like to be able to join in bush activities, particularly abseiling and rock climbing (Yr 10).
- Some minor support from Yr 10 boys for Junior Rugby League.

1.2 Recommendations

The recommendations of this report have been classified as:

- Short term (0 - 2 years)
- Medium term (3 - 4 years)
- Long term (5 - 8 years)

The recommendations are pragmatic and have been realistically framed in accordance with Council's budget, the ability to obtain grants and/or other resources.

It should be noted that costs outlined in the recommendations are indicative only and should not be relied upon for budgeting purposes as in many cases, multiple disciplines are involved (e.g. engineering, architecture, construction). In addition, factors such as proximity of services and local conditions (e.g. geo-tech) need to be examined.

The recommendations in this report have taken a strategic approach. The basis for formulating recommendations has been that they either meet broad community needs or address specific or obvious gaps in the provision of sport and recreation.

While the report identifies the aspirations and challenges of individual clubs in Biggenden Shire, it does not place them in an "order of merit" over the next 8 years. Many individual club needs require further clarification, reality testing, accurate costing and are likely to change over time.

It is suggested that Council include the recommendations of this report into the Biggenden Shire Council Corporate Plan so that they may be resourced over time.

Recommendation 1	Priority = Short
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Recreational Hall

Support the Showground Hall as Biggenden's premier recreational hall. Do not upgrade Memorial Hall and Council consider its market position and long-term future.

Rationale

Memorial Hall's acoustics are very bad necessitating Council spending funds in the near future to rectify the problem. Also, the catering facilities are not as good as those of the Showground facility.

An upgrade to Memorial Hall would result in the duplication of an existing facility. Council's expenditure on the Hall will only bring it to a level where it is equivalent to that of the Showground Hall. The level of demand for recreation halls in Biggenden is not so high as to necessitate two premier facilities.

The Showground Hall is a modern building with stage, lighting, good acoustics and catering facilities meeting the needs of its users. While serving as a venue in its own right, it also supports outdoor events at the Showground such as the Auto-spectacular, annual show and campdraft. Memorial Hall does not offer any feature superior to that of the Showground Hall.

Indicative Cost	Long term saving
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Recommendation 2	Priority = Short
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Biggenden Sports Reserve

1. Work with Cricket to extend the cricket nets to make them safe
 2. Council take responsibility for a defined number of “mows per year” and arrange a schedule with the sports clubs
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Rationale

The Biggenden Sports Recreation Reserve is the focus of field sport activities. Generally, the facilities are in good condition though there are some small issues that need to be addressed.

One of these is the safety of the cricket nets. Both the senior and junior cricket organisations indicated that the nets were too short, making them dangerous. As this is a safety issue, it is a high priority to rectify. Council, combined with the two clubs and possibly a grant from Jupiters Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund, Qld Government Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund or Sport and Recreation Queensland could fix the situation for little cost.

A significant “niggle” between the sports clubs and Council is being charged for mowing the grounds when they request a mowing. The clubs believed that as the Grounds were Council’s they should take responsibility for mowing them. They further believed that as the clubs were contributing to the infrastructure they were meeting their obligations to Council and the community.

While it is recognised that Council often provides this service for free and when it does charge, the rate is subsidised, it is an issue that should be addressed so that all parties understand what will be delivered and what will need to be budgeted for.

It is recommended that Council determine how many times a year they will mow the grounds and then agree with the user groups the scheduling of those mows e.g. just prior to major events or weekly fixtures.

Indicative Cost \$3,000 Materials for cricket nets

Recommendation 3

Priority = Short

Viability of Clubs

Create a Biggenden Sports Club based on the clubs and facilities at the Biggenden Sports Reserve

Rationale

Perhaps the major issue affecting sport in Biggenden at the present time is maintaining the viability of sports clubs. All clubs expressed difficulty in obtaining and retaining volunteers to take executive and committee roles. Most saw this situation getting worse in the future as responsibilities such as risk management and meeting the demands of GST accounting became more onerous.

Compounding this situation is the fact that most clubs face static if not declining memberships. While Biggenden's population is forecast to be static to 2011, it will continue to age with the likely consequence that there will be less young people available to play and administer sport.

In consultation it was also noted that clubs did not have a formal mechanism through which to communicate, though as there were so few volunteers many sat on the executives of a number of clubs giving them knowledge of what was happening elsewhere.

Apart from reducing the overall administration burden on volunteers, an amalgamated organisation would make financial savings through reduced (overall) public liability insurance, incorporation fees, auditors fees etc.

An amalgamated club need not destroy the individual identity of the clubs. They would exist as clubs under the umbrella of the Biggenden Sports Club.

Advantages include:

- Overall cost savings
- Reduced burden on volunteers (only one executive required)
- Better communication and coordination between clubs
- More likely to be successful in obtaining government grant funds (larger organisation with more members showing a progressive attitude)

Disadvantages include:

- The partial loss of individual identity and history
- Loss of some autonomy and control

The Biggenden Sports Club need not be limited to those clubs physically located at the Biggenden Sports Reserve, though as these clubs share common facility requirements this is recommended initially. Other clubs, in time, could join under the umbrella adding weight to this organisation.

Indicative Cost Nil to Council with long term savings to Clubs

Recommendation 4	Priority = Short
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BMX Track

Construct a BMX track at the Showgrounds

Rationale

As indicated for the skateboard facility (Recommendation 8) there is a lack of facilities for youths who are not interested in organised sport and even for those who are, there are times when they are looking for recreational pursuits.

A BMX track is a reasonably low cost facility for Council to construct, initially only requiring some earthworks and formation of banks and jumps.

The showground on the fall towards the sale yards offers a good site. Apart from the site being large and available, the natural slope would allow a good course of downhill jumps. Neighbours are not too close and there are a couple of trees for shade though more should be planted. Council should also ensure that water is available at or close to the track.

The track would be a public facility, as the town does not have a formal BMX club. Council would take overall responsibility for the track and its maintenance.

The activity is low cost meeting the financial needs of the community.

Like the skateboard facility the design should be established in consultation with the youth and external experts if required.

Indicative Cost \$5,000

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Recommendation 5	Priority = Short
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Active Australia

That Biggenden Shire Council become involved in the Active Australia network

Rationale

Local government is a major provider of sport and recreation facilities and opportunities. With local governments, investing significantly in provision of these services it makes sense to seek to do it as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The Active Australia network creates a mechanism for getting key sport and recreation providers together to share information and improve planning and delivery in local communities. Once Council becomes a member of this group, it will have access to examples of best practice, information on services and infrastructure, and the ability to access a network of professionals.

Indicative Cost Nil

Recommendation 6	Priority = Short
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Community Transport

Convene a Community and Government Working Party to examine the options to address issues of community transport

Rationale

Issues of transport, most commonly to attend events or competitions in other centres, were a common theme during the consultation. The cost and availability of the Variety Bus and the local commercial bus were often raised. Some suggestions were for another community bus, others believed that the Variety Bus could be used more often and some wanted to explore the options available by subsidising a commercial bus charter.

All these solutions have individual issues that need to be considered and evaluated. While it has been a major issue for sport and recreation it is also felt that transport would be a much wider community issue reaching into areas such as community health, home care, shopping etc.

The working party should determine the full gamut of community needs and develop a workable, whole-of-government approach to this difficult issue.

Indicative Cost	Nil. Long term solutions may have cost implications
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Recommendation 7	Priority = Short
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School Holiday Activities

Biggenden Shire Council support a program of school holiday activities, particularly aimed at young women.

Rationale

Young women have few options for recreation outside of formal sport. This report has recommended a BMX track, skateboard facility and half court for youths. While these facilities will be available to all youths, in reality they will tend to be used more by males than females.

Young women have few options outside of formal sport. A free program offering activities such as pottery, art and craft activities, drama etc. would provide entertainment during the school holidays.

Management could be by either an established agency or by Council appointing a temporary coordinator for the duration of the program.

The cost to Council of supporting a program such as this would not be great and it is low risk – because if it is not supported then funding can be stopped.

Indicative Cost	\$2,000 per year
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Recommendation 8

Priority = Short

Recreation Tourism Potential

Council, in conjunction with local and regional tourism bodies, determine a strategy for raising the profile of the area in regard to its natural environment/recreation potential with target markets.

Rationale

Without doubt, Biggenden Shire has some special recreational areas that are largely untapped.

However, this is not news to Council or many of the people who were consulted. Many people believe that “government should do more” to fix tracks and/or promote the area. This appears to have been an area of frustration for some years. In discussions with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, it was discovered that there will be some development of walking tracks at Mt Walsh over the next year or so¹. Moreover, Coongara Rock is planned as an addition to the Mt Walsh National Park in 2001 as part of the Regional Forest Agreement. This will add to the attraction of this National Park.

While it appears that there will be some development in the Mt Walsh / Coongara Rock areas Council would be well served by developing and delivering a strategy to encourage use of the attractions that currently exist as well as promoting widely the facilities when they are constructed.

The Biggenden community needs to review what natural assets it has, establish the target market(s) that would be attracted to them and then determine strategies for promoting the assets to them. Obviously the markets targeted need to be appropriate to the infrastructure that exists at the attraction and in the district.

If the Shire can get more use of the natural assets then the government departments charged with their management may come under pressure to improve the infrastructure in those areas.

The strategies adopted need to use the available funds efficiently and effectively. Suggested strategies for further consideration by specialist local and regional tourism bodies are:

- Write a human interest article on one or more of the areas that Council wants to promote and submit it with quality photographs to an appropriate magazine (or alternatively subsidise the magazine to write their own article). These could include the RACQ journal, lifestyle magazines or bushwalking magazines.
- Use Internet newsgroups to promote the area. Post photos directly or post a link to a web site where the photos are held.
- Liaise with programs such as the “Great South East” and facilitate them doing a story on the area’s attractions.
- Take out advertisements in appropriate magazines.

While Council’s financial contribution will be important it should be supplemented by businesses that will benefit from increased tourist visitation.

Indicative Cost	To be determined by Council. Seed funding though may be in the order of \$5,000 – \$10,000
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Recommendation 9	Priority = Medium
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Skateboard Facility

On the land at the corner of Alfred and Alice Streets, in conjunction with youth, construct a freestyle skateboard facility.

Rationale

There are few activities for youths in Biggenden Shire if they are not interested in organised sport.

The need for youth activities was a constant theme to emerge from consultation with all groups, including youth. This is a low cost activity which is consistent with community feedback suggesting recreation activities need to be affordable.

It is acknowledged that a skate facility currently exists behind the swimming pool and is not often used. While it may have been designed with youth input the facility displays a lack of knowledge of skate facility design. The result has been a design that is not suitable to the skate disciplines.

The site near the pool is recommended for a number of reasons. These include:

- It is close to the swimming pool offering families a choice of activities in the one location
- It is close to the school
- Has trees to provide shade
- Builds a recreation / sport precinct in this parkland when combined with the existing pool and rest area
- The availability of passive supervision by through a location that is open to public view.

It is further recommended that the design of the skate facility be established in collaboration with a representative groups of youths to ensure that the facility meets their needs. This process also establishes "ownership" with the result that the facility is less likely to be damaged. Should the youth not have a good understanding of the design possibilities (less likely then in the past) than an "expert" should be invited to attend a design workshop to provide ideas and knowledge.

A half-pipe is not recommended as this predominantly caters for skaters of higher skill levels.

Indicative Cost \$15,000

Recommendation 10	Priority = Medium
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Biggenden and District Tennis Association

Work with the Biggenden and District Tennis Association to construct two all-weather courts on the Biggenden Sports Reserve

Rationale

The Biggenden and District Tennis Association is located on private land and pays rates to Biggenden Shire Council. The Association manages three “antbed” courts and struggles with the maintenance.

Tennis has had a decline in membership in Biggenden but the Association’s membership is not fully reflective of the sport’s popularity. Tennis as a sport is undergoing a resurgence, in part due to Australia’s success in recent times. As a sport, it is popular with sportspersons of all ages. Being a sport that can be played by all ages it is particularly suited to a population that is ageing.

This recommendation sees the Biggenden and District Tennis Association moving to the Biggenden Sports Ground. This move would allow the Tennis Association to share infrastructure e.g. amenities, clubhouse, car parks etc. with existing organisations. They would also amalgamate under the umbrella of the Biggenden Sports Club should that recommendation be adopted.

A move to the Reserve would mean that the Association no longer has to pay rates to Council, the courts would be maintenance free (on a day-to-day basis) and being a member of the Biggenden Sports Association would deliver the benefits outlined at Recommendation 1.

As a caveat though it is recommended that a Master Plan for the Biggenden Sports Reserve is prepared prior to the move of tennis or other sports to the Reserve.

Indicative Cost \$50,000 (for two courts)

Recommendation 11 Priority = Long

Half Court Basketball Court

That a half court basketball court be developed as part of the creation of recreation / sport precinct on the parkland surrounding the swimming pool.

Rationale

The rationale is similar to that provided in support of a skateboard facility – there is a dearth of recreational facilities for youth in Biggenden.

The site near the pool is recommended for a number of reasons. These include:

- It is close to the swimming pool (and future freestyle skate facility) offering families a choice of activities in the one location
- It is close to the school
- Has trees to provide shade
- Builds a recreation / sport precinct in this parkland when combined with the existing pool, skateboard facility (if constructed) and rest area
- The availability of passive supervision by through a location that is open to public view.

A half court would be a low cost, informal, recreational option for the Shire's Youth.

The cost to Council is a one-off construction cost as once constructed maintenance costs are low.

Indicative Cost \$ 10,000

Recommendation 12	Priority = Long
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Showground Horse and Cattle Shed

Work with the Biggenden & District A&P Society to facilitate the construction of a horse and cattle shed.

Rationale

The Biggenden Showgrounds is Biggenden's premier facility for recreational events (and cultural events if recommendation 1 is adopted).

The showgrounds already host a number of significant events that bring financial and social benefit to the town.

The "Shed" will find use for shows, gymkhanas and campdrafts. It will also have use beyond "horse and cattle" e.g. for displays as part of the Auto Spectacular or the flower show.

Concentrating development in the Showground and Recreation Reserve will build stronger recreational/cultural and sporting facilities respectively. Biggenden's current and projected population cannot support multiple independent facilities. Fewer, stronger facilities will be the best use of the community's limited resources.

Indicative Cost	To be determined but should be subsidised by grant funds
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1.3 Funding of Recommendations

The following table indicates the possible cost and timing of the recommendations. All estimates are fully costed. Council may have opportunities to reduce costs e.g. donated materials, service club labour or be able to access grant schemes for materials or labour to reduce its expenditure.

For some recommendations it has not been possible to cost them at this time e.g. community transport options. These will need to be determined over time and budgeted accordingly.

It is felt that with grant and labour funds and some community assistance supplementing Council's contribution, the recommendations are affordable.

Recommendation	Year							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Recreation Hall	Long term saving							
Biggenden Sports Reserve	3,000							
Viability of Clubs	0							
BMX Track	5,000							
Active Australia	0							
Community Transport	Nil to establish strategy though there could be a long term cost							
School Holiday Activities	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Recreation Tourism Potential		5,000	5,000	Assess success and consider future strategies				
Skateboard Facility			15,000					
Biggenden and District Tennis				50,000				
Half Court Basketball Court					10,000			
Showground Horse and Cattle Shed						Costs to be determined		
Total	10,000	7,000	17,000	52,000	12,000	2,000	2,000	2,000

Table 1 Costs and Timing of Recommendations

1.3.1 Potential Funding Sources

It is suggested that Council consider the following funding sources to supplement its own or other organisations funding for the recommendations. This section draws heavily from the publication “Finding Funding”ⁱⁱ.

Community Sport and Recreation Facilities Program

Sport and Recreation Queensland (Department of Communication, Information, Local Government, Planning and Sport) (5479 1199)

Assistance is available “...to extend, upgrade or develop venues for regional sporting competition and for the community to participate in sport and active recreation”.

Applications from local government are given priority. Grants up to 50% of the eligible costs can be received to a maximum of \$500,000. The eligible project costs must be more than \$250,000.

Community Sport and Recreation Development Program

Sport and Recreation Queensland (Department of Communication, Information, Local Government, Planning and Sport) (5479 1199)

This Scheme’s purpose is “...develop and deliver sport and recreation activities to Queensland communities (by improving) the management and administration of organisations providing sport and recreation opportunities, and increase participation in sport and recreation activities”.

Assistance between \$3,000 and \$5,000 is available depending upon the nature of the project.

Gaming Machine Community Benefit Fund

Department of Families, Youth and Community Care (1800 633 619)

A broad range of non-recurrent projects is eligible for funding under this scheme. Projects must be able to demonstrate that they are “the development and provision of services and activities which will benefit the community”.

Generally funding will only be to \$15,000 though in certain circumstances greater amounts can be applied for.

Eligibility is open to Queensland non-profit community organisations (not local governments)

Jupiter Casino Community Benefit Fund

Jupiter Casino Community Benefit Fund Trust (3808 7444)

Grants up to \$150,000 (larger grants will be considered in exceptional circumstances) for a broad range of projects which benefit the community. Projects must be capital based and discrete.

Eligibility is open to Queensland non-profit community organisations but not local governments)

Minor Sport and Recreation Facilities Program

Sport and Recreation Queensland (Department of Communication, Information, Local Government, Planning and Sport) (5479 1199)

This program "...aims to increase the quality and quantity of sport and recreation facilities throughout Queensland (by) ...assisting in the construction or upgrading of sport and recreation facilities".

Financial assistance up to 50% of the total eligible costs to a maximum of \$50,000. Projects must have a total eligible cost between \$10,000 and \$250,000.

Outside School Hours Care for Young People

Department of Families, Youth and Community Care (3224 8045)

This program provides funding towards after school (including school holiday) activity programs for 13-15 year olds.

The program is not currently funded but the Department advised that liaison should be maintained with the regional office in case this changes or other funds become available.

Rural Living Infrastructure Program

Department of Communication, Information, Local Government, Planning and Sport (3225 8696)

Provides funding to local governments to enhance the quality of life for of people living in rural Queensland. Objectives include "improvement of community recreational, sporting or physical infrastructure" and "increasing tourism potential".

Grants up to \$75,000 are available and for a Shire the size of Biggenden, the subsidy would be up to 90% of the project cost.

Showground Capital Works Subsidy Scheme

Department of Communication, Information, Local Government, Planning and Sport
(3225 8636)

The scheme provides subsidies to show societies for capital works.

2 Study Objectives

The Councils of Gayndah, Kolan and Biggenden jointly issued a project brief for sport and recreation plans for each Council.

The purpose of the project as outlined in the project brief was to:

“...provide direction to Councils in the allocation of resources to sport and recreation development in each shire.”

The objectives of the study as outlined in the brief were:

- To identify existing sport and recreation facilities and their usage and make recommendations with respect to improvements to these facilities
- To identify existing sport and recreation programs and their community usage and make recommendations with respect to future provision
- To determine the future facility needs of the community, on a short (4 years) and long-term (8 years) basis, taking into account regional demographics and regional needs. Provide for those facilities the most appropriate times and locations at optimum quality and cost
- Identify avenues of funding for both the Councils and the community groups to access or provide sport and recreation opportunities
- To provide Councils with strategies and policies in relation to sport and recreation provision within each Shire suitable for incorporation in the Council's Corporate and Operational Plans
- To identify the opportunities for sport and recreation tourism available for each Shire and the benefits that it can bring to each local economy
- To identify and define on maps land required for the future provision of sport and recreation facilities.

It was agreed with the Steering Committee that mapping would be the responsibility of the various Councils.

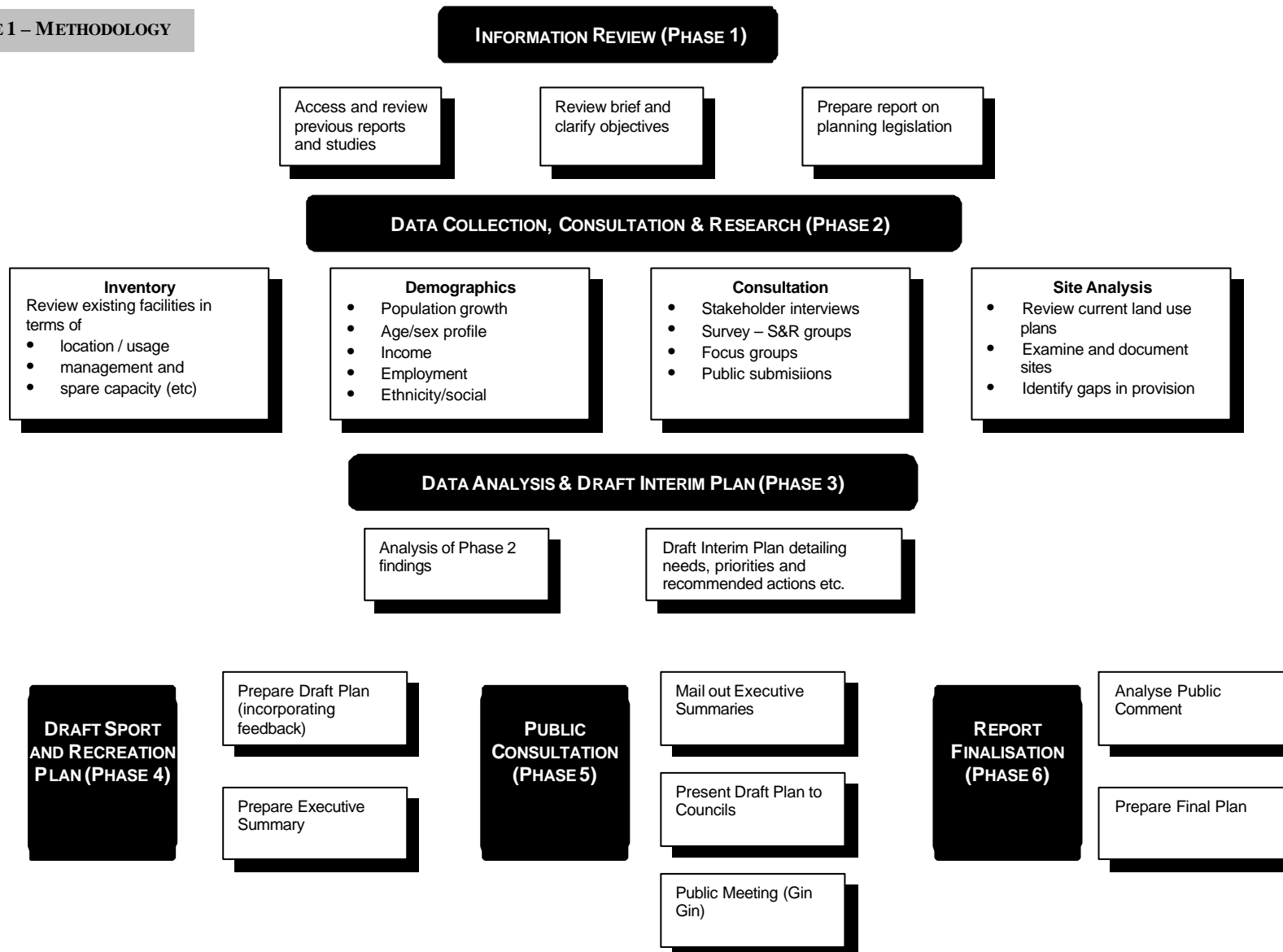
3 Study Approach

The study was undertaken in 6 distinct phases. This allowed the consultation to be undertaken in a logical and progressive fashion and provided the Steering Committee with feedback at relevant points.

These stages are represented in Figure 1 – Methodology and comprise the following:

- Phase One:** Information Review
- Phase Two:** Data Collection, Consultation and Research
- Phase Three:** Data Analysis and Interim Draft Sport and Recreation Plan
- Phase Four:** Draft Sport and Recreation Plan
- Phase Five:** Public consultation on Draft Sport and Recreation Plan
- Phase Six:** Report Finalisation and Presentation

FIGURE 1 – METHODOLOGY



3.1 Phase 1 – Information Review

In this phase the following activities were undertaken:

- The context of the study was clarified
- A tour of the Shire’s sport and recreation facilities was undertaken
- Initial interviews with key stakeholders to identify issues, opportunities and constraints in sport and recreation participation in the Shire
- A detailed review of relevant documentation

A review, identifying the likely impacts of current and planned legislation affecting recreational open space was also prepared.

3.2 Phase 2 – Data Collection, Consultation and Research

Phase 2 was divided into a series of stages, which allowed relevant information to be collected in order to make informed decisions and recommendations. Each stage was run concurrently.

Inventory

An overview of existing sport and recreation facilities, programs and services within the Shire was conducted. The purpose of gathering this data was to establish the location, size, usage, general condition and management of existing facilities and services and to establish whether or not spare capacity exists.

Demographics

A review of the socio-demographic profile of the Shire was undertaken in order to assess likely impacts on sport and recreation participation.

Consultation

A comprehensive consultation approach was undertaken to ensure community input into the study. The consultation strategy comprised:

1. **Stakeholder Interviews** – meetings and discussions with key individuals and groups identified by the Steering Committee
2. **Sport and Recreation Groups’ Survey** – questionnaires were distributed to sport and recreational groups in the Shire to determine current and future needs.
3. **Focus Group Workshops** – focus group meetings were held with representatives of:
 - sport and recreation groups
 - schools and educational institutions
 - business, tourism and community groups
 - Year 6 and Year 10 school children
4. **Public Submissions** – the public were invited to provide submissions and time was made available to meet one-on-one if that was desired.

Site Analysis

An examination of key potential sites for the development of sport and recreation facilities.

3.3 Phase 3 – Data Analysis and Interim Draft Sport and Recreation Plan

The findings from Phase 2 were analysed to develop an overall strategy for sport and recreation in the Shire. The aim was to produce a draft document that clearly identified relevant issues and provided logical and practical solutions.

- A realistic assessment of future facility needs based on the outcome of the consultation process and having regard to the impact of trends, future population projections, other demographic factors, and current and likely patterns of use.
- An action plan for facility provision / solutions over the next eight years, including
 - Recommendations
 - Priorities
 - Rationale
 - Indicative costing
 - Maps (where relevant)
- An outline of gaps in provision and possible non-asset solutions to future needs.
- The most appropriate sites for future development.
- Links to Council's Corporate Plan

The interim report was circulated to the Steering Committee and Council for their comment.

3.4 Phase 4 – Draft Sport and Recreation Plan

Following feedback from the Steering Committee / Council, the document was amended where errors of fact or emphasis warranted.

3.5 Phase 5 – Public Consultation on Draft Sport and Recreation Plan

An Executive Summary was prepared of each report and was used as the main public comment document. It was posted to those groups that had participated in the process (e.g. survey respondents, focus group participants, schools etc.). Each Executive Summary had a Response Sheet attached that allowed readers to easily provide responses on the Draft Sport and Recreation Plan.

3.6 Phase 6 – Report Finalisation

After Council and public comments were received, the need for any alternations or amendments was evaluated in consultation with the Steering Committee / Council and the final report, emphasising priorities, actions and recommendations was prepared. Council was also left with a database of facilities.

4 Review of Relevant Reports and Studies

4.1 Wide Bay Sport and Recreation Council – 3 Year Action Plan

The Wide Bay Sport and Recreation Council (WBSRC) was formed in 1996. The membership of the Council is reflective of the Wide Bay region. The region is broken down into 4 sub-regions with representatives from each of these areas on the Council.

The WBSRC's Action Plan identifies a number of priorities for the region. These were identified with the community and amongst professionals in the region. Since the original plan was developed many actions have been completed or are in train.

The sport and recreation plans for Gayndah, Kolan and Biggenden Shire Councils will satisfy Action 1.1.1 for these Shire Councils as well as contributing to a number of other Actions contained in the plan. Specifically these include those relating to sporting infrastructure for sport and recreation events (Action 1.3.1), the sport and recreation needs of special populations (Action 3.1.1) and identifying regional sport and recreation facility needs (Action 4.1.1).

4.2 North Coast Regional Sports Facility: Consultation Report 1998

This report is a regional consultation report which identifies facility needs of regional sport associations and local governments and the existing facilities capable of hosting regional, state, national or international competition. The Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing (now Sport and Recreation Queensland in the Department of Communication, Information, Local Government, Planning and Sport) prepared the report in 1998. The following issues were identified as affecting local governments:

- The Department of Natural Resources changed the requirements for leasing of crown land to include the preparation of management plans for reserves. This has had a significant impact on the ability of under-resourced local governments to process leases and has consequently slowed the development of facilities.
- Availability of further land for sport and recreation is a significant issue and the main source of additional land is crown reserve. However, increased sharing of land and facilities is being made more difficult by the extension of playing seasons and pre-season training. Rural centres also struggle with cost of infrastructure for new facilities if suitable land can be found.
- Increasing economic pressure on clubs has expanded the level of requests for funding assistance and local governments are constantly criticised for their lack of assistance.
- Management of Council owned facilities usually involves a tension between the need to recover some costs (by charging) and ensuring the facility is accessibly priced. In addition, club use of indoor and stadium facilities have traditionally allowed clubs to generate revenue through kiosk and sponsorship sales. This can sometimes be at odds with professional management of the facility, which seeks to control those revenue sources.
- In rural shires, the lack of planning (for facilities) has often resulted in a lack of resources for development of facilities.
- For shires with low growth it is difficult to prioritise development of sport and recreation facilities above that of generating employment and economic development.

- Several councils felt the role of federal government in funding facilities was unclear and that an agreement should be reached as to the responsibilities of each tier of government.
- Many councils are still unclear on the implications of the new Integrated Planning Act (IPA) 1997, for sport and recreation provision and planning.

4.2.1 Existing and Planned Facilities

The following points summarise the relevant facility issues in the region:

- Facilities in Biggenden Shire recognised as regional or higher include the Recreation Reserve, Golf Course, Bowls Club, Swimming Pool, Rifle Range, Showgrounds and Tennis Club
- Kolan Shire Council believes that the area has the potential for a State level equestrian course.
- Gayndah Shire Council are currently completing a \$330,000 upgrade of the Gayndah Sports Grounds
- Bundaberg plans to build a \$5M indoor sport and entertainment venue to a standard for national competition.

4.3 Biggenden Shire Council Corporate Plan

Biggenden Shire Council’s Mission is:

To ensure that Biggenden Shire is a progressive, attractive and prosperous area while maintaining for the citizens such amenities and services that will provide a quality of life of the highest standard

Council has nine goals in support of its plan.

The main goal relevant to this study is that for Environmental Services / Health which is:

To develop and maintain a healthy living environment for the Community

The plan lists a number of priority strategic issues, two of which are relevant to this study. These are:

- **Priority 12 Facility Provision** – To provide and develop facilities within the Shire in response to community needs
- **Priority 13 Health Standards** – To maintain and improve health standards throughout the Shire

Of the Plan’s sub-programs, the following are most relevant:

Sub-Program	Objective	Key Strategies 99/00
Tourism	To develop public facilities to attract tourism to the Shire	1. Maintain and enhance the quality of public parks and recreation facilities in the Shire
Community Events	To encourage community awareness and active participation in community events	Plan and conduct year 2000 Australia Day observance and Queensland Day observance and Anzac Day observance

Sub-Program	Objective	Key Strategies 99/00
Parks, Gardens and Recreation	To provide a network of well maintained and developed parks and recreation areas and facilities to meet community needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan and implement development and improvement 2. Pursue low maintenance, cost effective development and improvement 3. Pursue aesthetically pleasing and environmentally responsive park development and improvement 4. Determine community needs and expectations to assist with planning and development and improvement 5. Encourage community assistance and participation 6. Continue to improve and research new methods of management and operation
Libraries	To encourage community awareness and active participation	Maintain financial support towards the operation of the Library facility and broaden membership.

5 Demographic Analysis

5.1 Population and Age Structure

The ABS estimated that the population of Biggenden Shire (June 1998) was 1,574 personsⁱⁱⁱ. Over the five years, 1993-1998, the population decreased by an average of 1.1% per annum, though in 1997-98 this had accelerated to a 2.1% decrease^{iv}. The population is expected to remain relatively stable with the projection for 2011 being 1,580 persons^v.

Figure 1 shows the age and sex profile of the Biggenden Shire population^{vi}.

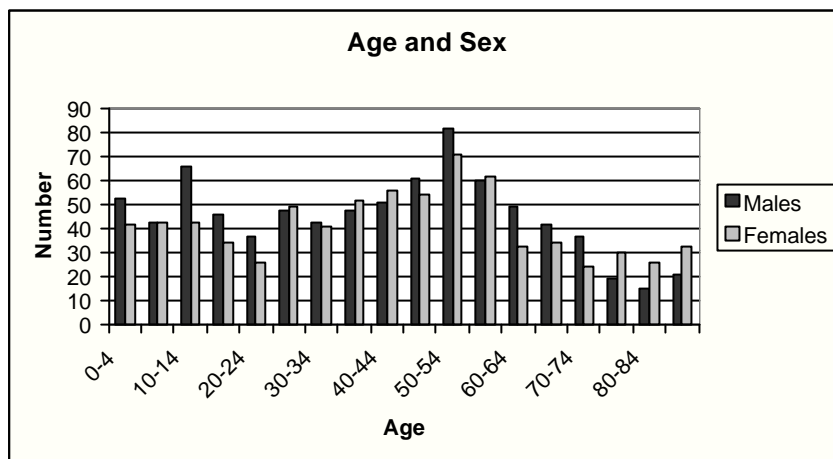


Figure 1: Age and sex profile for Biggenden Shire

Biggenden Shire’s age profile is similar to that of the broader Wide Bay-Burnett population – it is under-represented in all categories between 15 and 49 when compared to Queensland as a whole. The Queensland Government Statistician has surmised that this may be a result of these age groups leaving the region to pursue education and employment opportunities^{vii}.

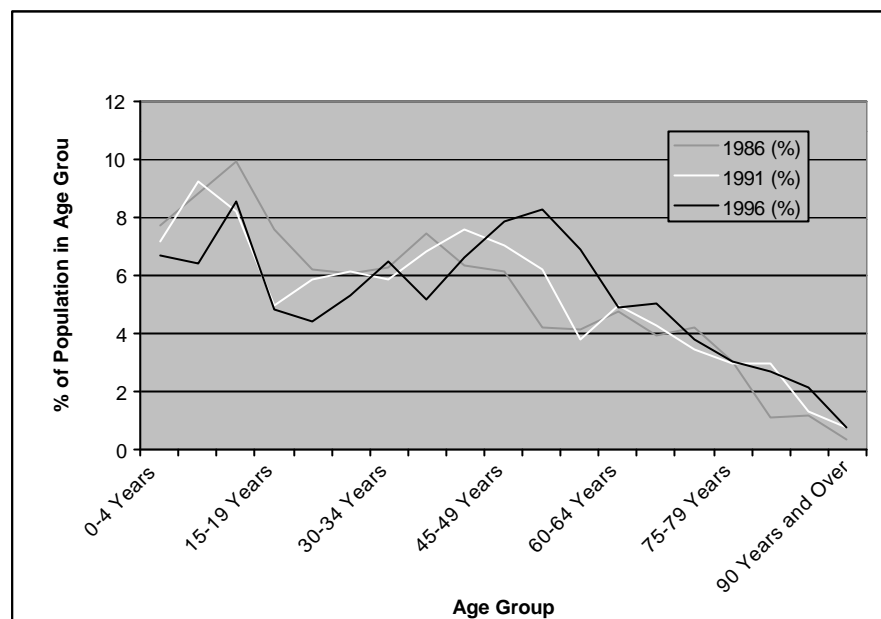


Figure 2: Age Trends in Biggenden Shire 1986 - 1996

Data on the age of Biggenden Shire residents from the 1986, 1991 and 1996 Census' reveal that the population of the Shire is ageing. Figure 2 shows the age trends in Biggenden Shire from 1986 to 1996. This figure indicates that the proportion of residents aged up to approximately 40 years has decreased since 1986. However, the proportion of residents' aged from around 40 to 70 years has increased during this period. The median age of residents in Biggenden Shire was 41 years in 1996, this is higher than both Kolan Shire (35 years) and Gayndah Shire (36 years) and is considerably higher than Queensland as a whole (33 years). This data clearly demonstrates that the population of Biggenden is ageing and is over represented in older age categories compared with both surrounding Shires and Queensland^{viii}.

5.2 Ethnicity and Social Profile

Biggenden Shire's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is 47 persons, which represents approximately 2.9% of the population^{ix}.

The population of Biggenden Shire, and the Wide Bay-Burnett statistical Division are less ethnically diverse than Queensland in total. Approximately 90.4% of the Biggenden Shire population were Australian-born, compared with 85.7% and 78.4% of the Wide Bay-Burnett and Queensland population, respectively^x. Of the overseas born groups in Biggenden Shire, persons from the U.K. or Ireland represent the largest group (4.3% of the population)^{xi}.

Educational levels across the three Shires are slightly below the Queensland average. Persons, as a percentage of the Shire population, with a vocational qualification, Diploma, Bachelor degree or higher are Biggenden (31%), Gayndah (29.8%) and Kolan (27.9%). The State average is 38.5%^{xii}. In 1996, 9.8% of people living in Biggenden were attending primary school and 6.1% were attending secondary school. Only 1.3% of the population was attending either a Technical or Further Education Institution, University or other Tertiary Institution. These figures are comparable to both Kolan and Gayndah Shires^{xiii}.

5.3 Income, Employment and Households' Profile

The median family income of Biggenden residents aged 15 or older was \$435 per week in 1996. This is lower than Kolan Shire (\$499) and substantially lower than Gayndah Shire residents (\$563) and Queensland as a whole (\$688)^{xiv}.

The unemployment rates of the three Shires and Queensland as a whole at the time of the 1996 census^{xv} were:

Local Government	Unemployment Rate
Gayndah	6.7%
Kolan	22.4%
Biggenden	9.7%
Queensland Average	9.6%

Biggenden Shire's unemployment rate was higher than Gayndah Shire, however close to the Queensland average.

The composition of family households in Biggenden Shire was somewhat different to the Queensland average. While there were fewer couple families with children (43.1%) and one parent families (10%) in the Shire compared to Queensland as a whole (47.5% and 13.7%, respectively), there were substantially more couple-only families in Biggenden (44.2%) compared to the whole of Queensland (35.4%)^{xvi}.

Significantly, 23.1% of all households in Biggenden were lone person households in 1996, this is slightly higher than the Queensland proportion of lone person households (21.7%). Also, the average household size in Biggenden (2.5 persons) was lower than Kolan Shire (2.8), Gayndah Shire (2.6) and Queensland (2.8). The number of lone person households and low average number of persons per household in Biggenden Shire is most likely a reflection of the high number of older residents in the Shire^{xvii}.

6 Outcome of Consultation Process

6.1 Sport and Recreation Survey

Surveys were forwarded to 20 known sport and recreation organisations to identify:

- Membership trends
- Participation details
- Current usage of facilities
- Levels of satisfaction with facilities
- Extent to which full use of existing facilities is being made
- Suggestions for improved use
- Essential facility development requirements and alternatives
- Long term priorities

Twelve responses were received as set out below.

Organisation	Response
Biggenden Bowls Club	U
Biggenden Ladies Bowls Club	U
Biggenden Charity Campdraft	U
Biggenden & District Cricket Association	U
Biggenden Junior Cricket Association	U
Biggenden Social Darts Club	U
Biggenden Fishing Club	W
Biggenden Golf Club Inc	W
Biggenden Golf Associates	W
Biggenden Hospital Social Club	W
Biggenden Indoor Bowls	W
Biggenden Pony Club	W
Biggenden Rifle Club	U
Biggenden Rose Festival	W
Biggenden Rugby League Football Club	U
Biggenden SES Social Club	U
Biggenden and District Tennis Association	U
Biggenden Touch Football Club	W
Biggenden Swimming Club	U
Biggenden & District A&P Society	U

6.1.1 Recent and Predicted Membership

Only three organisations showed an increase in membership in the past three years (figures in brackets indicate the membership three years ago and current membership). They were:

- Biggenden Rifle Club (28 – 54)
- Biggenden Swimming Club (32 – 36), and
- Biggenden Rugby League Football Club (42 – 64)

The membership of Biggenden and District Cricket Association (4 teams) remained stable as did Biggenden SES Social Club with 12 members.

Other organisations declined in membership over the last 3 years:

- Biggenden and District Tennis Association (20 – 14)
- Biggenden Junior Cricket Association (50 – 39)
- Biggenden Ladies Bowls Club (64 – 55)
- Biggenden Social Darts Club (50 – 37)
- Biggenden Bowls Club (58 – 55)

Reasons for decrease in membership (last 3 years)

The main reasons stated for declining membership in recent years included:

- Economic conditions. People looking for more affordable sports or withdrawing altogether
- Ageing membership
- Reduced numbers of youths in the community
- Loss of jobs in the community
- Attraction of other sports

Reasons for predicted increase in membership (next 3 years)

Reasons for predicted participation increases include:

- Introduction of junior coaching
- Renewed interest in Shows
- Links to learn-to-swim classes

6.1.2 Levels of satisfaction with facilities

Overall, the majority of organisations who responded to the survey indicated satisfaction with the facilities used (see Table 1). However, where the clubs were dissatisfied the reasons are shown.

Club	Facility	Satisfaction	Reason (if dissatisfied)
Biggenden Bowls Club	Did not answer		
Biggenden Ladies Bowls Club	Biggenden Bowls Club	Satisfied	
Biggenden Charity Campdraft	Showground	Satisfied	
Biggenden & District Cricket Association	Biggenden Sports Reserve	Very Satisfied	
Biggenden Junior Cricket Association	Biggenden Cricket grounds	Satisfied	
	Biggenden School	Satisfied	
Biggenden Social Darts Club	Bowls Club, Golf Club, Commercial Hotel and Grand Hotel	Satisfied with all	
Biggenden Rifle Club	Biggenden Rifle Range	Satisfied	
Biggenden Rugby League Football Club	Biggenden Sports Reserve	Dissatisfied	Dressing Rooms need upgrading, particularly the showers. Canteen needs cupboards so that clubs can leave their goods on-site.
Biggenden SES Social Club	Show Hall	Satisfied	
	Memorial Hall	Dissatisfied	Kitchen facilities too small for large functions
	Catholic Hall	Dissatisfied	Kitchen facilities too small for large functions
	Rifle range	Dissatisfied	Catering facilities are non-existent
Biggenden and District Tennis Association	Tennis Courts	Most Dissatisfied	Constant maintenance of antbed courts, canteen in disrepair, overgrown adjacent paddock and standard of lights
Biggenden Swimming Club	Biggenden Swimming Pool	Satisfied with qualification	Could be used more as it is heated – extend the season
Biggenden & District A&P Society	Showground and horse stalls	Satisfied with the showground; most dissatisfied with the horse stalls	The horse stalls' condition makes them an "eyesore" as well as dangerous

Table 2: Responding organisations' satisfaction with facilities

Facility Use

Most respondents felt that facilities were being used to the fullest extent possible. The exceptions to this were:

- Biggenden Swimming Club that believed that more use could be made of the pool's heating by extending the season
- Biggenden and District Tennis Association believed that an upgrade to the courts to make them multi-purpose would attract new members and sports, and
- Biggenden & District A&P Society believed that the Society's grounds could be used for a BMX track for children

New or upgraded facilities regarded by groups as essential

Suggested upgrades which organisations feel would be essential to the development of their sport, recreation or cultural activities are listed below. The organisation's priorities for the next five years, which may include non-facility issues, are also listed.

Biggenden & District A&P Society

Facility Priorities

- Construction of a large shed to house horses and cattle on show days, gymkhanas and campdrafts

Overall priorities for the next five years

- Upgrade grounds including the construction of a large shed to house horses and cattle
- New fence around the showground
- Removal of existing stalls and beautification of the grounds

Biggenden and District Tennis Association

Facility Priorities

- Upgrade antbed courts to flexipave

Overall priorities for the next five years

- Upgrade antbed courts to flexipave so that maintenance is not required as often
- Build a new canteen facility
- Upgrade lights and paint facility

Biggenden Swimming Pool

Facility Priorities

- Gas assisted solar heating at the pool
- Concrete walls on two sides of the pool as they retain heat and benefit winter swimmers
- Upgrade shower and toilet facilities

Overall priorities for the next five years

- Open pool 12 months a year
- Increase swimmer competency to State level
- Host Burnett Fraser Sunrice squads each year

Biggenden Rugby League Football Club**Facility Priorities**

- Construct a clubhouse at the Sports Reserve
- A gym at the sports reserve to assist training
- Better canteen facilities

Priorities for the next five years

- To compete at a professional level
- Offer the youth of the area the chance to compete as a team and provide them with a sense of loyalty
- Survive as a club and continue to represent Biggenden in district competitions

Biggenden Rifle Club Inc**Facility Priorities**

- Disabled Toilets
- Water Supply
- Expand Lighting

Overall priorities for the next five years

- As above

Biggenden & District Cricket Association**Facility Priorities**

- Top-dress oval as it has become uneven
- Extension of sight screens
- Upgrade practice wickets as they are unsafe

Overall priorities for the next five years

- All of the above
- Painting of clubhouse

Biggenden Bowls Club**Facility Priorities**

- Nil

Priorities for the next five years

- Increase membership

Biggenden Ladies Bowls Club**Facility Priorities**

- No upgrades unless the local economy changes

Overall priorities for the next five years

- Increase membership
- Upgrading the dining and kitchen area if funds are available

Biggenden Social Darts Club**Facility Priorities**

- Upgrade equipment such as dart boards and boxes

Overall priorities for the next five years

- Increase membership
- Build financial resources
- Update equipment

Biggenden Junior Cricket Association**Facility Priorities**

- Upgrade practice nets for safety reasons
- Improve drainage on the junior cricket grounds
- Improve the surface

Overall priorities for the next five years

- Maintain or increase membership
- Attract more parents for coaching and administration
- Contain costs

Biggenden SES Support Group**Facility Priorities**

- Improved catering facilities to meet the needs of large functions – suggested for the Show Hall

Priorities for the next five years

- Increase membership
- For catering facilities used by the Group improved
- To improve the Group's own equipment

Biggenden Charity Campdraft**Facility Priorities**

- New cattle yards and better fencing at the showground

Priorities for the next five years

- To continue raising money for the Cancer Fund and Leukaemia Foundation

Other Comments

A number of clubs provided extra comments concerning issues facing their organisations. These comments were:

- Biggenden and District Tennis Club is a privately owned facility that is not supported by Council. Council rates are a major expense. Declining membership has made it difficult to meet the maintenance expenses associated with antbed courts
- Junior cricket finds that travel costs are a major expense
- The Biggenden & District A&P Society believe that any new facilities provided at the showgrounds would encourage visitors to the area as well as providing facilities for larger functions
- The Biggenden Rugby League Football Club has 114 players and provides a valuable sporting service to Biggenden. However, the club is struggling to survive and being charged by Council for mowing “Council’s own facility” adds further strain to the club’s financial resources

6.1.3 Rocky Creek Farmstay

A written submission^{xviii} was received from Rocky Creek Farmstay.

Rocky Creek Farmstay uses natural attractions in the Biggenden Shire for tourists being accommodated. They rate Mt Walsh National Park as satisfactory but Coongara State Forest as most unsatisfactory. Inferior access, lantana infestation and lack of signage are the reasons given.

Comments in relation to the Shire’s sporting facilities are that they are sufficient for Biggenden’s population except for an indoor facility for night activities, which would offer younger people some night activities.

Priorities suggested were the opening up of more bushwalking, construction of a campsite at Lemon Tree Flat (Degilbo Creek) and build more accommodation to handle group bookings at Rocky Creek.

6.2 Focus Groups

Focus groups were held with:

1. School, community, business and tourism groups
2. Sport and recreation organisations

6.2.1 School, Community, Business and Tourism Groups^{xix}

The issues that came to light in this focus group concerned both sport and recreation for the community as well as using sport and recreation assets, principally natural assets, to generate economic activity.

A summary of the issues is:

- The Chamber of Tourism and Development wants to see increased use of the surrounding National Parks and State Forests for tourism use. To date there has been little exploitation of these resources and the managing authorities do not appear to be planning for increased access and use of these facilities in the immediate future. There is frustration

between Biggenden-based associations and individuals with the authorities on this issue. In particular the Chamber would like to see:

- the Mt Walsh walking track properly marked
- roads to a number of the parks/forests improved
- promotion of Coongara Rock as a climbing destination and/or abseiling
- The seasonal influx of fruit pickers brings a number of backpackers and others who are looking for activities to fill their leisure time. The national parks/state forests, if developed, could offer some of those activities. Others include canoeing on the Burnett River at the boundary of the Shire.
- The showgrounds have a \$42,000 grant from Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund to replace the horse stalls. The showground has potential for greater use for sport, recreation and camping.
- Council is currently considering spending funds on Memorial Hall to fix the Hall's acoustics. While an estimate has not been obtained, it was considered that the Showground Hall, which has good acoustics, might well be a better option. The Showground has a stage and is in better condition than Memorial Hall.
- It came to light during the discussions that the Showground and Memorial Hall's fee structures were significantly different. The Show Society and the Council agreed to cooperate to align the fees.

6.2.2 Sport and Recreation Organisations

A well-attended meeting spoke of the issues facing the conduct of sport and recreation in Biggenden Shire. A summary of the issues is:

- There is a change in the population structure with the population ageing. The junior ranks are dropping, as there are fewer children in the Shire.^{xx}
- Struggling clubs are finding it difficult to maintain facilities.
- Biggenden does not have an indoor multi-purpose sporting facility. Mt Perry, a smaller Shire, does have such a facility.
- The Biggenden and District Tennis Association is struggling with worn courts. In a catch-22 situation it does not have the \$60,000 needed to upgrade the courts, which when upgraded, would attract new members and increase the financial viability of the Association.
- The Shire is generally well catered for with sporting opportunities but is struggling to maintain them, as there are not enough players and volunteers to help administer and maintain the clubs and facilities.
- There is little communication between clubs about events and activities. Offsetting this though is the fact that many administrators are on several committees so defacto communication does exist.
- Transportation to visit neighbouring towns for sport is a significant issue. Trips to towns such as Monto requires an early start and late arrival home which is tiring for younger people. The Shire's larger bus (50 seats) is not available for hire and the "Variety" bus (seats 18-20) is sometimes too small and/or not available. When a large bus is required, it has to come from Gayndah adding significantly to the expense.
- A suggestion was made that Biggenden's facilities could be organised, perhaps as a country club, to offer day trips to retired and semi-retired

persons living on the coast. This would require all clubs to work together. The meeting thought that this was a big issue and probably beyond the scope of the volunteer coordinators managing the clubs at this stage.

- The swimming club wants gas assisted heating of the pool so that swimmers can continue training over winter. Currently they lose their competitive edge while not training over winter.
- A suggestion was made that the pool was central to the Burnett region and that if it was heated then competition could continue throughout winter. Biggenden was on the circuit for Burnett and Wide-Bay carnivals (48 swimmers) and could attract a winter carnival if the pool was heated.
- The rifle club is strong with an increasing membership and range of shooting activities.
- Junior Cricket's main issue is the cost of travel (paying about \$400 per year). The grounds are adequate – the main issue is gaining access to the Variety Bus. (There is confusion in the community about the use of the bus that requires clarification). Most school cricket trials seem to be held in Monto requiring travel.
- Insurances paid to State bodies, particularly for juniors, is a significant financial burden for families.
- When asked about Council's role in supporting sport and recreation in Biggenden Shire the following responses were elicited.
 - Clubs on private land pay rates to Council whereas others do not. Gayndah Shire Council's policy of rebating rates was cited as desirable to those clubs on private land.
 - Council charges (cost less 50%) to mow fields when requested. These requests are in addition to the normal mowing cycle and may result in charges 2 or 3 times a year. Some thought that this should be free, as Council owns the land.
 - Mail from Council is sometimes late

At the conclusion to the focus group the idea of a combined sports organisation based at the sports grounds was floated. The idea, now forming recommendation 2, was generally well received.

6.3 Biggenden Shire Council

Biggenden Shire Councillors, at an ordinary meeting (21 March 2000) gave input to the study. The Councillors cited as their concerns:

- The decline in community volunteerism is having a significant impact on the management of clubs. More and more is being asked of the declining number of volunteers
- There exists disparity in Council's support to different sport and recreation groups. Some groups get significant Council help e.g. if they are on Council land they get free mowing (mostly), small lease fee and some other help from time to time. However, for clubs not on Council land assistance can be quite different. For example, the tennis club receives no help from Council as they are on their own land. Council would consider consolidating tennis at the sports grounds if they were amenable to moving. Council could then share the infrastructure with the other clubs. The Golf Club and Bowls Club have liquor licenses that help them finance their activities

- The airstrip is under-utilised – only used by Air Ambulance and Bundaberg Aero Club for “touch and go’s”.
- There was some support for more use of the natural environment of the National Parks. Youths like bushwalking – mainly abseiling/rock climbing. Need to build a name for the town in that regard.
- Could use Memorial Hall in a modified way for indoor sport. All sports are now played in a modified way^{xxi}.

6.4 Consultation with Youth

Focus groups were conducted with youth at the Biggenden State School. A focus group was held with both a Year 6 and Year 10 class.

Discounting for those suggestions that, while desirable to youth, are beyond the economic means of Council, the suggestions that enjoyed popular support were:

- A skate bowl with a small jump (both Yr 6 and 10)
- An area where BMX bikes can be ridden (Yr 6 and Yr 10). Some children had motocross bikes but there was less support for this than there was for the BMX track.
- An indoor sports facility with a range of activities (Yr 6 and 10)
- A social activity such as a disco about once per month (Yr 10)
- Being able to hire video games (local shop only hires video movies) (Yr 10)
- Would like to be able to join in bush activities, particularly abseiling and rock climbing (Yr 10)
- Some minor support from Yr 10 boys for Junior Rugby League.

6.5 Biggenden Shire Librarian

As an adjunct to the discussion with youths, a discussion was also held with Council's Librarian. It revealed that:

- There is a high use of the internet by youths, particularly over the summer holidays
- Youths would like access to computer games but the library only has access to educational type games
- There is little for youths to do if they are not interested in structured sport.
- The school P&C organised socials for the school children
- Was very supportive of a skateboard facility and a BMX track.

7 Analysis of Parks and Open Space

7.1 Implications of the Integrated Planning Act (1997)

The Integrated Planning Act 1997 changes the basis upon which developer contribution for parks and recreation facilities is determined. Under this Act a contribution can be required towards the cost of community land for public recreation, however the contribution can only be towards the land and cost of basic development to make it suitable for the purpose intended.

This means that a financial contribution can only be towards the land component not the facilities on the land. Contributions must be determined on the basis of an Infrastructure Charges Plan (ICP) prepared for the development of parks and facilities and spent according to the Plan.

The amount of contribution is determined by the Standards of Service, which are identified in the Public Recreation Strategy. These Standards must in part be based on current levels and must consider existing supply. The service standard is applied on a “per additional person to be accommodated basis.”

For Biggenden Shire Council the implications are:

- An ICP will need to be prepared
- As Biggenden Shire currently has a good supply of open space and sporting fields, it will be difficult to justify further contributions towards acquiring land
- However, there are many localised issues with sporting parks and a contribution could arguably be taken towards the cost of “making the park suitable for the purpose intended”. This could cover drainage, basic landscaping, fencing and installation of basic services but not construction of landscape features, BBQs, picnic facilities or any built structures
- Funding of facility development and development of sports fields, parks and picnic areas will need to be funded by rates or other forms of partnerships.

8 Endnotes

- ⁱ Mr Doug Shultz of the Qld National Parks and Wildlife Service (Maryborough Office) invited Council to contact him to discuss priorities for upgrading the National Parks (phone 4121 1800)
- ⁱⁱ Wide Bay Sport and Recreation Council and Sport and Recreation Qld, North Coast Region, May 2000, *Finding Funding*.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Office of the Government Statistician, November 1999, *Regional Profile: Wide Bay-Burnett Statistical Division*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, p.3
- ^{iv} Office of the Government Statistician, April 1999, *Regional Profile: Wide Bay-Burnett Statistical Division*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, p.2
- ^v Department of Communication & Information, Local Government & Planning, 1998, *Population Projections for Queensland*, Brisbane, p. 93
- ^{vi} Australian Bureau of Statistics, June 1998, *Population by Age and Sex*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
- ^{vii} Office of the Government Statistician, November 1998, *Regional Profile: Wide Bay-Burnett Statistical Division*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, p.5
- ^{viii} 1996 Census
- ^{ix} Office of the Government Statistician, April 1998, *Regional Profile: Wide Bay-Burnett Statistical Division*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, pp.4-5
- ^x Office of the Government Statistician, November 1998, *Regional Profile: Wide Bay-Burnett Statistical Division*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, pp.5-6
- ^{xi} 1996 Census
- ^{xii} Office of the Government Statistician, April 1998, *Regional Profile: Wide Bay-Burnett Statistical Division*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, pp. 6-7
- ^{xiii} 1996 Census
- ^{xiv} Office of the Government Statistician, November 1998, *Regional Profile: Wide Bay-Burnett Statistical Division*, Queensland Government, Brisbane, p.6
- ^{xv} 1996 census data has been used as more recent unemployment data is not available at a local government level.
- ^{xvi} 1996 Census
- ^{xvii} 1996 Census
- ^{xviii} The submission was received on the sport and recreation survey form. However, as the survey form was not designed for organisations such as this the results are presented separately from other organisations.
- ^{xix} One of the participants at this focus group also represented Biggenden Junior Cricket. The information concerning junior cricket has been written up in Section 8.2.2
- ^{xx} Falling enrolments at the school supports this statement.
- ^{xxi} Following this meeting the floor area of Memorial Hall was measured. The available floor area was approximately 11.3m by 14.6m (165m²) wall-to-wall. A standard basketball court is 15.0m by 28.0m with a run-off of 2.05m all around which equates to 613 m². Memorial Hall's floor space is only 27% of that required for a safe basketball facility. The Hall would also have issues concerning ceiling and light height even if the floor space had been sufficient.