

# Gunnedah Open Space Strategy



17 March 2010





## Gunnedah Shire Council

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### Open Space Strategy

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# 1.0 Executive Summary

Arriving in Gunnedah, a visitor would perceive Gunnedah as a green town with many parks and high quality sports fields.

This Strategy has reviewed all parks as well as the supply of open space for Gunnedah and the Villages for the next 15 years.

Council, over the years, has planned the parks well. There is generally a good distribution of parks and generally enough open space, with the exception of high level parkland. Recommendations are made that will improve the current and future supply of open space, for recreation and sport, at all catchment levels.

Unlike many towns and cities, Gunnedah has not yet capitalised on the recreation value of its River (the Namoi River). The development of a section of the Namoi River Parklands is a high recommendation of this Strategy. The River is a very attractive recreation destination and Gunnedah has an opportunity to take advantage of it.

Wolseley Park should be Council's premier recreation park. Unfortunately, sport has been allowed to overtake the use of the Park. To provide the space to allow the Park to reach its potential as a the town's iconic recreation park, it is recommended that the tennis facilities are eventually removed, when they have become worn and in need of replacement.

The town has many sports fields and without exception, they are of a very high quality. Council contributes many resources to the maintenance of the fields and wickets and the results are obvious—and appreciated by the sporting community.

There are many possibilities for improving the open space network. The Namoi River Parklands have been mentioned but there is also Wandobah Reserve, Mullibah Lagoon and many of the other parks in the Shire. Unfortunately, the reality is that there are many more ideas than resources. This Strategy has suggested that Council reviews the services that it provides to the sporting community to establish if a better balance is required, freeing up some resources for addressing maintenance and improving parks, walking paths and other elements of the total open space system.

There is some backlog of park asset maintenance. Detailed planning has been undertaken for the first five years and projections out to 15 years. Council will need to find the budget resources to address these maintenance items.

To assist in this, a number of open space areas have been identified as surplus. Council needs to review these with a view to their disposal. Disposal will provide capital to Council and reduce ongoing maintenance costs.

Gunnedah Shire Council engaged ROSS Planning to develop this Open Space Strategy. The study builds on other Council planning including site specific plans and Council's S94a Plan.

This Strategy examines Gunnedah Shire's current and future demand for open space areas; improvements to existing parks and walkways, while being cognisant of Council's vision to have a high quality open space system.

This Strategy identifies Council's open space needs for the next 15 years. With this Strategy, Council can budget for improvements and maintenance to the system as well as work with the development industry, confident in its requirements for open space.

Council established three aims and objectives for the study:

1. identify and describe the current status/standard of each open space area and its elements (surfaces, services, buildings, minor structures, facilities maintenance and other elements)
2. determine, through consultation and assessment, ideal standards for all facilities (ideal service levels)
3. determine, through consultation and testing against available resources, the strategies for each open space including capital works and maintenance programs where identified using a 15 year timeframe.

Further direction was also provided:

- identify and assess the current range of facilities and open space opportunities available in the Shire
- measure current and estimate likely future demand for community facilities and open space opportunities
- identify any target groups within the community that are disadvantaged with open space areas and facilities and barriers for opportunity and development
- identify priorities in relation to the type, standard and location of community open space facilities and opportunities through input from the community and Council
- identify priorities for improvements to open space areas and their elements through input from the community and Council
- provide best practice planning and design guidelines for quality of life outcomes for future public open space facilities
- provide best practice social impact principles for future design and management of community open space facilities
- establish the relationship between supply and demand for each open space area including its associated facilities
- identify opportunities for areas including linkages, multiple use, consolidation of areas
- enable the Council to accurately identify and prioritise open space facility/ areas needs at the Shire and local community level, not ignoring regional capacity
- enable the Council to effectively plan for and prioritise the level of service from community facilities including identification of a focus on specific areas (e.g. riverine area)
- enable the Council to identify existing open spaces facilities/ areas that require improvement or redevelopment to meet the community needs.

## 2.0 Introduction

## 3.0 Planning Context

This Section of the document describes the current planning environment for open space in Gunnedah Shire.

Firstly, it looks at some of the key planning reports or policies that are used by Council in driving or managing open space at the present time.

Trends in park and playground design are provided as background to contemporary planning for readers that are less familiar with the topic. Responding to these trends is evident in the recommendations of this Strategy.

Population and demographic characteristics of the community are also presented. Population growth in particular is very important, as it is this growth, that is, or will be, driving much of the demand for more open space areas.

Finally, this Section:

- establishes the location of all existing open space areas
- provides a classification system to allocate each open space area to a function
- discusses the drivers for different open space types
- sets a desired standard of service for recreation and sport park types that describes the quantum of land as well as accessibility standards
- describes open space performance criteria that guide Council in obtaining suitable land in future subdivisions to fulfil its intended role
- discusses embellishment standards.

## Relevant Reports and Studies

Gunnedah Shire Council made the following documents available to the study team:

1. Gunnedah Urban Riverine Scheme (2006) and Gunnedah Riverine Project—Preliminary Report to Council (2008)
2. Contributions and Development Services Plan (2007).

### Gunnedah Urban Riverine Scheme

Two reports were provided that are summarised here. In 2006 Council prepared, and adopted, the Gunnedah Urban Riverine Scheme— Concept Plan. This Plan was updated with a report to Council in December 2008 (Report to Extraordinary Meeting of Gunnedah Shire Council 3 December 2008).

The study area for the Concept Plan comprised the lands from Donnelly Fields to Mullibah Lagoon and was broken down into three precincts:

1. Precinct 1: Riparian Management
2. Precinct 2: Urban Development
3. Precinct 3: Stormwater Management.

In Precinct 1, riparian management is to be undertaken from Donnelly Fields west to the Sewerage Treatment Plan. Development will include vegetation and stormwater management, replanting road closures and walk/cycleway development.

In Precinct 2, which extends from Donnelly Fields east to Elgin Street, the aim is to promote “public movement from the Central Business District northward down Marquis Street to Cohen’s Store and the riverine environment. The precinct will provide a historical walk along Maitland Street, which was once the main street of the town”.

Precinct 3 is focused on Mullibah Wetlands for the purposes of stormwater management though recognising that the area has aboriginal significance, recreation usage and wildlife values.

The Concept Plan, as well as describing the development of the three precincts, also recognises that the precincts, and the wider urban and near rural lands, need to be linked through walk and cycle trails and biodiversity corridors.

In late 2008, a broad costing was undertaken of the concept plan. The costs were estimated as:

Precinct 1:.....	\$980,000
Precinct 2:.....	\$5,105,000
Precinct 3:.....	\$1,850,000
Total:.....	\$7,935,000.

The development, at nearly \$8 million, is a significant investment for Council. Moreover, the ongoing maintenance would also be a significant burden, and this has been estimated at \$500,000 per annum.

## Gunnedah Contributions and Development Services Plan 2007

The Gunnedah Contributions and Development Services Plan 2007 is Council’s S94A Plan<sup>1</sup>. The Plan allows Council to levy a charge for essential community infrastructure.

Relevant works (to this Open Space Strategy) for which Council is collecting a contribution, and have not been undertaken, include:

- CBD Upgrade program—Conadilly Street and side streets
- Riverine Environmental Management and Improvement Program
- Embellishment, shade protection and playgrounds to various parks
- Village park improvements
- Upgrade to floodlighting at Wolseley Park
- Upgrade of shade shelters at Wolseley Park.

These projects represent the major items of expenditure planned by Council to the open space network in the next eight years or so.

<sup>1</sup> Prepared under S94 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979.

## Trends in Park and Playground Design

This review looks at some key trends that are affecting the provision of and embellishment of open space. This review is not a comprehensive critique of all trends. Such a task would be a major report in itself. The purpose of this information is to highlight to readers, who are less familiar with park provision and design, some of the more important trends that influence local governments' thinking in open space provision.

### Ageing Society

While the nation's, and Gunnedah's, populations continue to grow, it is the ageing of society that will have most impact on the way that parks are used. Gunnedah Shire's population is older (median age 40) when compared to the NSW (median age of 37). Importantly, evidence suggests that the median age will continue to increase for some years before the trend is reversed.

An older society will have a greater demand for passive and informal recreation and physical activity opportunities than a younger society. For older people, access to playing fields and formal sport opportunities is not as important as walking and bike paths, dog off-leash areas and picnic grounds. This does not mean that Gunnedah will require less sports fields than it has in the past—there will always be enough young people to require formal sports fields. It does mean though that new developments need to recognise the needs of this changing demography.

### Physical Activity

#### Participation in Physical Activity

Participation in leisure-time physical activity across Australia has declined in recent years and the incidence of obesity is increasing. Local governments (as well as State and Commonwealth governments) are taking steps to increase physical activity levels. At the local government level, opportunities for walking, cycling and sport are some of the most common, and easily implemented, responses.

Various studies have shown that the most popular physical activities for both Australian men and women are walking, swimming, aerobics/fitness, cycling, tennis and golf.

#### Volunteer Sport Organisations

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the rate of volunteering for executive positions in sport and recreation clubs has been declining for many years. The responsibility for these roles is being carried by the remaining volunteers and it could be expected that over time, these volunteers will also decline in numbers.

It could also be expected that there will be changes in this sector over time. Amalgamations are likely with multi-sport clubs becoming more common. In other cases, organisations may become aligned to larger licensed clubs that take over some, or all, of the volunteers' roles as well as asset management responsibilities.

A degree of "professionalisation" of clubs is also likely to take place with some positions attracting at least a basic remuneration. The commercial sector will also displace some clubs by offering competitions where people can turn up and compete without any requirements to undertake other duties (e.g. umpiring or canteen).

#### Cost of Participation

The cost of participating in sport is increasing. These cost increases are most often linked back to insurance premiums, but the end-result is that parents, in particular, are being more selective in the sport(s)

that their children pursue. Particularly where there are a number of children, the cost of junior sport is often a real burden. Parents may reduce the number of sports that their children are involved with, choose a lower cost option or activity, or withdraw altogether.

### Programming of Parks

No longer are local governments taking a "build it and they will come" approach to parks. Increasingly, Councils are recognising that they need to program public open spaces to encourage people into them.

In South East Queensland, a number of Councils are now taking this approach. Brisbane City Council has initiated "Active and Healthy Parks" where 120 parks across the City are being actively programmed. Gold Coast City Council has appointed an "Active and Healthy Community Officer", who, over the next three years, will trial a range of methods, including programming, to increase community physical activity. Logan City Council has recently appointed a Physical Activity Officer. Other Councils have implemented, or are considering, similar responses.

Apart from physical activity programs, open spaces are being programmed for events (e.g. community festivals, film nights) and more regular activities such as markets.

## Park Design

### Design Principles

The design of a park is critically important in ensuring that it is well used. In particular, public open spaces should include:

- "attractive and safe open spaces with good lighting, seating, shade, shelters, areas for play
- well-lit, level and shaded footpaths that provide linkages to other open space areas and facilities
- walking and cycle pathways, with links to community and commercial areas, and public transport
- facilities linked to regular transport and/ or easily accessible to communities
- well-designed and landscaped streets, including safe pedestrian road crossings and traffic management devices
- availability of a range of safe, quality indoor and outdoor facilities
- infrastructure that supports participation by people with disabilities, including the provision of ramps, accessible amenities, and safe pedestrian crossings".<sup>2</sup>

Creating the right park setting is critically important to the community's use of it for physical activity.

Numerous studies highlight the need for paths linking residential areas with parks and other types of open spaces. Walking has become the preferred physical activity for both men and women, therefore, there is a need for path systems providing good connectivity between places of activity.

## Water Management

Drought conditions have made all park managers more aware of saving water in park maintenance.

Greater use of drought tolerant plants and grasses is important. The collection of rain water for use in water features and playgrounds can reduce the demands on the reticulated supply. Artificial surfaces and hard surfaces, such as gravels and decomposed granite, are being considered instead of grasses.

Lack of rainfall makes sports fields hard. In some cases, these fields may be too hard and are possibly leading to injuries. While Australia

<sup>2</sup> NSW Department of Local Government 2001, *Creating Active Communities: Physical activity guidelines for local councils*, NSW State Government, Sydney

does not have a current Standard for field hardness, one is being considered. Once the Standard is in place, there will be pressure from sports administrators and insurers to “soften” the sporting surfaces.

In some cases, artificial grasses may be the answer as they need no water and are kept soft by their rubber chip “filling”. This surface may be suitable for football (soccer) but at this time appears unsatisfactory for rugby league and rugby union due to possible health effects associated with ingesting the rubber chips. It is likely though, that new surfaces being trialled now will soon be suitable for sports such as rugby league and union.

## Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, or CPTED, is about crime prevention by “designing out crime”. Research is showing that particular types of crime, fear of crime and feelings of insecurity can be reduced by a better design and proper maintenance of the built environment.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 1: Night lighting of popular paths can improve safety



<sup>3</sup> International CPTED Association, March 2002, *Designing Out Crime Newsletter*

## The Play Experience

### Defining Play Through Different Eyes

To an adult, play is a way to pass time, with no immediate useful product. To a child however, play is doing something interesting or enjoyable that they are in control of. Through play, children can be *anyone, at any place, at anytime*.

To a play-planner, play is the outcome of a sophisticated interaction between the physical setting, the play opportunities and the child users. When carefully planned, a play facility instantly delivers benefits to the delight of the child users. It can also have wider benefits such as promoting the child’s physical, emotional and social competencies, or by providing a community asset for either active or passive enjoyment. Children at play should be seen as an integral component to any public park facility.

### What, Where and How do we Play?

The indicator of a successful play experience is whether children want to return. Play experiences need to incorporate many or all of the following characteristics:

- *Physical form.* The play area needs to be adapted to the physical landscape (rocks, trees, gullies) and supplemented by man-made variations (mounds, bridges, platforms). It can beneficially reflect the local sense of place or identity.
- *Child and adult participants.* Consider the local demographics within the user groups. There is a need to offer separate areas for different age groups (2-5 years, 5-12 years, 12+ years), while providing for active adult supervision or for adult passive watching.
- *Safety.* The play area should be accessible to all, including the physically challenged and supervisors with prams. The design must incorporate safety standards to prevent traumatic events, but still provide challenge and invitation to explore.
- *Invitational design.* This tends to be subtle, so that children spontaneously move between play opportunities—exploring and discovering, using their imaginations to create new uses for infrastructure or loose parts (water, sand, leaves), interacting with each other and utilising rhythm, movement, co-ordination and balance. Open-ended designs with graduated support built into them are of high play value.

When an area for play cannot deliver on the four points above, then the users will be less than satisfied. Examples of successful structures can be found in Figure 2.

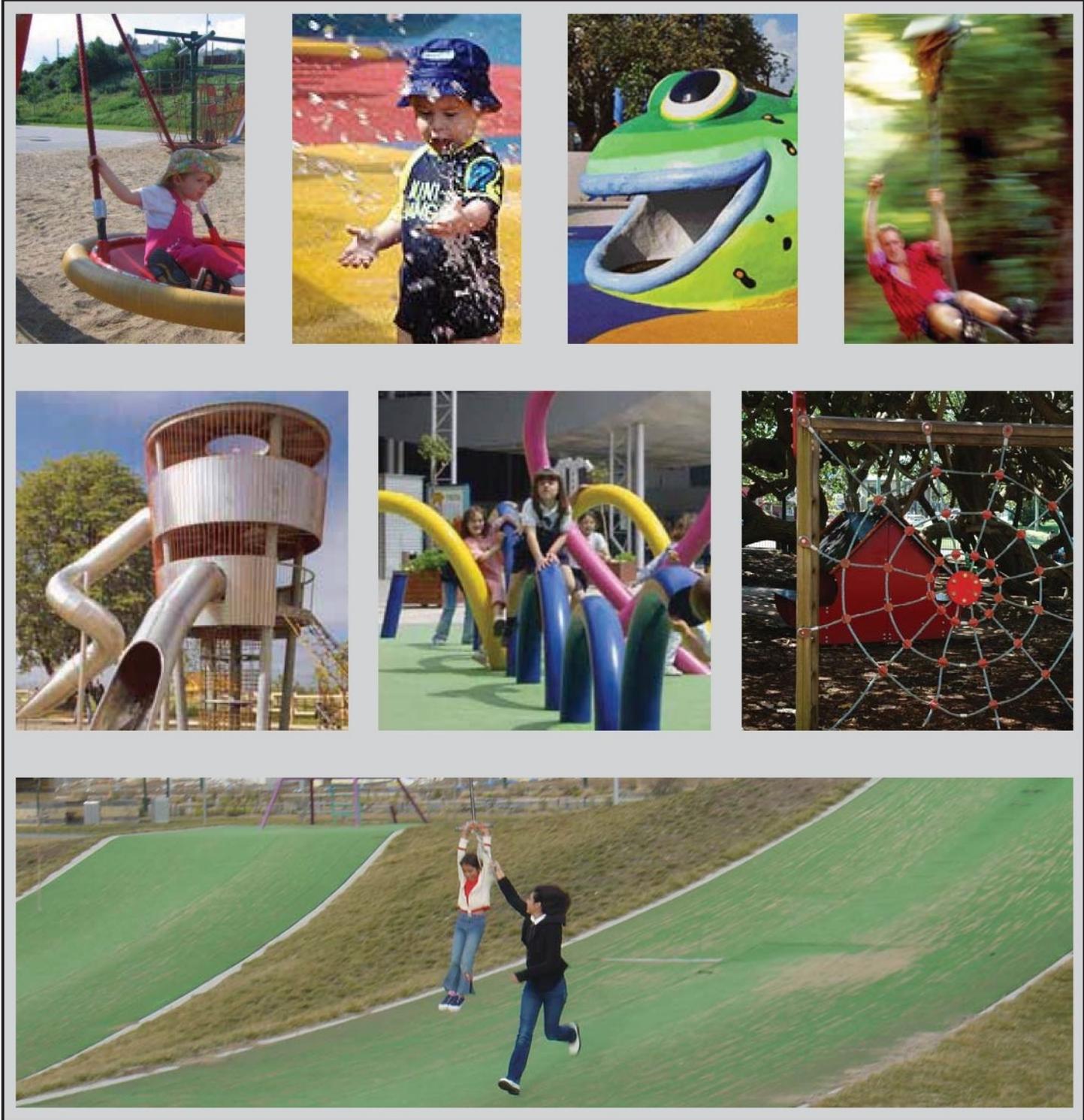
### A Play Experience Versus a Playground

A play experience is, or should be, vibrant and exciting—whereas a playground is just the infrastructure that is provided. The difference is somewhat like that between a mountain bike ride and a stationary bicycle. More importantly, a play experience does not automatically require the installation of structured play equipment. Interesting and interactive places to play and explore may be created by designing magical and evocative landscapes. This may include sculpting the earth or utilising the natural contours, planting (for example, vegetated tunnels or mazes, forests) and/ or utilising various textures and materials such as creative paving patterns (stepping stones, steps, edgings for balancing). A play space may incorporate interesting views or vistas, showcase art or innovation (mobiles and alternate energy sources), sculptural park furniture, landscape structures or buildings.

Play experiences may incorporate elements such as:

- storytelling/ sculpture trees
- labyrinth/ mazes
- tunnels of plants

Figure 2: Images of various successful play structures



- hiding holes
- mist water play
- meandering paths
- meeting places
- water jets
- musical play.

The common characteristic in all of these is that the infrastructure suggests (but never dictates) how it is to be used. Moreover, each element can be used in many ways—common sense says that a toddler will use a mist water play area quite differently to a 12 year old.

Such unstructured play needs to complement and be integrated with other recreational facilities to encourage active recreation for children, youth and adults. Examples include:

- basketball courts and hoops
- play structures and equipment
- cycling and/or pedestrian networks and skill development circuits
- attractive open space areas for ball games etc.
- water play parks
- surfaces and markings for games such as hopscotch and handball
- swings for all ages including adults
- flying foxes and climbing walls
- fitness stations and training equipment.

## Clusters of Activities

As children want to play at their own pace and to be able to choose what type of play fits “today’s ideas”, then a play area needs to accommodate this. For example:

- when toddlers are present, the variety of play and scale of components require that they have a separate zone. This is vital for their safety and enjoyment.
- within any play space, some children will prefer noisy or active play (like climbing). This play should be physically zoned to separate them from children playing quietly (like fantasy or sand play). This is vital to reduce conflict and promote socialisation skills.
- compare the effectiveness of separate zones with the problems inherent in a toddler playing in sandy softfall while older children are chasing each other over the nearby obstacle course.

It is important to have a variety of activities within each zone—otherwise children will look for variations (that tend to be less acceptable to the supervising adults).

## Integration with the Wider Park

The provision and thoughtful location of play spaces and complementary park infrastructure that considers how children, supervisors and the community will use the space and what their requirements will

be, is necessary in order to create a destination that can be utilised by all. Design considerations will be site-specific and may include:

### Creating Attractive Places

- landscaped open spaces that maximise shade and create an aesthetically pleasing environment.

### Providing Comfort and Convenience

- complementary amenities may include seats, shelters, picnic areas, bins, bicycle stands, fencing, lighting, drinking fountains/ bubblers and showers. Assess the need for public toilet provision.
- adjacent seating and picnic areas ought to face, and be within full view of, the play space to optimise use by supervisors.
- the play space ought to be accessible by pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles with safe and comfortable walking distances. In order to maximise community use, pedestrian and cycle path networks are required with linkages to other entries and areas of interest. Circuit opportunities promote recreation purposes.

### Promoting Safety and Amenity

- consider the orientation of the play space/ equipment and park amenities especially seating to maximise shade protection during the hottest part of the day. Shade protection may be achieved by locating infrastructure under shade trees (existing or proposed) or shade structures. Consider the set out and location of play space to also ensure indirect and passive surveillance of facilities.
- in order to ensure playgrounds are safe and functional, play spaces ought to comply with the relevant Australian Standards. The Australian Standards specify requirements for the design, construction, installation and maintenance of playground equipment and softfall materials. The design needs to consider the mobility challenged and access for supervisors with prams.

### Considering Maintenance Objectives

- ensure ease of maintenance to enable a high standard of maintenance
- select materials and plant materials that are low maintenance.

## Population Growth and Demographics

This section presents information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the Shire at the 2006 Census as well as estimates of future population growth that have been used to guide the estimation of additional parkland required to service new residents.

### Demographics

At the 2006 Census Gunnedah Shire had a resident population (i.e. excluding visitors) of 11,525 persons. Of those, approximately 7,542 live within Gunnedah Township with the remainder dispersed across the villages and farms.

Table 1 summarises a range of socio-demographic characteristics drawn from the 2006 Census. The characteristics are shown for the Shire, the villages and township, and a comparison with the national result is shown as a point of reference.

Some points to highlight include:

- within the villages of Breeza, Carroll and Curlewis, males substantially outnumber females
- the Shire has a median age of 40 compared to the national median age of 37
- in the villages of Tambar Springs, Carroll and Curlewis the median age is somewhat lower than for the Shire
- in Mullaley the median age of 43 is somewhat higher than for the Shire
- older people appear to leave the villages to live in Gunnedah
- the Shire has a high indigenous population and as a percentage it is approximately 4.5 times the national average
- the Shire has very low levels of citizens born overseas.

### Population Growth

In a town the size of Gunnedah, population growth can be significantly influenced by business projects such as mines or large agricultural operations. The employment demands can mean that a large number

of people, in a relatively short time, move to the town to take up the positions. As such, the population estimates used in this report will need to be reviewed from time to time.

Population growth has been estimated at an additional 750 people every five years with nearly all this growth occurring in Gunnedah. Some growth may occur in Curlewis but is unlikely to be sufficient to affect the supply of open space. Other villages are likely to stay steady or decline slightly.

The future population of Gunnedah is then estimated as:

- 2006—7,542<sup>4</sup>
- 2011—8,250
- 2016—9,000
- 2021—9,750.

The future population of the Shire is then estimated as:

- 2006—11,525<sup>4</sup>
- 2011—12,275
- 2016—13,025
- 2021—13,775.

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<sup>4</sup> actual census night figure

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of Gunnedah Shire

Characteristic	Gunnedah Shire		Gunnedah Town-ship		Breeza		Carroll		Curlewis		Mullaley		Tambar Springs		Australia
	No.	% of Total Persons in Shire	No.	% of Total Persons in Shire	No.	% of Total Persons in Shire	No.	% of Total Persons in Shire	No.	% of Total Persons in Shire	No.	% of Total Persons in Shire	No.	% of Total Persons in Shire	% of Total Persons in Australia
Total persons	11,525	-	7,542	-	133	-	447	-	603	-	217	-	135	-	-
Males	5,746	49.9%	3,646	48.3%	71	53.4%	244	54.6%	322	53.4%	110	50.7%	69	51.1%	49.4%
Females	5,779	50.1%	3,896	51.7%	62	46.6%	203	45.4%	281	46.6%	107	49.3%	66	48.9%	50.6%
0-4 years	739	6.4%	445	5.9%	5	3.8%	33	7.4%	51	8.5%	19	8.8%	13	9.6%	6.3%
5-14 years	1,852	16.1%	1,138	15.1%	23	17.3%	82	18.3%	120	19.9%	39	18.0%	27	20.0%	13.5%
15-24 years	1,301	11.3%	937	12.4%	15	11.3%	37	8.3%	54	9.0%	21	9.7%	13	9.6%	13.6%
25-54 years	4,290	37.2%	2,616	34.7%	50	37.6%	183	40.9%	234	38.8%	90	41.5%	51	37.8%	42.2%
55-64 years	1,394	12.1%	891	11.8%	22	16.5%	53	11.9%	76	12.6%	21	9.7%	15	11.1%	11.0%
65 years and over	1,946	16.9%	1,516	20.1%	19	14.3%	57	12.8%	68	11.3%	29	13.4%	15	11.1%	13.3%
Median age	40	-	41	-	40	-	38	-	37	-	43	-	36	-	37
Indigenous persons	1,171	10.2%	931	12.3%	22	16.5%	52	11.6%	77	12.8%	11	5.1%	11	8.1%	2.3%
Australian citizens	10,790	93.6%	7,018	93.1%	131	98.5%	429	96.0%	568	94.2%	213	98.2%	106	78.5%	86.1%
Born overseas	424	3.7%	281	3.7%	13	9.8%	23	5.1%	23	3.8%	9	4.1%	9	6.7%	22.2%

## Drivers for Provision of Open Space

Table 2 details the basic drivers behind the need for different types of open space and the basic factors underlying provision of open space of that type.

Understanding the different drivers and underlying factors aids in understanding differences in the nature of performance criteria/standards of service for each open space function. For example, desired standards of service for recreation and sport parks will be related to the number of people, where they live and work, how they use the land and the type of experience they might expect.

In contrast, criteria for provision of ecological areas will depend on the species of flora and/or fauna present, the significance in sustaining ecosystems and other such criteria.

When classifying the recreation and sporting parkland, we have ensured that the land:

- is suitable and safe for use by people (servicing the recreational, social, cultural and sporting needs of residents)
- has free and unrestricted access (there may be some restriction on access for regular or special events, but people are able to access the space freely at other times)
- is embellished or is intended to be embellished, to encourage and facilitate recreational or sporting access.

Table 2: Drivers for the provision of open space types

Open Space Function	Drivers	Factors underlying provision
Recreation and sport parks	Need to provide opportunities for physical activity, health and well-being of people	Developing land and increasing populations
Recreation corridors	Need to connect residential areas, community destinations and open space areas to facilitate opportunities for physical activity, health and well-being of people as well as alternative commuter routes	Connection, access and mobility within and between residential areas, community destinations, open space and places of employment
Ecological areas	Need to conserve and protect flora, fauna, biodiversity and ecological functions	Dependent on the extent and significance of the element being protected
Amenity reserves	Need to protect scenic amenity, cultural and natural features, and livability of areas	Dependent on the nature and extent of the element being protected
Public utility land	Need to support and facilitate development of all social, economic and environmental outcomes of societies	Dependent on the function being provided

# 4.0 Open Space System

## Gunnedah Shire Public Open Space Network

Gunnedah Shire has approximately 45 areas of publicly accessible open space (see Map 1 for Gunnedah parks), though a number of these are split into different functional areas. These areas are a mix of Council owned freehold land and Crown Reserves held in trust by Council for Recreation or similar purposes. Together, these areas total 386 hectares. The network consists of various types of open space that are further categorised as sub-types. Details of all Gunnedah Shire’s public open space are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Area of open space types

Open Space Category	Hectares In Network
Amenity Parks	9.2
Ecological Areas	106.0
Public Utility Reserves	32.3
Recreation Parks	28.0
Sports Parks	50.0
Sports Parks Specialised	31.4
Unallocated	87.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>344.4</b>

## Open Space Vision

It is suggested that the Gunnedah Shire Council adopt the following vision for the provision of community open space:

*“An attractive, green city where residents and visitors have easy, safe, access to a range of sport, recreation and natural area park types that interconnect with the Namoi River, creeks, Mullibah Lagoon, lookouts, parks, community facilities, CBD, schools and points of interest”.*

## Open Space Outcomes

The open space network will:

- provide recreational and sporting parks in line with current and emerging community needs
- provide a diverse range of activity opportunities and landscape settings to encourage healthy lifestyles and maximise opportunities for engagement in physical activity
- provide safe, attractive places and equitable and convenient access to recreation, sport and open space infrastructure
- ensure that sufficient land is identified and protected to meet the recreation and sporting needs of the future population
- ensure spaces and facilities support the ongoing viability of community user groups and have capacity to adapt to changing needs over time
- protect, preserve and enhance natural habitat and environmental processes
- protect and enhance the cultural and natural heritage and scenic/ landscape amenity of Gunnedah Shire
- contribute to the legibility and character of neighbourhoods.

Map 1: Major parks in Gunnedah



## Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles are outlined below that describe Council's intentions through the provision and management of open space.

### Effective Planning

Council will ensure that provision of recreation and open space opportunities accurately reflects current community needs and Council resource constraints.

### Effective Use

Council will encourage and assist maximum utilisation of recreation, sport and open space infrastructure.

### High Quality

Council will ensure that all recreation and open space opportunities are designed and maintained to a high quality, commensurate with the nature and use of the facilities and spaces.

### Community Involvement

Council will provide a range of means for the community to become involved in the provision of recreation and open space opportunities.

### Resourcing

Council will identify and allocate resources for the provision of recreation and open space opportunities in an efficient, effective and equitable manner.

### Access

Council will ensure that all new and, where possible, all existing recreation and open space facilities, can be safely and conveniently accessed by all existing and potential users.

### Minimal Impacts

Council will ensure that recreation and open space facilities and activities have minimal impacts on surrounding land uses.

### Effective Management

Council will ensure that recreation and open space facilities and events are managed in the most efficient and cost effective way.

### Public Safety

Council will ensure recreation and open space facilities are safe for public use.

## Open Space Classifications

Various open space types possess differing values, functions and settings. The sustainability of each type of open space is commensurate with the nature and level of impact on their values. Impacts arise from compatible and incompatible uses of respective open space, and/or within open space types. Impacts occur both on individual open space areas and cumulatively.

Impacts change the nature of types of open space. For example, recreation activities in ecologically sensitive areas are likely to degrade ecological values. Consequently, each type should be managed according to potential impacts.

To promote appropriate use of Gunnedah Shire Council open space a classification framework has been proposed (Table 4) and applied to the existing resource (Figure 3). Public open space in Gunnedah Shire

is classified according to its function and hierarchy.

The first level of classification identifies the primary function of the land. The second level of classification is the hierarchy. Hierarchy is used to describe the size and scale of a park, from smaller local parks to major regional parks. Understanding park hierarchy helps Council to allocate resources for development and maintenance in a consistent and equitable way.

The Local Government Act 1993 requires that all public land be classified as “operational” or “community” land. All open space covered by this Strategy is “community” land.

## Hierarchy of Parks

Park types are further distinguished to indicate to users, and managers, the level of embellishment, and thus variety, that can be expected in the particular park. Users will make their selection based on the experience that they are seeking and managers will use the hierarchy as a guide to embellishment levels and maintenance regimes. Three hierarchy levels are suggested:

1. Regional—major recreation parks that offer a wide variety of opportunities to a broad cross section of the Shire's population. These parks are large in size, well known amongst residents and they are major destinations.
2. District—mid-sized parks providing a range of facilities and activity space for recreation. These areas have facilities to cater for large groups and are appealing to a range of users. They service several neighbourhoods and are fairly well known destinations for those people living within their catchment.
3. Local—smaller parks providing a limited range of recreational opportunities for local residents. These parks contain facilities to facilitate recreational use, but generally cater for short visits only.

## Planning Units

For the purposes of this study planning units have been defined as the townships i.e. Gunnedah, Curlewis, Breeza, Mullaley, Carroll and Tambar Springs.

Gunnedah has the greatest population but is still sufficiently compact to be a discrete planning unit i.e. it does not require further subdivision.

Planning units allow open space to be assessed at the appropriate level. District level open space is assessed at the planning unit level. Local open space is assessed within the planning unit in terms of both quantity and accessibility. However, regional recreation open space, and sporting open space, are considered across the planning units (i.e. for the Shire) as users are prepared to travel to utilise these significant open space areas.

## Desired Standards of Service

Desired Standards of Service (DSS) is the level of open space that Council strives to provide as a minimum to all residents in the Shire.

There are two forms of Desired Standards of Service—a quantitative measure and a spatial standard.

The current supply (quantitative measure) for Gunnedah Shire is:

- recreation open space Gunnedah urban area—3.4ha/ 1,000 people
- recreation open space Gunnedah Shire—2.4ha/ 1,000 people
- sporting open space Gunnedah Shire—3.3ha/ 1,000 people.

For comparative purposes, the Desired Standard of Service, which is close to the Actual Standard of Service<sup>1</sup>, for a number of other local governments whom ROSS Planning has worked with are shown in Table 5.

<sup>1</sup> Except for Mount Isa where the supply is well below their DSS

Table 4: Classification framework for open space

Primary Function	Definition/ Description
Amenity park	<p>Parks that primarily protect and/ or enhance an area's scenic or visual amenity value and landmarks/ signature points. These parks have no or very limited recreational value or use. These open space areas include land that has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ornamental gardens</li> <li>• scenic outlooks, views and vistas</li> <li>• memorials and monuments</li> <li>• natural features such as escarpments, rock outcrops</li> <li>• steep slopes/ topography</li> <li>• small size or lacks access.</li> </ul>
Ecological areas	<p>Ecological open space is primarily intended to conserve or protect ecological values.</p> <p>This open space protects and enhances biodiversity by providing habitat for flora and fauna and includes environmental corridors. These areas are planned and managed to protect environmental values, but may also include some outdoor recreational use where this does not compromise the values for which the land is being managed. Ecological areas include environmental or bushland reserves.</p>
Recreation park	<p>Public open space areas used primarily for social, cultural and a variety of informal or unstructured recreational activities that people undertake in their leisure time (e.g. picnics, social gatherings, walking, cycling, relaxing, playing). These parks provide a range of opportunities and facilities for informal or unstructured activities and enhance the visual and scenic amenity, and identity of the community. Three levels of park are presented:</p> <p><i>Local Parks</i> providing a limited range of recreational opportunities for local residents. These parks contain infrastructure for recreational use, but generally cater for short visits only.</p> <p><i>District Parks</i> are usually larger in size and provide a range of facilities and activity spaces for recreation. These parks have facilities to cater for large groups and are appealing to a range of users. They service several neighbourhoods/ suburbs and are fairly well known destinations for those people living within their catchment.</p> <p><i>Regional</i> are major recreation parks that offer a wide variety of opportunities to a broad cross-section of the Shire's population and visitors. These parks are generally large in size, embellished for recreation and are well known amongst</p>
Sport park	<p>Parks that primarily provide open space for a variety of structured or formal sport opportunities such as team competitions, physical skill development and training. These parks are characterised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large flat open areas that meet formal sporting code parameters</li> <li>• facilities specifically for undertaking competitive, organised sport</li> <li>• ancillary facilities for clubs or organisations to support sporting activities (such as canteens, amenities blocks, clubhouses, storage facilities, car parks)</li> <li>• free unrestricted access for informal use when formal sporting activities are not being undertaken.</li> </ul>
Sport park specialised	<p>Open space areas provided for sporting activities where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the nature of the activity and subsequent land requirements result in provision on a regional basis (i.e. catchments are greater than district or township level)</li> <li>• the nature of the activity and/ or facilities precludes free, unrestricted access to members of the public when not in use for formal sport activities/ events.</li> </ul> <p>Specialised sports are considered to include motocross/ motorcycling, equestrian, golf, shooting, car/ kart racing, model aeroplanes, lawn bowls, croquet, field archery/ bow hunting, animal sports and cycling (velodrome).</p>
Public utility land	<p>Open space areas necessary for the provision of general services and infrastructure (e.g. power, water, sewerage) and/ or to assist in management of other land values. These open space areas may contribute to scenic and visual amenity of areas, but have limited functionality for recreational use. These open space areas include land for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• water bodies/ canals—property parcel, or part thereof, that is covered by a permanent body of water such as a canal, lake or significant water feature</li> <li>• drainage reserve—land associated with waterways, creeks, drainage lines and stormwater infrastructure such as retention basins (where not embellished for other uses)</li> <li>• infrastructure reserve—land for utility infrastructure such as electricity transmission, telecommunications, water and sewerage</li> <li>• cemetery—land used for cemetery functions.</li> </ul>
Undeveloped park	<p>Land gazetted, dedicated or designated for recreation open space but does not contain recreational infrastructure/embellishments. Undeveloped parks may provide opportunities for local informal recreation in the way of a kick-about space but are not developed or managed for anything other than occasional mowing and weed treatment. They may be notionally intended for a future use (e.g. sport) but do not function in this role at the time of the study.</p> <p>Separation of undeveloped parks from developed local recreation parks enables planners to better identify where existing opportunities are located, and hence develop strategies and priorities to address gaps in the network.</p>

Figure 3: Classification of open space in Gunnedah

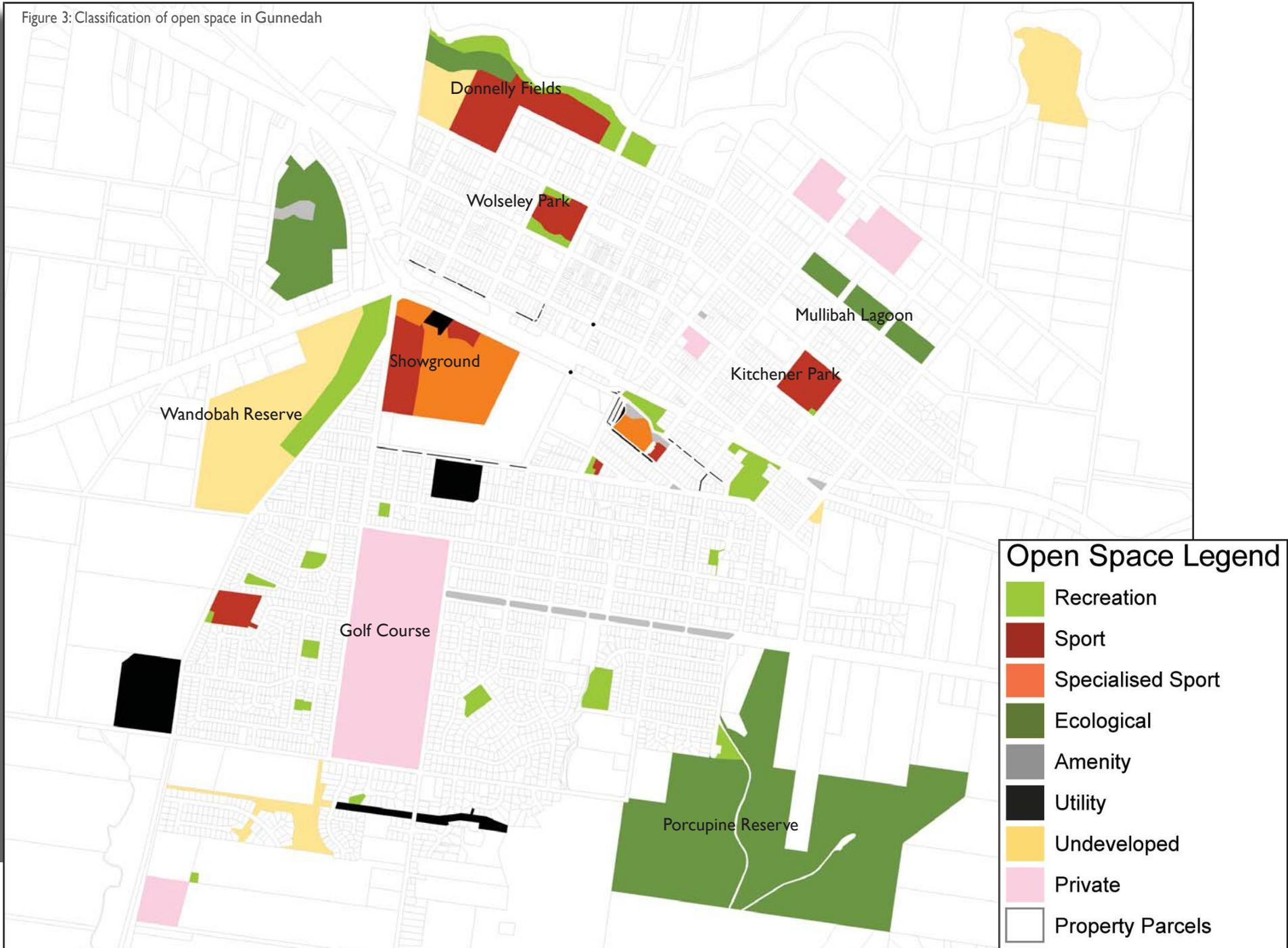


Table 5: Comparative Desired standards of service

Local Government Authority	Total Recreation Parkland (ha/ 1,000 residents)	Total Sport Land (ha/ 1,000 residents)
Broken Hill City Council (proposed)	1.6	2.0
Caboolture Shire Council	4.0	2.0
Dubbo City Council	5.0	2.8
Gold Coast City Council	3.5	1.4
Tamworth Regional Council	2.7	2.6
Toowoomba City Council	3.0	2.0
Mount Isa City Council	2.0	2.5

In comparison to other local governments, the provision of sporting open space is high, while recreation open space is about average. The reason that sporting open space is high is probably because Gunnedah has large, sport facilities which are used by only one code (i.e. the junior cricket).

The provision of single use sport land has a number of advantages, including:

- a single set of field markings
- no tension between users, especially at the end of the season when there may be season overlap
- the fields have “time off” to regenerate
- the schedule allows time for turf maintenance
- the mowing height can be determined for the single sport code and not have to be a compromise length
- more green space making the urban area more attractive. The

disadvantages include:

- increased operational costs as more area needs to be mowed and maintained
- increased capital costs as more clubhouses, public toilets, car parks, lights etc are required.

As can be seen the only disadvantages are financial in nature—it costs significantly more to maintain single use sport facilities. Council has made it clear that costs are an issue of concern so a slightly lower

DSS is suggested for the future.

A quantitative DSS for Gunnedah Shire is suggested in Table 6. This DSS provides the basis for determining the quantity of land required to meet current and future population needs.

The DSS for sporting open space is lower than the current supply. The likely result of adopting a lower rate would be that no existing sport facilities would be lost, however, any emerging needs will need to be accommodated within the existing supply.

The quantitative DSS for recreation open space is similar to the present supply as the existing level is not excessive when compared to other localities.

Table 6: Desired standards of service (DSS)—quantity of land

Catchment	Recreation (per 1,000 people)	Sport (per 1,000 people)
Local	1.5ha	–
District	1.0ha	–
Regional	1.0ha	2.9ha
Total	3.5ha	2.9ha
		6.4ha

Table 7 presents the secondary DSS, being Spatial Desired Standards of Service for accessibility to the recreation facility network. The access standards are used to guide appropriate spatial distribution of local and district level recreation facilities. Access standards for regional parks are not specified as provision of and demand for this type, depends on other factors such as attractive location and alternative recreation opportunity.

There is very little divergence between local governments when it comes to spatial standards. Some local governments aim for a local park within 400m of each resident but typically, in established communities, 500m is more satisfactory.

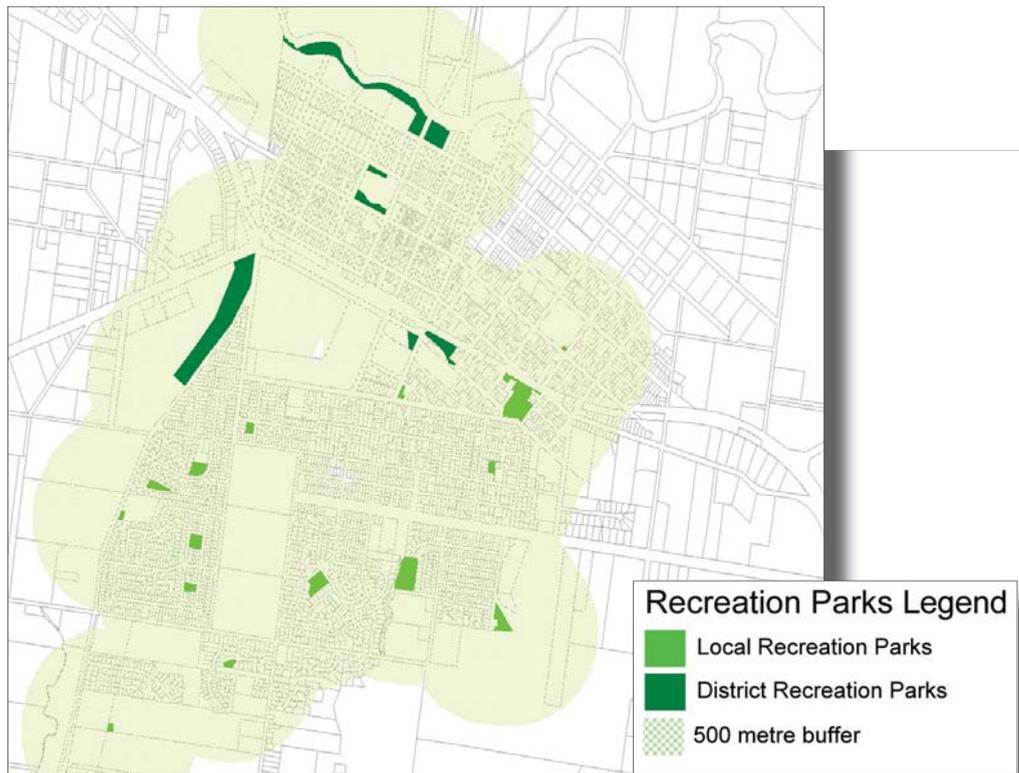
Table 7: Desired standards of service (DSS)—access

Catchment	Recreation	Sport
Local	500m	–
District	2.5km	2.5km
Regional	–	–

Figure 4 shows the application of a 500m buffer from each open space area. The result shows that essentially all residences in Gunnedah are within 500m of a recreation open space area.

A comparison with other local governments is useful but it is not necessary to imitate them. All the local governments listed in Table 5 are larger than Gunnedah Shire. There are scales of economy with a larger population such that the DSS can be lower than for a smaller community.

Figure 4: Accessibility of open space in Gunnedah (500m)



## Performance Standards

Performance standards are required to ensure that land offered by developers as part of their developer contribution, or acquired by Council with other funds, is capable of supporting the recreation activity intended from the site.

Basic Performance Standards have been established for recreation and sporting parks. These will generally only be applicable to new open space acquisitions or additions to existing spaces to improve their functionality.

### Recreation Parks

#### Local Parks

Typically, local parks will:

- be 0.5-1.5ha in size (or joined to a network of open space areas)
- have slopes no greater than 1:10 for 75% of the park area. Where wheelchair access is more likely to occur then some of the park should have slopes of 1:15 or less
- retain and integrate natural vegetation and creek lines where possible into the park design
- have 50% of the park boundary fronting the road
- have access to required services such as electricity and water
- be linked to other open space where possible.

#### District Parks

Typically, district parks will:

- be 5-10ha in size (or joined to a network of open space areas)
- have an average grade no greater than 1:10 for 75% of the park area. Where wheelchair access is more likely to occur then some of the park should have slopes of 1:15 or less
- retain and integrate natural vegetation and creek lines where possible into the park design
- have sufficient land above 100 year flood levels for infrastructure (notionally at least 10%)
- have 75% of the park boundary fronting the road so that visibility

- is maximised
- have access to required services such as electricity, sewerage and water
- be linked to other open space where possible.

#### Regional Parks

Regional Parks will generally have performance standards similar to district parks. However, Regional Parks tend to be unique and the performance criteria will be a product of the design and recreation outcomes being sought.

### Sport Parks

The following criteria are for typical open space areas used for field and court sports. Specialised facilities, such as indoor sports or lawn bowl greens may be adequately accommodated on other land types. Typical open space for sporting fields will:

- be at least 8ha in size as this allows for efficient development of infrastructure, adequate buffers and adequate space for competitions. There is no limit to maximum size
- have at least 75% of the area directly facing a road
- have adequate space for car and bus parking
- be relatively flat to minimise the earthworks required to provide level playing fields
- if the site is a closed landfill, then have some virgin areas for facilities
- have soils that offer adequate drainage.

## Recreation Setting and Diversity

The open space network also needs to offer variety in the recreation setting—a measure of diversity within the recreation park network. This type of classification recognises people’s needs and expectations for achieving a variety of experiences from recreational participation.

The underlying principle of setting diversity recognises that variations in the perceived physical, social and managerial elements affect people’s recreation experiences in open space.

Council needs to consider the variety of settings in the recreation parks within the urban area. Not all parks need to be mown grass—opportunities to incorporate existing trees, grasses and rock outcrops can offer an alternative recreation experience (and can be more economical to maintain).

## Embellishment and Maintenance Standards

Embellishment standards describe the typical levels of embellishment expected for recreation and sport infrastructure. Documenting the typical level of embellishment at different levels of the hierarchy and in different settings assists local governments by providing:

- descriptions that help stakeholders understand the differences in the levels of a hierarchy
- a structure to estimate typical capital costs of development (for infrastructure charging and/ or budgeting)
- a basic set of parameters guiding appropriate versus inappropriate embellishment, ensuring functionality, diversity and values are not eroded.

Management/ maintenance standards can be developed that are related to the planning framework, classification and hierarchy categories. These standards provide a structure for allocating resources in the areas where they best service community needs. For example, areas classified as local recreation parks might receive a more frequent schedule of mowing than public utility land.

# 5.0 Maintaining the Resource

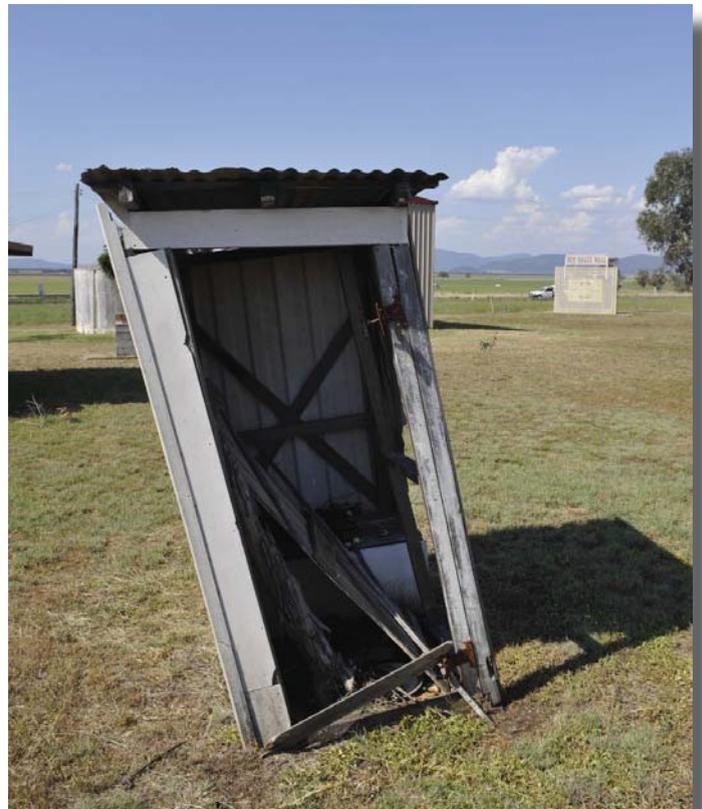
## Facility Assessment

All Council owned or controlled parks<sup>2</sup> were inspected to determine the condition of the assets<sup>3</sup>. Assistance in this task has been provided by Howell Facilities—asset engineers that specialise in sport and recreation infrastructure as well as Council's Public Facility staff.

The basis of the assessment was:

- visual inspections only. No detailed or diagnostic testing was undertaken
- where internal access was not available an estimate has been provided based on the external presentation
- costs are for budget guidance only and will be subject to detailed scoping of work
- no provision has been made for project management or administration
- costs have been prepared without knowledge of Council's required standards, usage patterns, and current maintenance practices. Accordingly, no estimate is provided on remaining useful life
- where costs for minor works are less than \$1,000 a bulk provision has been made
- no estimate has been made on ground renovations.

Figure 5: Parks outside Gunnedah are in need of greater maintenance



<sup>2</sup> Areas that were leased were not generally inspected as Council is not responsible for the maintenance. All private facilities were excluded.

<sup>3</sup> The assessment of facilities at the Gunnedah Showground only involved the sport fields and the external facade of the Lyle and Griffith Centre and the Basketball buildings. Other buildings, that are under the control of the Show Society, were not inspected.

## Results of Assessment

Table 8 sets out basic maintenance requirements of the existing assets and improvements to meet Australian Standards, OH&S requirements or contemporary health and safety standards. It does not incorporate general park upgrades (except to the irrigation systems) and it may include costs for replacing an item that, after consideration of need and use, Council decides against replacing.

The figure for Year 1 is much higher than later years. This recognises backlog maintenance that needs to be addressed as soon as possible. In reality, Council will smooth this cost over the next few years.

The broad health and safety improvements include an allowance for accessible pathways, bubblers and picnic benches<sup>4</sup>; general termite inspection and the replacement of affected timber; an asbestos audit and labelling exercise; extending the provision of regulatory signage to all parks.

The total across all items over the next five years is estimated at \$1.57 million. An itemised list is included in Section 10.

## Timeframe

The assessment has been budgeted to 15 years though only the first five years is in detail. Council will need to review costings for later years.

## General Comments

Detailed assessment of all open space areas can be found in Section 9. Some broad comments concerning the asset portfolio are:

- much of the asset inventory, outside Gunnedah town, is in poor condition
- basic condition-based maintenance requirements e.g. painting, is not keeping pace
- some assets are not used e.g. bowling green, or very rarely used e.g. some playgrounds. These and associated assets should be removed and not replaced
- vandalism is evident in certain areas
- some shortcomings regarding health and safety (e.g. playground shade, accessible facilities, running track close to picket fence)
- provision of unsuitable facilities (e.g. inadequate sports lighting). It should either be to Australian Standard or should be removed to avoid risk to Council
- appearance of broad termite damage
- suspect asbestos present in many buildings. No asbestos labels identified
- lack of monitoring or control of use of public spaces (e.g. car access across parks to get to back yards).

<sup>4</sup> for people with limited mobility

## Notes on Costing

A schedule for the painting of park furniture has been developed. The schedule will cycle over five years. The schedule is:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Kitchener, Wolseley, Anzac Parks and Longmuir Fields	Arthur Heath, Athol Gallen, Bottle Brush, Jaeger, Jae-High, Ken Green, Kilcoy, and Mary Davis Parks; indoor sport facilities on Showground	All Village Parks	McAndrew, McDonagh, Mornington and Ron Pople Parks; Hunter Street and Memorial Park Cemeteries; Pensioners Hill and Mullibah Lagoon	Rotary West Park, Stock Road; Wandobah, Woolshed and Porcupine Reserves

In consultation with Council staff it is recommended that shade sails over playgrounds are only provided at Wolseley Park (southern playground) and Kitchener Park. Existing shade sails over playgrounds at Hamilton Park (Curlewis) and Rotary West Park are to be maintained.

Softfall will be “topped-up” every three years. The maintenance schedule has an allowance for all town parks in Year 1, all villages in Year 2 and no allowance for Year 3.

A number of parks are missing regulatory signs however, Council is completing a separate exercise identifying regulatory sign needs. The cost of new signs will be developed through the process and needs to be added to the maintenance budgets.

Some attempt has been made to smooth costs over the five years though it is expected that Council will spread the costs to suit its budget expectations and priorities, particularly regarding upgrades, improvements and new assets.

An allowance has been made for an increase in the cost of labour and materials due to the remote location but at the same time we have taken into account a reasonable economy of scale (e.g. a painter would carry out all the painting work in one park as one job).

In most cases, it is assumed that all assets are to be refurbished or replaced, rather than simply removed, unless indicated otherwise.

Costs take into account a premium for handling and disposing of asbestos, where it is suspected as being present.

## Operational Expenditure

Costs to date for wages, on-costs, use of stores and plant were supplied for the first 46 weeks of the financial year. Extrapolating these costs to 52 weeks indicates that approximately \$392,000 will be spent of parks and sports field maintenance in the 2008-2009 financial year. These costs do not include water charges or rates.

The amounts indicated below for backlog maintenance are in addition to these costs in forward budgets.

Table 8: Costs to rectify backlog maintenance and undertake basic improvements

Item	Year				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Park specific maintenance	\$150,950	\$189,100	\$96,650	\$44,850	\$75,150
Bulk items across all parks maintenance	\$446,500	\$137,500	\$134,000	\$164,000	\$132,500
<b>Total by year</b>	<b>\$597,450</b>	<b>\$326,600</b>	<b>\$230,650</b>	<b>\$208,850</b>	<b>\$207,650</b>
<b>Total for 5 years</b>	<b>\$1,571,200</b>				

# 6.0 Consultation

In developing this Strategy, consultation has been held with a broad cross-section of the community.

This consultation included the community in Gunnedah as well as the Villages. All sport clubs were surveyed and many were contacted directly to ensure that their views were adequately represented. Some interest groups were also consulted, for example, environment groups. All schools were asked to provide input but only one school took the opportunity. Community members were also asked to complete a survey instrument to gauge their preferences for open space.

Councillors were briefed on the project and provided input. A range of Council staff also provided input from their role in the planning, management or maintenance of the open space resource. The comments received are summarised below.

## Community Meetings

Community meetings were organised in the towns of Gunnedah, Carroll, Mullaley (incorporating Tambar Springs) and Curlewis.

Meetings were advertised in the local media which also ran an article about the development of the Strategy and gave details for the meetings. Further, Council sent correspondence to all community organisations on Council's database—in excess of 100 organisations.

Despite this, attendance was low with only one participant at Carroll and no-one at Curlewis. Results for the meetings are summarised below.

## Carroll

Only one person turned out for the Carroll Community meeting. These comments may not be broadly representative of the community though the person was a long term resident who had been involved in most aspects of Carroll community life for many years.

Issues that were canvassed included:

- the cricket pitch has not been used for many years and it is unlikely that the village will ever have the ability to again field a team
- the tennis courts have not been used for more than 10 years. The last attempt to reinstate the courts collapsed before a single game was played. There is now a single court in the school that is available for community use
- there was support for removing the tennis court fences and minor infrastructure and incorporating this area into the park, which would give the village's only park road frontage to the highway
- the resident was unsure why the highway tree plantings<sup>1</sup> were only on one side of the highway but postulated that there may have once been telephone lines that prevented the planting of the trees on the opposite side
- in the villages Council should use local contractors more to look after the parks<sup>2</sup>
- there is no need for increased access to the River. Locals know where to go if they want to access the River.

<sup>1</sup> The species that has been planted is *Celtis australis* or European Hackberry. It is a long living, deciduous tree that can grow to 20m or more but in this location has been kept trimmed because of the overhead powerlines. If it was planted on the opposite side of the road it could be allowed to grow higher as there are no overhead wires.

<sup>2</sup> This is Council's preferred arrangement where possible

## Curlewis

No one attended this meeting. In response, the Curlewis Progress Association was contacted for comment which is outlined below.

Sporting groups in Curlewis have “died out” with the exception of Little Athletics and the Golf Club. Both these organisations are struggling to stay afloat. A campdraft was held last year for the first time and this was successful. It is hoped that this event will now be held annually.

The tennis club ceased over three years ago. Since then, the Progress Association has kept the courts clean and available for anyone wanting a casual game. The clubhouse has been vandalised and the Association will decide soon whether to restore or remove it.

The Curlewis Golf Club is also struggling with a lack of volunteers. The clubhouse is rarely used by other community groups nowadays. In the past it was but the community hall has since been improved and is now more attractive. The golf club’s use had a big impact on the use of the community hall and the town would struggle to utilise two venues.

The town’s entrance signs have faded badly and are very hard to read. New signs are supported. A second entrance to Curlewis from the Kamilaroi Highway would help attract more travellers to the town. Most travellers would expect at least two opportunities to turn into the town.

## Gunnedah

A strong theme at the Gunnedah community meeting was making greater use of the Namoi River. The point was made that most towns and cities nowadays make a feature of their rivers and encourage

recreation on land adjacent to the river. Generally, these areas are popular locations for walkers and people planning a picnic or extended family gathering.

Connecting the town’s open space was also a strong theme. Being able to walk from one open space area to another, as much as possible using off-road routes, was strongly valued. Walking is Australia’s most popular form of exercise and Gunnedah appears to be no exception. Most walkers enjoy walking in open space areas as opposed to using streets and footpaths; like a variety of routes to choose from, and like to be able to take shorter or extended walks.

There was consensus that the Gunnedah town entrance statements were functional but bland and not memorable. New statements should be considered and the local arts community asked to contribute design ideas/ or be involved in creating new statements.

The greater use of public art in parks and throughout the town, particularly the main street and Wolseley Park, was also raised.

A lack of shade in Conadilly Street meant that it was hot and the value of the recent upgrades could not be appreciated—“it still looks harsh”. Artificial shade (e.g. trellised grape vines over the car parks<sup>3</sup>) may rectify the situation. There is also scope to add more shade in side streets as an alternative to Conadilly Street as it was acknowledged that Conadilly Street is a main road and has heavy vehicles using it.

Overall, the town does very well with sporting facilities with Council considered to “be doing a good job”. The two sports of cricket and rugby league were considered to do particularly well with Council assistance and other sports required “to work a little harder” to get that assistance.

The Showground is in need of maintenance and as a facility, it is underutilised.

Other points made during the meeting include:

- connect the Namoi River through to Mullibah Lagoon
- provide signage in the CBD and elsewhere to direct visitors to the Namoi River
- connect the Arts Centre to Wolseley Park through traffic calming of Chandos Street
- develop a green corridor plan for the movement of wildlife through the town
- provide multi-use sport grounds in the future
- install 3-phase power for events in key parks e.g Pensioners Hill, Wolseley Park and the Namoi River parklands.

Figure 6: *Celtis australis* planted along one side of the highway through Carroll



<sup>3</sup> It was mentioned that similar plantings had been undertaken in Mildura. However, a colleague visiting Mildura was unable to find any example of this development.

## Mullaley

Mullaley only has one recreation park—Mullaley Park. It is maintained by the Mullaley Improvement Group. Council reimburses the Association for the costs of maintenance.

Public sporting facilities in Mullaley—the rodeo ground and a paddock used for cricket—while adjacent to the township, are in Warrumbungle Shire. The facilities are maintained by the Mullaley Improvement Group, a contractor for Gunnedah Shire Council.

The Mullaley Primary School has a small field and a tennis court. The tennis court is available for public use.

While no-one at the community meeting was a part of the Cricket Club, it was widely understood that the Cricket Club was preparing an application to Council to use land on the northern side of the Highway at the eastern edge of the village. The Cricket Club has approximately five twilight matches a year.

Ideas for improving the open space included:

- replace the softfall at the playground as cigarette butts have lit the material a number of times
- plant a row of trees along the northern side of the highway.<sup>4</sup>

## Sporting Clubs

### Gunnedah Giants Baseball

The Gunnedah Giants Baseball Club has 26 senior members and two junior members. Senior membership has more than doubled in the last two years.

The Club uses Donnelly Fields on a Saturday (5 hours) and Wednesdays for two hours during the season.

The Club rates as high priority developments bigger backnets and dugouts—citing spectator and player safety. Seating and shade are also desired improvements to the site.

### Gunnedah Junior and Senior Cricket Associations

These notes represent views from both senior and junior cricket in Gunnedah.

Junior cricket is played on the seven synthetic wickets at Donnelly Fields and the Junior Cricket Complex as well as the turf wickets used by the seniors. Senior cricket is played on turf wickets at Kitchener, Wolseley and McAndrew Parks; Longmuir Fields and Gunnedah High School. Council maintains the turf wickets at Kitchener and Wolseley Parks while the Association maintains the other three. The synthetic wickets are in good condition, being only about a year old.

There are approximately 260-280 junior players and 130-140 senior players. While still strong, numbers have been dropping steadily for 15 years.

Overall, the facilities provided by Council, or available in the town, service cricket's needs well. Council's management of the turf and grounds was considered to be very good.

There are still some areas where the Association's would like improvement. At Donnelly Fields/ Junior Cricket Complex the amenities

<sup>4</sup> *It is understood that Council planted many trees in the town some time ago with most of these having since died as they were not suited to the local conditions. Next time, establish a tree that is suited to the local conditions by looking at trees doing well in residents' gardens or is a native to the locality.*

are adequate as are the fields. However, improving the access road and car parking would tidy the appearance of the area. Shade needs to be provided on or around the fields. There is a shortage of practice nets in the town so 3-4 nets would assist the scheduling of practice. Some minor improvements to the irrigation is also required at the Junior Cricket Complex.

### Gunnedah Little Athletics Association

Gunnedah Little Athletics Association uses Wolseley Park (Figure 7) and is very happy with the condition of the Park and the space available to Little Athletics. The facility, while it has some shortcomings (e.g. the track is not oval-shaped) as an athletics facility, is considered to be very good in a town the size of Gunnedah.

The trees and the ambience of the park are particularly valued.

The Association's members are mainly from Gunnedah though there are some from Curlewis, Mullaley and farms.

If any upgrades were to be undertaken, the Association would like access to more storage space for its equipment.

### Gunnedah Netball Association

The Gunnedah Netball Association has approximately 260 junior players and 73 senior players.

The Association plays on courts at Longmuir Fields. The Association is satisfied with the location and the amount of space allocated to the sport. The Association lists as its facility priorities:

- increasing the number of hard courts from four to ten (conversion of the existing grass courts)
- upgrading the lighting
- upgrading the PA system so that it can be better heard on the courts
- public toilets are "dark, always wet and damaged". Would like a couple of toilets built into the clubhouse for umpires as they only have a few minutes between games and the toilets would be a little closer to the courts
- more natural and artificial shade around courts, including trees along the fence with Wandobah Road
- more seats closer to the courts
- car parking across the site improved—more bitumen areas, line marking and road widening.

### Gunnedah Rugby League (Senior) Football Club

The Gunnedah Rugby League Senior Football Club has four sides in the Group 4 competition—under 16's, under 18's, reserve grade and first grade.

The Club is focused on Kitchener Park during the season but in the pre-season uses Longmuir Fields or Donnelly Fields for training as Cricket still has control of Kitchener Park.

The Club is generally satisfied with Kitchener Park but has suggested several ways that the Park, and its facilities, could be improved.

In the north-west corner there is an undeveloped area that is not used by either rugby league or cricket (and it is not used for car parking). If the turf in this area was upgraded then the Club could use it for training in the pre-season and as a warm up area on match days. The availability of this area would allow the Club to be based at the Park all year and avoid the need of loading equipment into a trailer to take to training for four weeks or so.

Other improvements suggested include a cover over part of the grandstands. A cover would provide rain protection for rugby league

patrons and provide shade for cricket patrons.

The commentary box is to be extended soon (grant received). The lights have recently been upgraded and are “excellent”.

## Gunnedah Rugby League (Junior) Football Club

There are approximately 250-300 children<sup>5</sup> playing in the Gunnedah Junior Rugby League competition<sup>6</sup>. The Club uses Longmuir Fields where an international field and three mod fields are set up for the season (Council undertakes line-marking).

The fields are always well maintained by Council, even when harsh winters are experienced. Council have always been responsive to requests and do a very good job.

Longmuir Fields provide the Club with sufficient space now and for the foreseeable future. Facilities are generally adequate though the toilets, shared with Showground campers, can sometimes be a little dirty.

The Club’s only significant issue is with dog walkers that allow their dogs to soil the fields and they do not clean it up.

## Gunnedah Softball Association

The Gunnedah Softball Association conducts a social softball competition of a Thursday evening for 18 teams (180 players).

The Association uses two venues—Longmuir Fields (six diamonds) and Donnelly Fields (four diamonds).

The Association only has backnets at Donnelly Fields—two backnets erected by the Gunnedah Baseball Association.

The Association would like to see more backnets at Donnelly Fields. These backnets would be used by softball but also baseball and school sports.

The Association wanted to make the point that they believe that Gunnedah has “fantastic” sport facilities and that Council is a great supporter of Clubs. Council staff are always willing to help where they can. Nevertheless, and not wanting to labour the point, the Association believes that rugby league and cricket may be getting a little bit more attention and support from Council than other sports.

## Gunnedah Triathlon Club

The Gunnedah Triathlon Club were initially approached for an opinion on Council’s planned walkways and cycleway. The Club believed that they were well placed, would be well supported and were a priority. In particular, the Club thought a walkway/ cycleway through Wandobah Reserve to town would be well used by the community in West Gunnedah.

The Club also supported a general upgrade of the Namoi River Parklands. Any development should have trails and cycleways.



## Gunnedah Tennis Club

The Gunnedah Tennis Club has 225 members and reports that it has the highest per capita membership in NSW.

The Club uses courts at Wolseley Park and Kitchener Park. The courts at Wolseley Park are used daily while the courts at Kitchener Park, which are in need of repair, are used for one hour per week.

The Club sees a need for more courts and a clubhouse upgrade at Wolseley Park to cater to the growth in membership over the next 3-4 years.

## Gunnedah OzTag Inc

Gunnedah OzTag, uses two venues twice a week—Longmuir Fields and Gunnedah Rugby Park. The organisation is very satisfied with the facilities at both venues.

Membership is 170, the same as it was three years ago and is not expected to change significantly.

Figure 7: Council undertakes line-marking for users of Wolseley Park. Note the proximity of the outside lane to the fence.

5 Nearly all boys—there can be up to five girls

6 It is currently sign-on time so final numbers are not available

## Community Organisations

### Gunnedah Urban Landcare Group

The Gunnedah Urban Landcare Group (GULG) provided a lengthy submission to Council in regard to this Strategy. The text below is a summary of the submission's key points.

GULG has six main locations of interest in Gunnedah Shire, being:

1. Riverine Area (including Mullibah Lagoon and wetlands)
2. Porcupine Reserve
3. Wandobah Reserve
4. Walkways and Cycleways
5. Pensioners Hill Reserve
6. Wallaby Trap.

#### Riverine Area

GULG and Council have co-operated in making considerable improvements including:

- the creation of the Mullibah Artificial Wetlands, and
- bank rehabilitation using gabions, significant tree plantings, removal of willows, and fencing.

However, much of this work has been undermined by unrestricted access of vehicles and the dumping of rubbish by locals that do not value the area. In an attempt to redress the situation, the following actions need to be undertaken:

- restricting vehicular access to a number of pre-defined areas
- cleaning up the areas adjacent to Cohen's Store and Bridge
- providing a defined, constructed walkway linking Mullibah Lagoon, Namoi River and Blackjack Creek via Wandobah Reserve
- community education on the value of the site
- renovation of Cohen's Store.

#### Porcupine Reserve

GULG, in conjunction with Council, has upgraded this Reserve over the last decade including educational signage, track improvement and fencing. Unfortunately, some in the community do not value the Reserve. In an effort to improve the area, GULG recommends:

- strict enforcement of laws against the riding of motor bikes and 4-wheel drive vehicles to give a clear message that inappropriate usage will *not* be tolerated.

- vandalism and graffiti should be addressed as soon as possible after it occurs
- the Draft Management Plan should be reviewed and confirmed.

#### Wandobah Reserve

The construction of a water feature in this area has been considered a number of times over the years and plans have been drawn. GULG supports the development of a water feature in this area and suggest that the plans be revisited and a plan of implementation be developed.

#### Walkways and Cycleways

GULG recognises that the installation of walkways and cycleways throughout the town have been extremely well received and utilised by members of the community.

However, the Ashford Watercourse pathway between George Street and Beulah Street is yet to be completed (after some 2 years) leaving a glaring "gap" in that path. This needs construction as soon as possible.

GULG recommends the extension of the Lincoln Street section of the pathway ("top" end of Golf Course) along to Wandobah Road and south to the new residential sub-division and Rugby Club and also north through Wandobah Reserve, crossing the Oxley Highway past the saleyard site to link up with the Mullibah/ Namoi River pathway referred to above.

Towns and cities such as Dubbo, Inverell, Tamworth and Goondiwindi are excellent examples of communities that have developed their river walkways to the benefit of their residents and visitors.

#### Pensioners Hill Reserve

Continued support and resources for this project will further enhance what is now the premier panoramic viewing area for Gunnedah.

This project has received considerable recognition from many objective judges including Landcare Awards and Tidy Towns.

#### The Wallaby Trap

This project has the potential to make a significant contribution to the indigenous history of the Gunnedah community.

The recognition and value of the project will increase with the ongoing development of the area. GULG recommends the continuing involvement of the Aboriginal groups and individuals to ensure the ownership and authenticity of the project.

Figure 8: Early morning at Mullibah Lagoon



GULG encourages Council to support the project wherever possible and to acknowledge the value of this connecting corridor linking Mullibah Lagoon and the Namoi River to Porcupine Reserve. This is an important natural corridor connecting these important community recreation areas.

## Gunnedah Rotary Club

The Gunnedah Rotary Club gave input to the study, particularly as a group of older, active people focused on exercise and walking as opposed to competitive sport.

Impressions from the group included:

- there is a good amount of open space in Gunnedah—perhaps too much and some of the smaller parks/ areas could be used for alternate activities
- the Shire has very good sport facilities
- the number of publicly available tennis courts could be increased
- there was a strong desire to see open space areas linked together as this would offer better opportunities for interesting walks—add variety and allow for different routes with different lengths and grades
- the section of path from Beulah Street to George Street must be a priority to construct as it is the “missing link” (Note: this has now been addressed)
- the Namoi River Parklands are in poor condition and need to be developed/ redeveloped. The town needs to make a feature of this area
- Wandobah Reserve—the northern end of Blackjack Creek against the Oxley Highway—should be developed with a water feature as has been mooted in the past
- Mullibah Lagoon is an attractive area but it is not well promoted. Signs from the highways would make visitors more aware of this beautiful area.

## Red Chief Land Council

The Red Chief Land Council is supportive of Council’s efforts at Mullibah Lagoon. The Land Council also noted that the Lagoon has been slowly silting up over the years and would support efforts to restore the area. The Land Council would like to assist Council with interpretative materials (e.g. signage) for the Lagoon.

The Land Council may be able to assist with maintenance of some of the natural areas (e.g. Mullibah Lagoon) but would need assistance with equipment and resources.

A priority for the Land Council at the present is the redevelopment/ reinstatement of the Wallaby Trap and eventually, linking this area to Mullibah Lagoon and Porcupine Reserve.

Figure 9: Public art can add another dimension to major recreation parks and helps support the local arts industry



## Council Officers

### Councillors and Senior Management

A presentation of the project methodology and expected outcomes was given to Councillors and Senior Managers. Input from Councillors was also received. Some of the more pertinent comments included:

- the presentation of parks is not as good in the villages as it is in Gunnedah
- there are options for locals to “adopt-a-park”
- more scope to link walking paths and extend the network
- playgrounds are being upgraded to meet Australian Standards. Council has started to implement shade sails over playgrounds
- Chandos Street outside the Arts Centre could be a shared traffic/ pedestrian zone creating a stronger link between Brock Court and the theatre complex. The road could be closed for special events at the theatre or Brock Court creating a pleasant outdoor space.

### Parks Operations

Staff from Parks Operation discussed how the open space areas were maintained.

Open space in Breeza, Mullaley and Carroll is maintained by local groups or organisations, as contractors. This is the preferred option for Tambar Springs but Council is currently performing the function until a suitable person or organisation is found.

The Council maintains the turf area of the Showground and pays the water (an expense of about \$60,000 p.a.).

There is a high level of irrigation across the park resource. Some systems though are quite labour intensive (e.g. require hoses to be moved).

Across the sporting parks there is a need to replace some of the “big head” sprinklers with “small head” designs. There is no centralised system for irrigation control which can improve water efficiency.

Council maintains the turf cricket wickets at Wolseley and Kitchener Parks while the Cricket Association prepares the wickets at McAndrew, Longmuir Fields and Gunnedah High School. Council's cost is two people per week for the cricket season.

Council undertakes *all* line-marking for sporting clubs on Council lands.

Council does not have any power to stop games proceeding even when it knows major damage will occur through the game proceeding. This is most often likely to happen when the grounds are wet. Kitchener Park is an example. The lessee pays approximately \$3,000 per year and Council performs all maintenance (and cleans the grounds, picks up rubbish). After a wet game major damage can occur that Council has to have repaired for the next round (usually one or two weeks).

There may be opportunities to reduce mowing of some of the road green spaces (e.g. median strips, traffic islands) by the use of heavy mulch. Other points to note include:

- the area of land west of Blackjack Creek, east of Wandobah Road from Wandobah Reserve to Memorial Park is listed as future open space
- Athol Gallen Park is a potential dog off-leash park. This Park will be more important when the sub-division occurs off Baxter Road
- Pearson Street will link the Wallaby Track to Carroll Street via a 1.1m wide stormwater swale and path
- investigate moving athletics from Wolseley Park to Donnelly Fields so that they can have a full-sized facility

- there may be issues of equity. For instance facilities at Kitchener Park, Wolseley Park and Donnelly Fields are maintained by Council but Talibah Park (soccer fields) facilities are maintained by the Soccer Association.

### Tourist Officer

Council's tourist officer was interviewed for the Strategy. The focus of the interview was to understand what tourists would like to see/ use in terms of open space and what the Tourist Officer needed to do their job.

Firstly, a map of available walks would be well used. The only brochure available was an old brochure produced by the Department of Lands for the Bindea Walking Track.

Tourists are looking for walks that they can do around the town. More paths need to be built or signed for this market.

The Namoi River needs to be improved as a priority. Any development should allow people to camp for one night.

Town entrance statements are bland and need to be made more memorable/ eye catching.

The Tourist Information Centre is located in Anzac Park. Some of the improvements suggested for the Park include:

- a wedding rotunda as the Park is a popular venue for weddings (as is the State Government Office Block Park and Mullibah Lagoon)
- grow a vine over the fence between the Park and the railway line. There has been talk of a brick wall which will be a magnet for graffiti, costly and lack any sense of parkscape (i.e. it is not a plant).

## Community Survey

During the course of the consultation, people were asked to complete a survey to understand various attitudes to the provision of open space in Gunnedah. These people were generally participants at the consultation events.

A total of 56 usable responses were received. The survey is unlikely to be a statistically valid survey of the community. However, it does represent the views of a range of male and female adults (Note: no youths were surveyed).

The first question asked respondents:

*“How important are the following characteristics to your enjoyment of public open space?”*

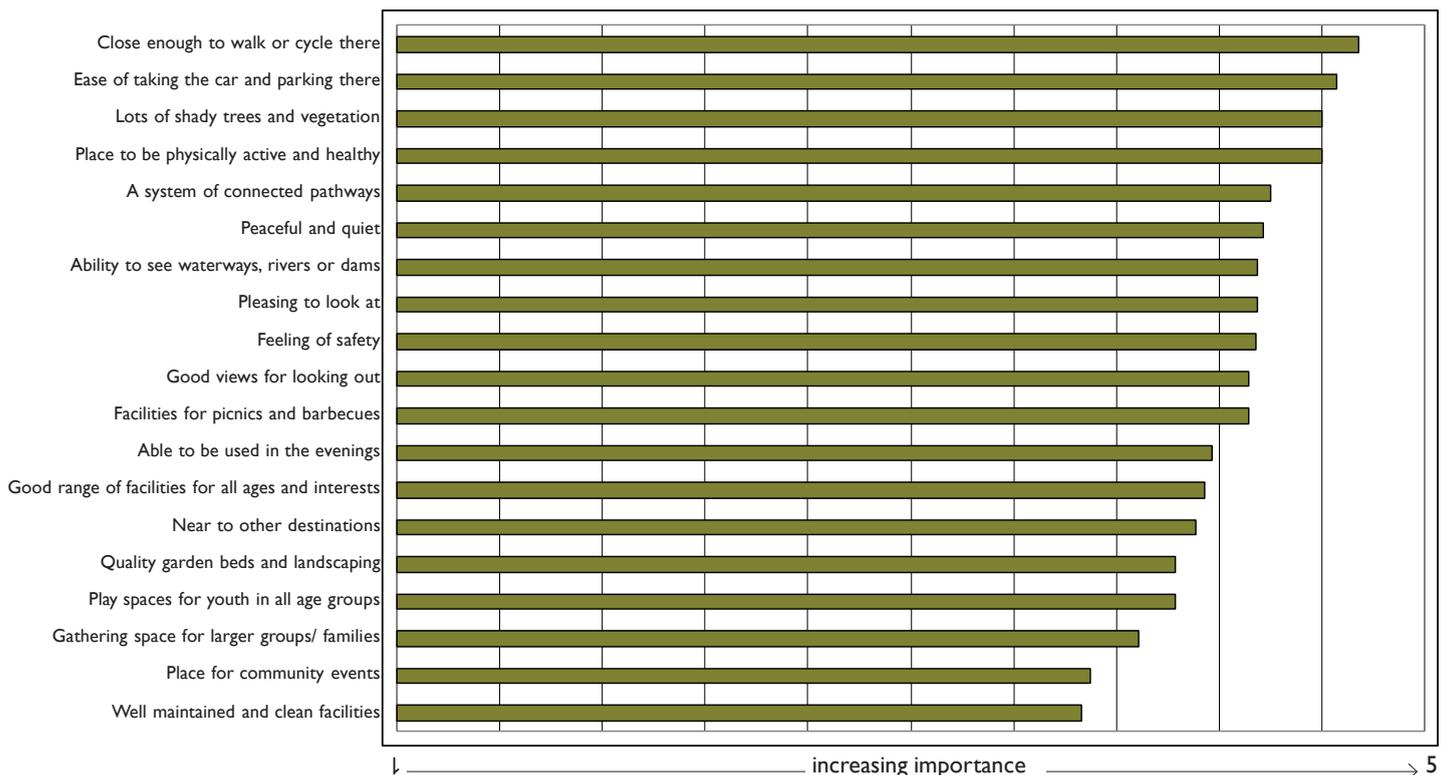
Interestingly, the two most important characteristics (Figure 10) were related to access. People either wanted to be able to walk or cycle to the open space area, or if they had to take the car, they wanted to be able to park with ease.

Once the respondents arrived at the open space they expected it to be shady—nice trees and vegetation.

Connected pathways, places for physical activity, as well as peace and tranquility; good views and water bodies are also important.

The least important characteristics, from the respondent group, was “well maintained and clean facilities” and as a “place for community events”. That “well maintained and clean facilities” got such a low rating is very surprising. Perhaps Gunnedah residents are used to clean and tidy facilities and do not recognise how much worse they could be.

Figure 10: Importance of various characteristics of public open space



Respondents were shown eight pictures representing various types of open space. For the various types of open space, respondents were asked:

How important is each of the following types of open space to you and your family?

The results are shown in Figure 11. As can be seen, all open space types are considered important. While pathways has the highest importance, it was only just ahead of the next six types and is likely to reflect the demographic of the people answering the survey.

There is really only some drop off for local parks (slightly less important) and then basic parks which are somewhat less important.

The third questions asked:

“Generally, how would you rate the amount of available parkland in each type of open space (i.e. is there enough)?”

The results are shown in Figure 12. Respondents indicated that Council’s level of provision for community spaces, basic parks, local parks and sports fields was very high, and getting close to exceeding requirements.

Riverside recreation parks and pathways were the two open space types that were considered most under-supplied while there was some support for more natural area type open spaces.

Question 4 was focused on the adequacy and quality of the embellishments in the park—the seats, playgrounds, amenities, picnic tables, barbecues etc. The question read:

“Generally, how would you rate the quality of facilities in open space of each type?”

The respondents clearly indicated (Figure 13) that sports fields were particularly well embellished and of a high quality. The recreation park types of “Major” and “Local” also rated highly.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the “Riverside Areas” obtained the lowest rating. This open space type was substantially behind natural environments, that by their very nature, should have very few facilities.

Question 5 was similar to Question 4, but was focused more on the maintenance of the open space types. Maintenance was rated “good” or better across all open space types except “Riverside areas” and “Natural Environments”.

The final question (Figure 14) was related to usage and asked:

“How often would you use the following types of open space?”

Pathways were the most commonly used open space type, by a considerable margin. As people increasingly use pathways for exercise, this is to be expected. However, “Community Spaces”, “Sports Fields” and “Major Recreation Parks” were also well used.

Basic parks, by its name, indicates that there is little to do in the way of recreation within the space and people, accordingly, find little need to go within them. This park type was clearly less used than other park types. Basic parks were also rated “less important” above so the supply of these areas needs to be considered in light of the value that the community places upon them.

Figure 11: Importance of various types of open space

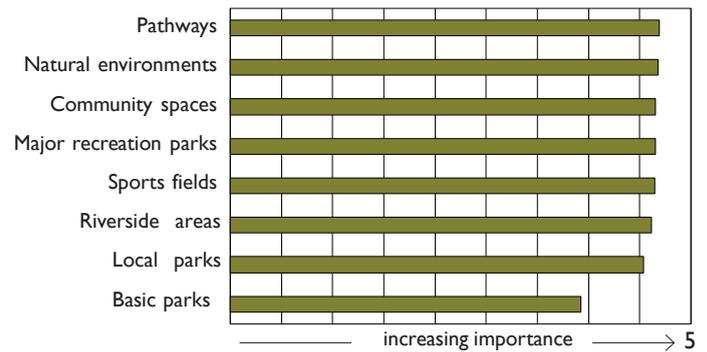


Figure 12: Amount of open space

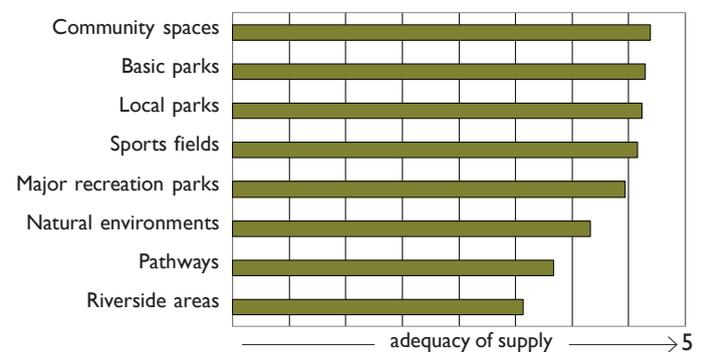


Figure 13: Quality of facilities in open space

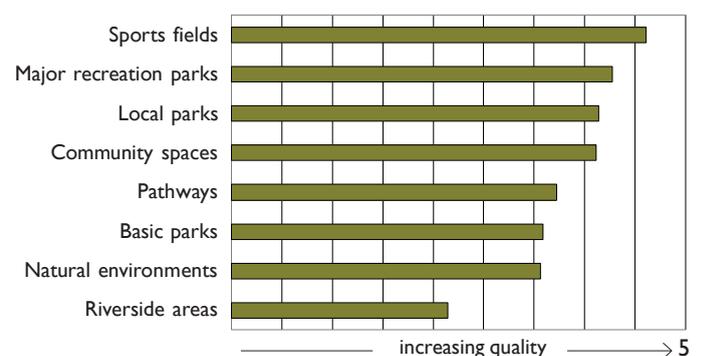
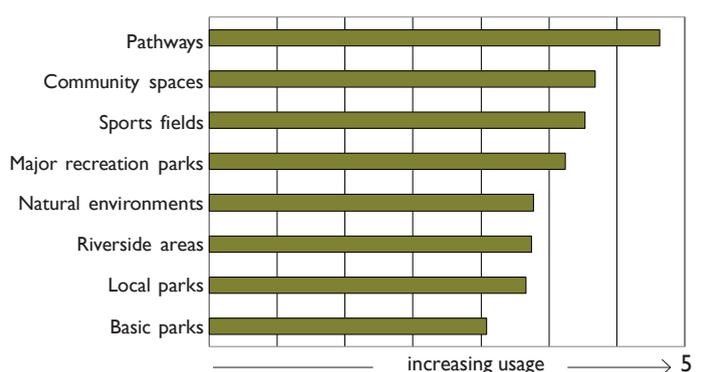


Figure 14: Usage of various open space types



# 7.0 Demand and Supply Analysis

This section presents a quantitative and spatial analysis of current and future open space requirements in Gunnedah Shire.

Demand for recreation and sporting parkland is quantified by applying the Desired Standard of Service (DSS) to the current and the projected population.

The current supply is determined and the gaps between what is required, and what is provided, both now, and in the future, are established.

Recommendations to address these gaps complete the analysis. Analysis is undertaken for the town of Gunnedah and the villages of Curlewis, Carroll, Mullaley and Tambar Springs.

Recreation open space needs are determined using the population residing within these centres as recreation parkland is generally only used by people in the urban setting (except regional recreation parkland) as people on living on acreage or farms generally have sufficient open space available to meet their recreation needs.

However, sporting open space is determined using the population of the Shire as a whole and the supply as a whole. The location of the sporting open space is much less important than for recreation parkland as it is generally the activity that a person wants to play (e.g. cricket, soccer, tennis) that will determine where they must go to play.

## Demand Assessment

### Recreation Open Space

#### Gunnedah

Table 9 shows the demand for recreation open space in Gunnedah township for the current population of 7,542.

As the villages have populations under 1,000 people, their open space needs have to be assessed pragmatically and cannot be understood using a method suited to a larger population mass, such as Gunnedah.

Table 9: Application of DSS to Gunnedah Recreation Open Space

Open Space Type	Actual Area	Required Area <sup>§</sup>	Current Shortfall or Surplus
Recreation—Local	9.5	11.25	-1.75
Recreation—District	16.0	7.5	8.5
Recreation—Regional	0	7.5	-7.5

<sup>§</sup> Calculated using the DSS

Overall, Gunnedah town has approximately the correct amount of open space, but the catchment level is biased to district level parkland. There is no regional level parkland and a small deficit in local parks.

The parks, their area, and the assigned catchment level is shown in Table 10. Readers will notice that some parks have been split e.g. Kitchener Park is mostly a sporting park but there is a small playground that acts as a local park so that area is recognised separately from the main park.

Table 10: Assigned classifications to recreation parks in Gunnedah

Park Name	Catchment	Area (ha)
Anzac Park	District	1.08
Namoi River Parklands	District	4.67
Wandobah Reserve	District	7.87
Wolseley Park	District	1.09
Woolshed Reserve	District	1.35
Arthur Heath Park	Local	2.63

Park Name	Catchment	Area (ha)
Athol Gallen Park	Local	1.85
Bottlebrush Park	Local	0.86
Jaeger Park	Local	0.41
Jae-High Park	Local	0.63
John Dodd Park (interim name)	Local	0.15
Ken Green Park	Local	0.54
Kilcoy Park	Local	0.27
Kitchener Park	Local	0.07
McAndrew Park	Local	0.13
McDonagh Park	Local	0.29
Mornington Park	Local	0.20
Ron Pople Park	Local	0.23
Rotary West Park	Local	0.92
Stewart Park	Local	0.30

There is no parkland that is considered regional in nature i.e. attractive enough that people would be likely to travel from outside of Gunnedah to use it.

Wandobah Reserve is the largest area of District Parkland and dominates the supply of this open space type. The skate park is the main reason that this parkland, in its current form, rates such a classification.

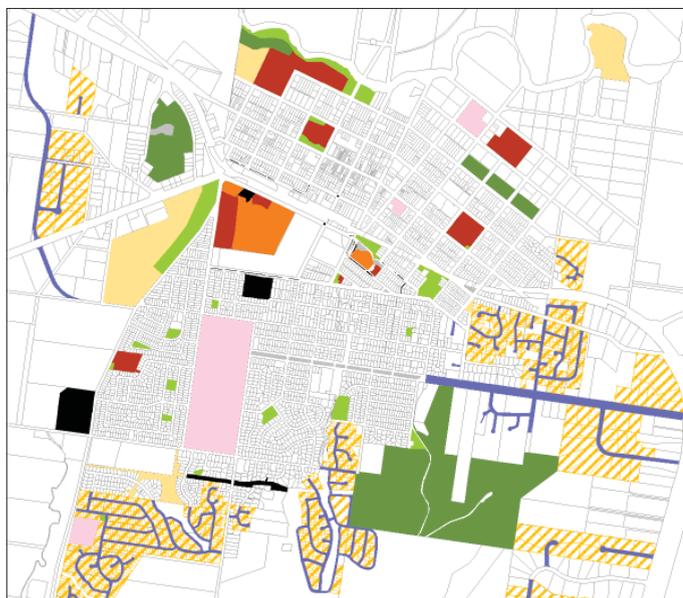
**Population Growth**

Gunnedah is likely to experience population growth of approximately 2,250 people over the next 15 years. The growth has been compared to the current supply of open space and the DSS in Table 11.

Table 11: Supply of Recreation Open Space to meet growth

Open Space Type	Actual Area	Required Area	Shortfall or Surplus
Recreation—Local	9.5	14.7	-5.2
Recreation—District	16.0	9.7	6.3
Recreation—Regional	0	9.7	-9.7

Figure 15: Future urban growth for Gunnedah (yellow striped areas)



The location of the growth within Gunnedah is indicated in Figure 15. The Open Space Strategy is most interested in the urban (small lot) growth rather than the larger lot, rural subdivisions occurring adjacent to the town<sup>1</sup>.

There are three main areas where greenfield growth will occur:

1. an extension of Goodwin Road to the south (and west of Porcupine Reserve)
2. an area to the south of Mornington Heights, east of the Rugby Club and south along Wandobah Road
3. an area mainly between Kamilaroi Road and Stock Road, to the east and west of Boundary Road.

These areas will need access to local park level recreation. Suggestions as to how this is to be addressed are detailed.

**Area 1—Goodwin Road**

This development is linear along a watercourse extending about 1.3 kilometres from Athol Gallen Park south, and is shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Proposed Goodwin Road developments



Council has already considered the open space needs and the proposed areas are shown in yellow.

The watercourse provides an ideal opportunity to extend the walking path network. There is a path extending from Athol Gallen Park north to Mornington Park and this should be continued south through the development. Council has considered a large area of open space to the west that will link into the electricity easement, again another great opportunity to connect with other open space areas and provide a local park experience.

Council has also identified one further area for a local park which, along with an upgrade of Athol Gallen Park, will meet the needs of residents in this development.

<sup>1</sup> People living on larger, semi-rural lots do not create the same demand for recreation parks as they have adequate space within their private lot for recreation.

**Area 2—Mornington Heights**

This development area is shown in Figure 17 and again Council has forward planned the open space (shown in yellow).

Figure 17: Proposed Mornington Heights developments



The open space areas make good use of the overland watercourses linking the community into the open space system. John Dodd Park (interim name) has recently been handed over to Council. While small, it does offer alternative recreation experiences—instead of a typical plastic playground, the Park has a sandpit and grassed mounds of earth for children to roll down. Future parks though will need some open areas for older children to kick a ball.

The open space area between Wattle Street and Banksia Place is to be known as Turner Park and this connects to a drainage reserve known as Leonvale Reserve. Leonvale Reserve has sufficient space for an area where teenagers can play ball sports.

The southern end of the Reserve will also need a local park and it should be possible to utilise the drainage reserve in developing a small park.

**Area 3—Boundary Road**

In this development area Council has again considered open space issues. The proposed design shows three recreation park nodes with linking spaces so that the development is well connected to open

space areas. In the final design, Council will need to ensure that the links are sufficiently wide, and straight, so that people will use them to move through the area and that they are easy to maintain. Narrow laneways are to be avoided as people can feel threatened by neighbouring dogs and/ or feel a sense of entrapment.

Pearson Street, when it is formed, should ensure that the design allows for a walking and cycle path so that the Wallaby Trap is better linked into Mullibah Lagoon and other open space areas.

Figure 18: Proposed developments near Boundary Road



**Other Areas**

Council has advised that Wandobah Reserve, in time, will be extended to the south to link with Memorial Park. While not required for park purposes from a purely quantum perspective, it does make sense when considering the value that comes from linking multiple open space areas into a network.

Cohen’s Store, currently a run-down building amidst a vacant block will at some point be redeveloped by Council and will form part of the Namoi River parkland system. This area provides a good linkage between The Woolshed Reserve and Mullibah Lagoon.



**Gunnedah Recreation Park Recommendations**

As the analysis shows there is a shortage of local open space and a continuing shortage of regional open space. District open space remains in surplus. The local parks suggested by Council for the new subdivisions will meet the DSS in both qualitative and access standards. The final form of these parks needs to be established which should be cognisant of providing variety of experience and linking the open space network. Other recommendations for recreation parks include:

1. to address the shortfall in regional level recreation it is suggested that the Namoi River Parklands are upgraded. Initially a master plan needs to be developed and costed. The priority area should be the area adjacent to Donnelly Fields. If funds allow, then extend this area through to The Woolshed Reserve and possibly Cohen’s Store.
2. Wandobah Reserve is another area that the community would like to see improved. However, resources are limited so Council’s priority should be the Namoi River Parklands. Wandobah Reserve is likely to have flood mitigation works undertaken in the future. Council should review any plans to achieve the best possible recreation outcome from the works.

3. There are several parcels of land that are not required as parkland and could possibly be sold (subject to no other Council requirements) to help fund the upgrade to the Namoi River Parklands. These include:
  - Stewart Park
  - part of Arthur Heath Park
  - Jaeger Park
  - areas west of Blackjack Creek in Wandobah Reserve
  - part of Carroll Park.

Council should review this list and decide on a course of action.
4. Recommendations are made for all recreation open space areas in Section 9. Council needs to review these and action them as resources allow.

### Curlewis

Curlewis, with a population of approximately 600 is the largest of the villages. The village has a recreation park (Hamilton Park) within the town and sporting facilities encompassing athletics/ rugby league, tennis, golf and rodeo (Curlewis Recreation Ground and Hamilton Park).

Figure 19: Open space in Curlewis

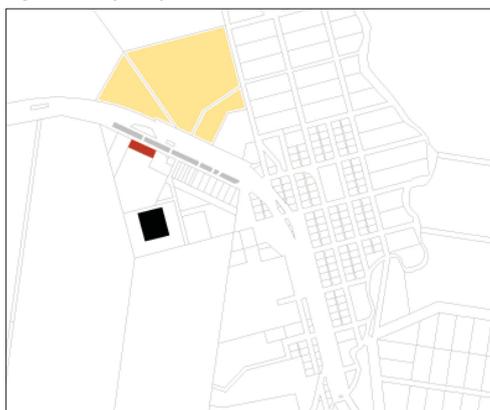


There is no significant population growth expected in Curlewis so the existing open space areas will be sufficient for the next 15 years. Recommendations for Hamilton Park and the Curlewis Recreation Ground can be found in Section 9.

### Breeza

Breeza is a very small community of approximately 133 people spread along the Kamilaroi Highway. There are no schools or commercial establishments. The small park, shown in red on Figure 20, is a sporting park with some recreation infrastructure. The park showed no signs of being used over several visits.

Figure 20: Open space in Breeza



Given the decline of the town and the lack of use of the Park no further resources should be invested at this point.

Several large parcels of land (coloured tan on Figure 20) are not required for open space and should be considered by Council for possible disposal if they are not required for other Council functions.

### Carroll

Carroll's population of approximately 447 people will probably decline slightly over the next 15 years. The village has a small recreation park (Carroll Park) and unused, dilapidated, sports facilities (tennis and cricket)—though they are on the one parcel of land. Part of this parcel of land is made available to the Carroll Public School as a small sporting field. Additionally, the School has a tennis court that is available for community use. Figure 21 indicates the location of Carroll's open space areas (the black shaded area is the cemetery).

Figure 21: Open space in Carroll

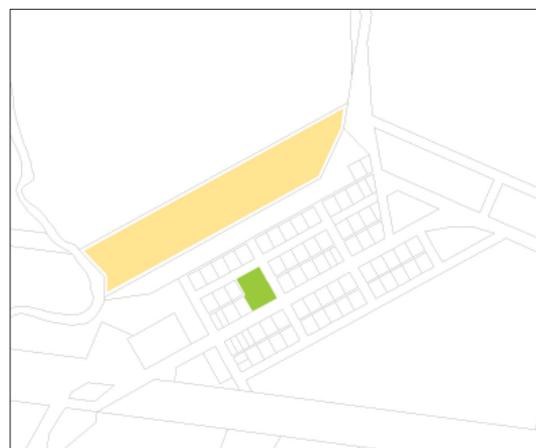


The village requires a recreation park but the tennis courts and sports fields are unlikely to be ever be resurrected. It is recommended in Section 9 that the tennis courts be cleared and the recreation park extended over this area to give frontage to the Highway.

### Mullaley

Mullaley has a population of approximately 217 and is served by one recreation park (Mullaley Park) and a large community common. There is a sporting facility located across Coxs Creek in Warrumbungle Shire—the rodeo grounds. A social cricket competition is reportedly played for a few weeks per year in a private grazing paddock, also in Warrumbungle Shire.

Figure 22: Open space in Mullaley



For a small population the existing recreation park, which is large, is sufficient. At the community meeting there was some discussion that the Mullaley Cricket Club, the social club, was looking for land to the east of the town for an occasional cricket ground. The land that was discussed is actually part of the road reserve and the Club would

most likely need to approach the State Government in this regard.

The Oxley Highway is the main street of Mullaley. The road corridor at this point is quite wide but bare except for a few, generally, stunted trees. The streetscape would be improved by the planting of suitable trees either side of the highway.

### Tambar Springs

Tambar Springs has only one<sup>2</sup> recreation park, Memorial Park, for its approximately 135 residents, which is sufficient—the green shaded area in Figure 23 while the black shaded area is the cemetery.

Figure 23: Open space in Tambar Springs



The Tambar Springs’ community appears to be active in the improvement of the park and this needs to be encouraged.

There is no need for any other open space areas within the community. Some improvement of the road verge adjacent to the Park and the few commercial establishments may be warranted if the local population requests Council’s assistance.

### Sport Open Space

Table 12 shows the demand for sporting open space for the Shire for the current population of 11,525.

Table 12: Application of DSS to Regional Sport Open Space

Open Space Type	Actual Area	Required Area <sup>§</sup>	Current Surplus
Sport	37.9	33.4	4.5

<sup>§</sup> Calculated using the DSS

For the present population, there is a surplus of 4.5ha using the DSS of 2.9ha / 1,000 residents.

The parks that have been allocated as sport parks are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Sport parks in Gunnedah Shire

Park Name	Area (ha)
Breeza Park	0.73
Carroll Park	3.15
Curlewis Recreation Ground <sup>‡</sup>	5.19
Donnelly Fields (inc Junior Cricket)	11.67

<sup>2</sup> With the project documentation Council indicated that there was a second park, Apex Park, at 50-56 Adams Street. An inspection of this address revealed vacant land that did not appear to have ever been a park. This land may be surplus to Council’s requirements.

Park Name	Area (ha)
Hamilton Park (Curlewis)	0.41
Kitchener Park	4.06
Longmuir Fields	5.51
McAndrew Park	2.69
Memorial Pool	0.34
Mornington Park	0.18
Showground (gymnastics and basketball)	0.92
Wolseley Park	2.97

<sup>‡</sup>The Curlewis Recreation Ground is mostly recognised as specialised sport being the golf course and the campdrafting grounds.

In addition, there is Rugby Park (3.7ha) and Talibah Park (5.1 ha) that are also sporting open spaces but in these cases, are held in private ownership.

Of the sporting parkland shown in Table 13, all, except Carroll Park and Breeza Park (Ben Halls Wall), are quality sporting parks that are being used for one or more sporting activities. Carroll Park is a large area (3.15ha) that was once used for cricket but is unlikely to ever be required in that role again. Similarly, Breeza Park (0.73ha) was once used for tennis but is unlikely to ever be resurrected in that role. It is unfortunate, but the manner in which sport is organised and played has changed and it has, and will continue to, centralise into the larger population centres. The villages will find it increasingly difficult to support sporting competitions in the future.

If these two areas are excluded from the total supply of sporting parkland, then the total is approximately 34.0 ha which is still more than the DSS would indicate is required.

It is expected that the Shire’s population will grow by 2,250 people by 2021 for a total population of approximately 13,775. Such a population would need about 40.0ha of land. This is approximately 6.0ha more than the adjusted<sup>3</sup> current supply.

### Sport Open Space Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- At some point after 2015 Council may need to add 5-6ha to the current supply of sport open space. The most obvious option in developing the undeveloped reserve land to the west of the Junior Cricket Complex.
- However, a review of the role and function of the Gunnedah Showground undertaken through a master plan, may also identify some space that could be used for sport and added to the John Longmuir Fields complex.
- The area of Carroll Park that was used for sport is unlikely to ever do so again. Council is maintaining the area through an occasional mowing. This area is no longer required as open space and if not required by Council for some other function, should be disposed of.
- Breeza Park should be cleared of most of its assets (they are generally in poor condition and some are dangerous) and placed on an occasional mowing cycle. As the Rural Fire Brigade shed is located on this Park the Park needs to be retained.
- Recommendations are made for most individual sporting open space areas in Section 9. Council needs to review these and action them as resources allow.

<sup>3</sup> Current supply less Carroll Park and Breeza Park

## Connectivity

Connecting the open space system makes the individual parks more accessible and more valuable. There are two aspects relating to connectivity:

- connecting open space areas
- connecting communities.

Planning physical connections between open space areas seeks to maximise outcomes for a range of values by consolidating and linking otherwise isolated and fragmented land areas. The principle of connectivity is based on synergy, where the value of the whole is greater than the value of the individual parts. Connectivity relates to recreation and sport outcomes and a range of other land use values, including (but not limited to):

- environmental corridors for flora/fauna and biodiversity
- waterway management and/or flood mitigation
- view corridors and/or visual connectivity.

In seeking connected open space areas, performance criteria should ensure that sufficient space is provided for recreation and/or sport infrastructure in addition to other open space values being protected. For example, design criteria for buffer zones should ensure recreation access is achieved (appropriate topography and widths for safe and accessible paths) while still meeting the intended purpose of the buffer (protecting/enhancing environmental corridors, riparian zones, scenic/visual view corridors, visual screening of adjacent land uses).

The second aspect of connectivity relates to the physical and visual legibility of communities. This principle and subsequent performance criteria should guide subdivision layouts to encourage and facilitate non-motorised forms of transport and a range of recreation activities (e.g. walking, cycling, skating, horse riding), linking people to community destinations.

Gunnedah Shire Council has already mapped existing and proposed on-road and off-road pathways—and over many years has developed a significant system of pathways, much of it off-road (see Figure 23). However, with the expansion of the town, and an ageing population, the system will need to be extended to bring the new areas into the network, as well as meet the needs of the residents for recreation and physical activity close to their homes. Destinations such as shopping centres, schools and parks should be connected into the system over time.

Given past planning decisions it will not always be possible to develop off-road paths. However, Gunnedah is fortunate to have wide streets that make safe on-road cycling achievable in many instances.

Figure 24: Current and proposed cycleway/ pathways in Gunnedah



# 8.0 Entrance Statements

Gunnedah Shire has entrance signs at the borders of all the villages and the town of Gunnedah.

The village entrance signage has suffered from the elements. Most are faded or stained, and those facing the west, are almost illegible. The style of signage is similar across all villages but the graphics and information vary for each (see Figure 25). Council has recognised that these signs need to be replaced and has allocated a budget accordingly.

The signage at Gunnedah's entrance is of a different style and while it is functional and well maintained, it is widely considered to be bland (see Figure 26). This installation is more likely called an entrance statement as it more than a sign, being a brick sign wall with a small garden and koala graphic—a 3D sign whereas the village signs are flat, two-dimensional images.

There is no signage at the Council boundary except small “regulatory” style signs shared with the neighbouring Council (see Figure 27).

## Purpose of Entry Statements

A number of local governments across Australia have, in recent years, created attractive entrance statements to their towns and cities. Once, entrance statements were little more than a hooped sign, often adorned with the logos of local service clubs (and even church meeting times). As you drive around you can notice many of these signs still, often rusted and dilapidated, and in need of removal.

A major purpose of an entrance sign or statement is to identify to a traveller that they have arrived. However, as they are nearly always viewed from a moving car they should contain limited text, but lots of colour and graphics. They are not meant to provide directional, distance or tourist information which is better handled with other signage.

Outstanding signs can build a sense of local pride and connection. They can also convey a message of quality to prospective residents and business investors.

A suite of signage will be part of a branding strategy that may start at the Shire boundary and town and village entrances and extend down to parks, community facilities and CBD signage. The signage, while varying in size, will display similarities that subtly, and almost subliminally, tell the observer that they are within the same community. The shared look may include colour, materials, plantings or images (or any combination).

However, to distinguish the local government area from others, the signage suite must be distinctive. Signage must have strong graphic appeal, or it risks getting lost in the myriad of other images visually bombarding travellers.

Budget considerations will often require branding projects to be phased over a number of years. However, if the planning is undertaken up-front, then the signage suite will come together over time. Without forward planning though, it is likely that “non-conforming” signage will be erected that will lose the sense of coherence created by a complementary suite of signage.

Figure 25: Example of a village entrance sign



Figure 26: Entrance statement for Gunnedah



Figure 27: Regulatory style signage at the LGA border



By way of example the following images illustrate various town signs and entrance statements.

Figure 28 shows two examples of the typically brightly coloured signs created by Danthonia Designs<sup>1</sup>, one of the more popular makers of local governments entrance signs in Australia.

Figure 28: Examples of Danthonia Designs town entrance sign



<sup>1</sup> For further information on sign options view the company's website at [www.danthonia.com.au](http://www.danthonia.com.au)

Many local governments also create their own entrance statements, often using local artists either in the creation of the design or at least in the development of ideas and concepts.

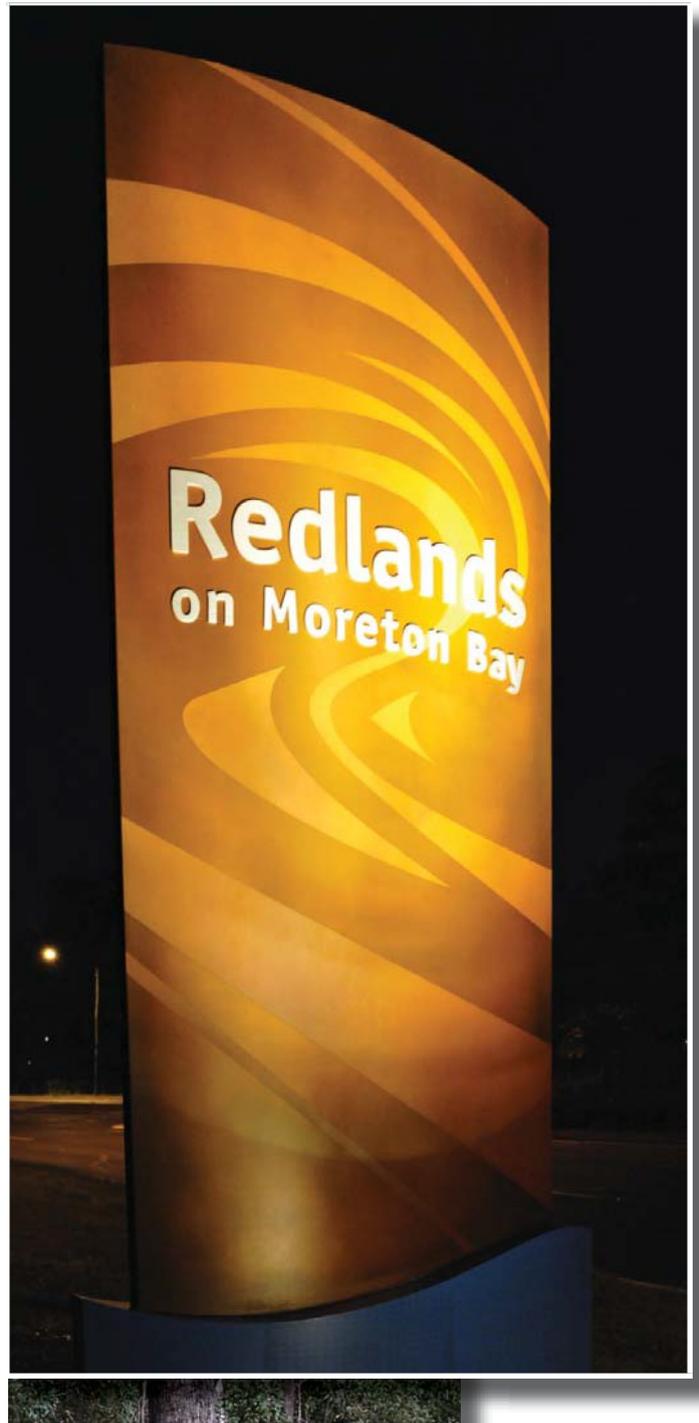
Somerset Regional Council is currently developing entrance statements at a number of its towns and villages. The entrance statement shown in Figure 29 (and still under construction) reflects the town's continuing role in the timber industry.

Where electricity is available (or the budget runs to solar power), the entrance statement can be lit to create a very attractive scene at night (see the Redland City Council entrance sign in Figure 30). Often, during the day, the entrance statement is battling with many other images. Darkness removes many of those images and lighting can allow the entrance statement to capture attention.

Further information and detail on signage and way-finding can be found in the Section 11.

Figure 29: The entrance statement ideally reflects something about the town—in this case the town's timber heritage

Figure 30: Lighting can create an attractive night scene



## Streetscapes

Streetscapes are part of the entrance experience for visitors — particularly along the highways and main streets.

Favourable impressions can be left in the minds of visitors where the tree planting is “spectacular”. Figure 31 is a photograph of part of the Captain Cook Highway in Mossman, Far North Queensland. This part of the highway is spectacular—the trees fully enclose the road—and it forms one of the lasting images of the town in the minds of visitors.

While Gunnedah, with a different climate, would not be able to support such large trees, an avenue of trees suited to the climate (one or two varieties only), could be created at the highway entrances to the town, where the road verge is sufficiently wide. A similar approach to the villages is also supported.

Elsewhere in this Strategy there are recommendations for:

- Carroll—plant *Celtis australis* on northern (western) side of the Oxley Highway to complement the plantings on the opposite side
- Mullaley—plant a suitable tree along the Oxley Highway through the Village
- Gunnedah—engage a landscape architect or similar to develop a planting strategy for the highway entrances to Gunnedah
- Gunnedah—in various areas convert the mown areas at the road end or median strips to heavily mulched, low maintenance shrub gardens.

Figure 31: Spectacular Rain Trees and Figs along the highway in Mossman (Far North Queensland)



## Chandos Street Plaza

Chandos Street, between Brock's Court and the civic buildings, is to be established as a shared space plaza.

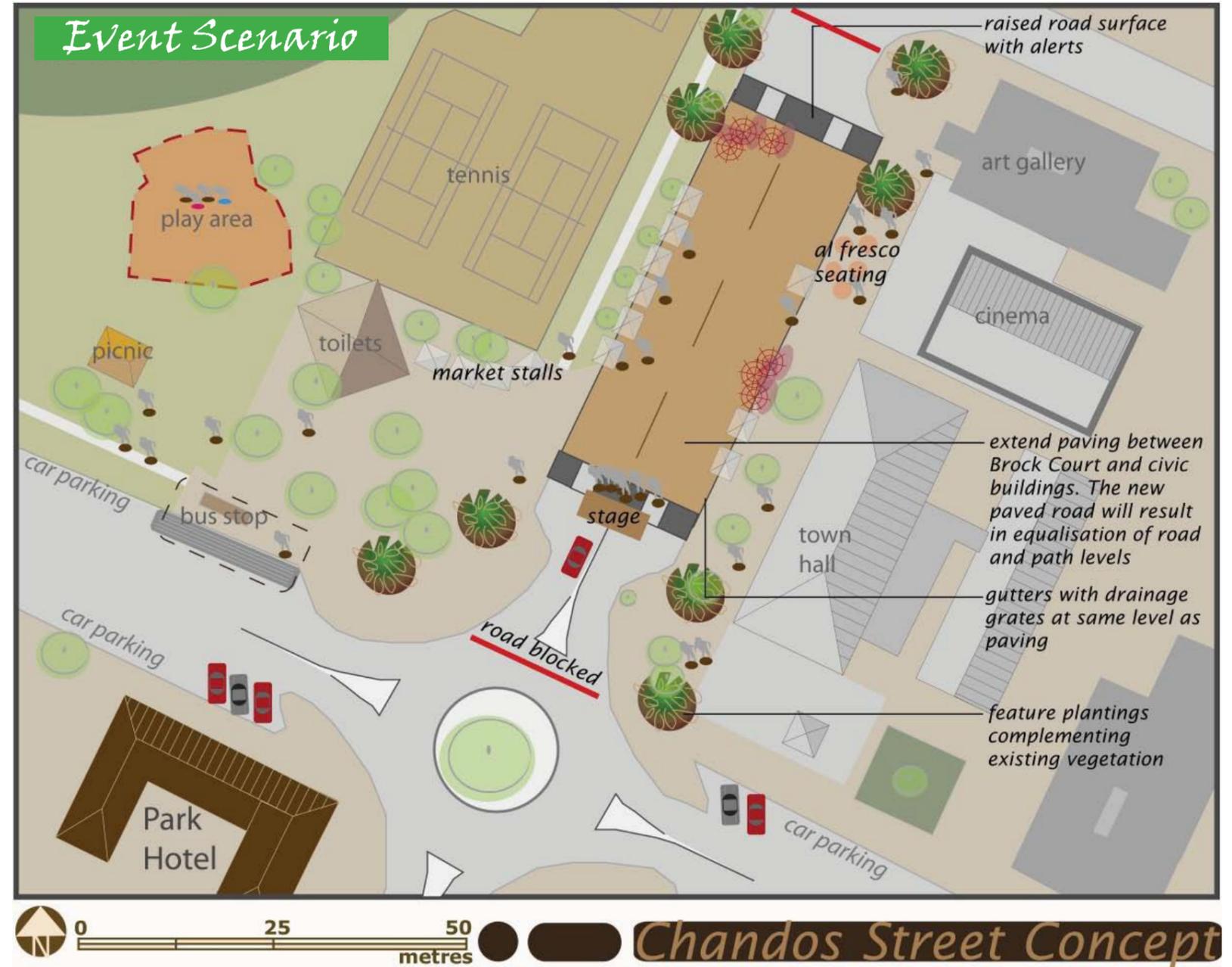
The concept involves the creation of a space where motor vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists have equal access. It involves the removal of traditional road priority management devices such as kerbs, lines, signs and signals to put all users on an equal and safe footing.

The road surface is likely to be raised and paved or treated so that its appearance is unlike a normal road surface—establishing in the minds of vehicle drivers that the space is shared with other users.

Safety, economic vitality and community severance will be ameliorated by the shared space plaza. For larger events, either in Wolseley Park, or one of the civic buildings, the space can be closed to traffic so that people can freely move between the two spaces, or the street itself is used for the event.

A basic concept design is shown here. Elements of the design include:

- raised and paved surface that extends over the road and footpaths
- the plaza surface being the same height as the existing footpath
- the current gutter is retained but a grate surface keeps the street and the footpath at the same level
- landscaping at either end of the plaza
- car parking within the plaza is retained except for events.



**Chandos Street Concept**

# 9.0 Recommendations

## Open Space

The following recommendations are made in relation to open space:

1. Council adopts the open space classification definitions, Desired Standards of Service and assessment approach utilised in this report.
2. As general practice, Council will develop a master plan for all new district and regional parks, and sport parks, before any development takes place.
3. Detailed recommendations for individual parks can be found later in this section. Council should review these recommendations and decide on their implementation (where agreed). Some of these are long term (e.g. more than 10 years) and are not expected to be implemented in the short term. However, as opportunities arise they should be pursued.
4. Section 7 included recommendations for recreation open space on page 33 and sporting open space on page 35 that should be reviewed and actioned.
5. Several open space areas would benefit from detailed planning. These include:
  - development of a recreation park along the Namoi River is a high priority of the community. Council has costed an extensive parkland development but this is not affordable. A smaller scale development, perhaps encompassing the parkland adjacent Donnelly Fields and possibly extending to The Woolshed Reserve and/ or Cohen’s Store, should be master planned and costed. Implementation should occur in a staged manner as funds allow. An initial budget of \$250-500,000 should be sought.
  - the Gunnedah Showground is under utilised and is struggling to be financially viable. The site would benefit from a management and master plan that reviewed new economic opportunities and facility development needs. One avenue to explore is in a support role to the Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre (Tamworth) and the relocation of the Gunnedah Tennis Club from Wolseley Park.
6. A number of areas have been identified as surplus open space and can be disposed of if there is no other Council need. Some of the land that has been classified as undeveloped, and not required for future recreation open space, may also be surplus to Council needs.
7. Too many of the town’s playgrounds offer a similar experience. There needs to be more variety and challenge. At least one playground should be significantly better than the others (perhaps in Wolseley Park’s northwest corner). This playground could use a mix of natural and prefabricated play items.
8. In a number of parks the play items obviously have not been used for a very long time. These should be replaced.
9. Adopt a Walkway and Cycleway Masterplan for expansion of the network as funding becomes available. There was strong community support for completing the “missing link<sup>1</sup>” in the cycleway network and then further expansion in accordance with Council’s plans.
10. Review policies to encourage greater community involvement in managing the open space resource, e.g. S355 Committees and “adopt-a-park” arrangements.
11. Evaluate the need and identify the location of additional sport open space required after 2015 having regard to more efficient use and embellishment of existing facilities.

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<sup>1</sup> *This has now been developed*

12. Do not use parks as convenient location for community infrastructure such as Rural Fire Brigades, unless they can be placed so as not to compromise the park (i.e. it is not located in a central part of a park but in a corner of a large park that has spare capacity).
13. Stop all illegal vehicle access across parks immediately.

## Entrance Statements and Streetscaping

1. Before work commences on replacing park name signs, Village entrance signs, Gunnedah Entrance Statements and similar, Council needs to design and agree a suite of complementary signage that can be installed, over time, across all Council controlled public places
2. Engage a landscape architect or similar to develop a streetscape concept plan and planting program for the main road entrances to Gunnedah and the villages, highways, major roads and significant intersections. As part of this exercise, or separately, develop new entry statements. Local artists should be invited to participate in the design
3. Work with Country Energy to ensure that street trees are carefully trimmed, maintaining the health of the tree and as green an appearance to the streets as possible.
4. In Carroll, plant *Celtis australis* on the northern (western) side of the Oxley Highway to complement the plantings on the opposite side.
5. In Mullaley, plant a suitable tree along the Oxley Highway through the Village
6. Convert the mown areas at the road ends, or median strips, to heavily mulched, low maintenance shrub gardens to save mowing expenses.

## Park Asset Management

1. An indicative schedule of works has been provided in this Strategy for the next five years in detail, and an indicative amount for the following 10 years. Council needs to review these costs, in light of the other recommendations in this report and then establish appropriate budgets to address the backlog maintenance.

The work done to date can be enhanced by:

- undertaking a detailed assessment of the facilities to fully establish and identify compliance and risks. This includes the internals of buildings for which access could not be gained during these inspections
- replacing the A-Frame picnic shelters gradually over time. These facilities are prone to vandalism and are showing signs of deterioration (Note: this replacement has not been included in the maintenance budget)
- developing a strategic plan to provide long term asset view of facilities, including a review of asset management reporting, control mechanisms, prioritized maintenance and management program of park assets
- undertake a review of all current public toilets in terms of standard, location, usage levels, facilities, fittings, accessibility, signage, water and energy requirements, safety, vandalism levels, and determine whether any public toilets should be removed and which are to be refurbished or replaced. Consider the role that portable toilets may play for events or occasional use.
- implement a program for provision of shade, seating and waste facilities at each sporting field
- review the role and function of village parks

## Assistance to Sport Clubs

Gunnedah provides a high level of assistance to its sport clubs. This results in very high quality facilities which the community is proud of,

and high levels of satisfaction with Council among the sports community. However, given the many competing demands for Council's resources, it may be opportune for Council to consider its role in assisting the sporting community. Questions that need to be considered are:

- should Council meet the water bills of users, as well as the Arena of the Showground?
- should Council be maintaining turf wickets for sport clubs?
- should Council be undertaking line marking for sport clubs?
- how often is Council mowing sport grounds?

It is recommended that Council undertakes a review of its sport and recreation policies, specifically considering the following matters:

- general assistance to sport clubs including line marking, water costs, mowing frequency, cricket wicket maintenance
- Council needs the power to stop games being played in wet weather where the asset is likely to be severely damaged. Council does not have this power at this time but has the significant cost of rectifying the damage
- the fees clubs pay seems low compared to the benefit that they receive. Council should consider a review of fees and charges across all user groups as well as Council's and the Clubs' responsibilities
- there may be some equity issues to consider. Equity between sport clubs in Gunnedah and the Villages, e.g. compare Council's assistance to Gunnedah Little Athletics versus Curlewis Little Athletics and/ or within Gunnedah e.g. assistance to soccer versus rugby league
- all future sport areas, where possible, should be multi-use – review the irrigation systems and arrangements across the town with the aim of more efficient use of water with lower costs to Council.



*Address:* South Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—District Park

*Size:* 1.1 hectares (park area less the swimming pool)

*Description:* This Park is in two sections—dissected by South Street. The northern section, adjacent to the railway, houses the Tourist Information Centre, the Band Hall, Museum, memorials and minor structures. An area to the rear of the Band Hall provides a discrete location that is sometimes used for a garden wedding.

The southern section is mostly occupied by the swimming pool, but in the eastern section, a defunct bowls clubhouse is now used by the Triathlon Club and community groups for various indoor activities. A small area of garden near the entrance to the pool has a memorial to Dorothea MacKellar. A number of war memorials are “dotted” throughout the Park.

*Future Options:* At some point, the Tourist Information Centre will be relocated, but this is 10-15 years in the future. A suitable community use of the building needs to be found at that time.

The area that is used for weddings could be improved with the development of a “bush chapel” for the wedding celebration and seating made from natural materials for the guests. A suitable climber should be planted over the railway fence to screen views into this space. There was some discussion that a brick fence is being considered as a replacement. This is not recommended as it is likely to soon be covered in graffiti, unsightly, and expensive to maintain.

When funds allow, the old lawn bowls rink should be removed and the area returned to lawn.

Views throughout Anzac Park





**Address:** Hunter Street, Gunnedah

**Classification and Hierarchy:** Recreation Park—Local Park

**Size:** 2.64 hectares

**Description:** This Park is, at 2.6ha, large for a local park and is largely unimproved. There is only a swing set and a seat. The seesaw has been removed and only posts remain where there were once a garbage bin and regulatory sign.

It is understood that the Park was named after the late Arthur Heath who contributed to the development of Gunnedah’s rural industry and was responsible for the concept of natural park areas in the Shire.

The Park has a stand of mature trees covering approximately half the site. The trees have been planted, in rows, some time ago. Grass cover is tufted varieties and not as “picnic friendly” as most parks in Gunnedah Shire.

This Park consumes significant resources for mowing essentially to keep the Park tidy and safe. Scarce resources could be better directed.

**Future Options:** This Park is too large for a local Park and is not required as a District Park. Council should consider:

- selling some land off on the eastern side in Wentworth Street, subject to extensive community consultation with affected parties and in accordance with legislative requirements.
- planting additional trees within the existing mature trees to create a denser canopy so that leaf and bark litter builds up and grass cover is thinned (The image below indicates the type of landscape this would create).The purpose of the dense planting is to stop the need for mowing and to create a “semi-natural” local park setting which are almost nonexistent in Gunnedah (and coincidentally, more fitting to the legacy of Arthur Heath).To allow access through the area a path could be constructed. To add visual interest, up-lights along the path, in different colours, would create an attractive night scene.
- a small playground at the corner of Hunter and Meldrum Streets.



Example of heavy planting, low maintenance with a walking path (Logan Gardens, Logan City)

# Athol Gallen Park



*Address:* Walter Rodd Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—Local Park

*Size:* 1.8 hectares

*Description:* This Park has very little development. There is a small playground at the northern entrance but otherwise the Park is lightly treed open space. In Ashford Watercourse there is a concrete path that extends down to the CBD and is very popular with walkers and school students of Gunnedah South Primary School.

*Future Options:* This Park will become more important as developments occur on vacant land to the south. The walking path should be extended as these developments occur, linking other people to the Park.

The Park is sufficiently large that many activities can be undertaken. One activity could be a fenced dog off-leash area. This area is well connected into the walking network and is close to many residences, unlike The Woolshed Reserve, where the dog off-leash area is not well used (this area is also not fenced and beside a busy road which deters its use). Further detail is provided on the next page.

The design of the Park could be changed to create a central community common where locals could come in the evening to kick a ball, play French Cricket or similar while enjoying the space with a picnic or barbecue. Activities for teenagers, such as teenage playgrounds, would also be well used.

An additional car park off Baxter Street may be required if use of the Park improves significantly. Consideration could also be given to the sale of a portion of the park on the southern side, subject to extensive community consultation with affected parties and in accordance with legislative requirements.



Part of the small playground in Athol Gallen Park

## Dog Off-Leash

Dog off-leash areas are typically fenced areas where dogs can be let off their leashes once they are within the fenced area. Sometimes, there are two fenced areas catering to small as well as large dogs.

Within the fenced area there is typically:

- seating and shade for the dog owners
- water for dogs and humans
- plastic bag dispenser for dog droppings
- garbage bins
- lighting
- dog agility equipment (sometimes).

The areas are typically connected into the walk and cycleway system and have car parking for those that drive.

Some example photos are shown below of a typical dog off-leash area.



# Breeza Park



*Address:* Breeza

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Sport

*Size:* 0.7 hectares

*Description:* This Park is both sport (tennis club) as well as some recreation—some items of play equipment are located in the Park. It also has a Fire Station that has been poorly located in the middle of the Park, thus dividing the Park in half.

Trees in the Park are not doing well. A number have deadwood, are stunted and otherwise growing poorly. No tree offers any significant shade. The grass cover is a coarse tufted grass and there is no irrigation.

Ben Hall's Wall, a besa brick wall featuring stories and images of the bushranger is starting to crack and the paint is fading. The improvements in this Park are generally beyond repair. The toilets are collapsing, as is the barbecue. The tennis clubhouse has been extensively vandalised and the courts are overgrown. Court lighting would not meet Australian Standards and the fence needs repair. Playground items (swings and slippery-slide) show no evidence of use.

*Future Options:* At this point the Park appears to have no use. There is no evidence of visitors stopping or locals using the facilities. The Park's facilities and vegetation is not inviting. There are no public toilets, barbecues or interesting play items. It is unlikely that a tennis club will re-emerge.

It would appear that Council could remove the various assets from the Park (except the Fire Brigade) that no longer have any value and place it on an occasional mowing schedule to keep it tidy and reduce fire risk. Council plans to replace the playground should not proceed and the playground that has already been purchased should be used elsewhere.

The land, at this point, should be retained in case a need emerges in the future.

Some of the elements in Breeza Park





*Address:* Carroll

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—Local Park and Sport Park

*Size:* 3.25 hectares

*Description:* This Park comprises a small local park of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> and some old tennis courts and a disbanded cricket pitch/ field. There are also two fire brigade sheds on the site.

The recreation park is opposite the School and has public toilets, a small amount of play equipment and some trees. There is evidence that it is regularly used.

A small area of the site is used by the School for sport.

The tennis courts are in disrepair as is the cricket pitch. It is believed that it is unlikely that the tennis club or the cricket club will ever require these facilities again. It should be noted that the School has a tennis court that is available for public use.

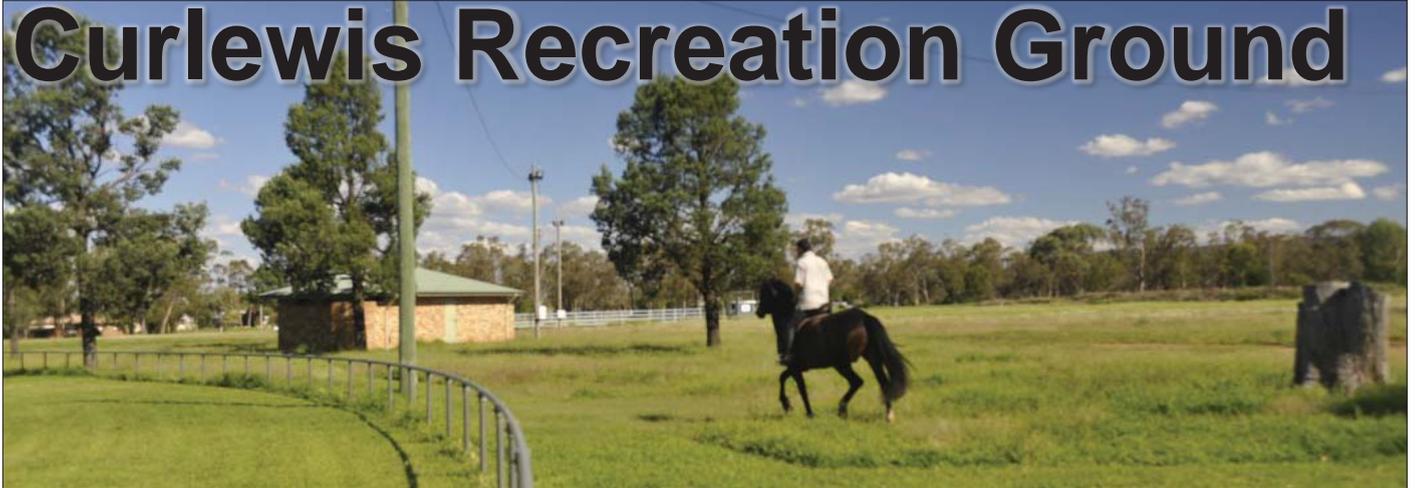
*Future Options:* The recreation park does not address the Oxley Highway—it is behind the tennis courts that are against the Highway. It is suggested that the tennis courts—fences, poles and a small building—be cleared and that the Park be extended to the Oxley Highway. Travellers would be more likely to see the Park (and its public toilets) and stop. The Carroll General Store is only 50 meters or so from the Park so may benefit from travellers stopping in the Park.

The remainder of the Park, essentially the old cricket ground, is not required. Council could consider its disposal.

The old cricket pitch



# Curlewis Recreation Ground



**Address:** Curlewis

**Classification and Hierarchy:** Curlewis Recreation Ground Oval has been categorized as “sport” while the Curlewis Golf Club lease area and the Campdraft Grounds have been recognised as “specialised sport”.

**Size:** Curlewis Recreation Ground is 12.2ha while the Curlewis Golf Course is 15.0ha.

**Description:** The Curlewis Recreation Ground is the Village’s only sport ground. It is currently used by Little Athletics and Campdrafting<sup>1</sup>. Rugby league was once played on the ground but has not been for some time.

There are a number of buildings or improvements on the site. Facilities in good condition include the toilet block, golf clubhouse and campdrafting yards. The Little Athletics Club operates from a small building (shed) and shipping container (see photograph below) which is basic in design.

Around the site there are various old buildings and features that should be removed for health, safety and amenity reasons.

**Future Options:** It is essential that old buildings, that have fire and pest issues, be removed. Some other old structures, such as announcer’s box, should also be removed to make the area more attractive.

There may be an option for the Curlewis Golf Club to broaden its focus to establish itself as a Community Sport Club that incorporated all the activities on the Recreation Ground. Council can initiate these discussion and encourage the Club’s to work closely with a view to eventually sharing infrastructure.

At this point no new facilities are recommended. As Curlewis has an active Progress Association, it would be opportune for Council to meet with this group to plan and budget a Schedule of Works for an agreed list of improvements to the town’s recreation areas—essentially Hamilton Park, Curlewis Recreation Ground and the open space areas in the main street.

The Curlewis Golf Club’s Clubhouse



Little Athletics’ “clubhouse” and storage container

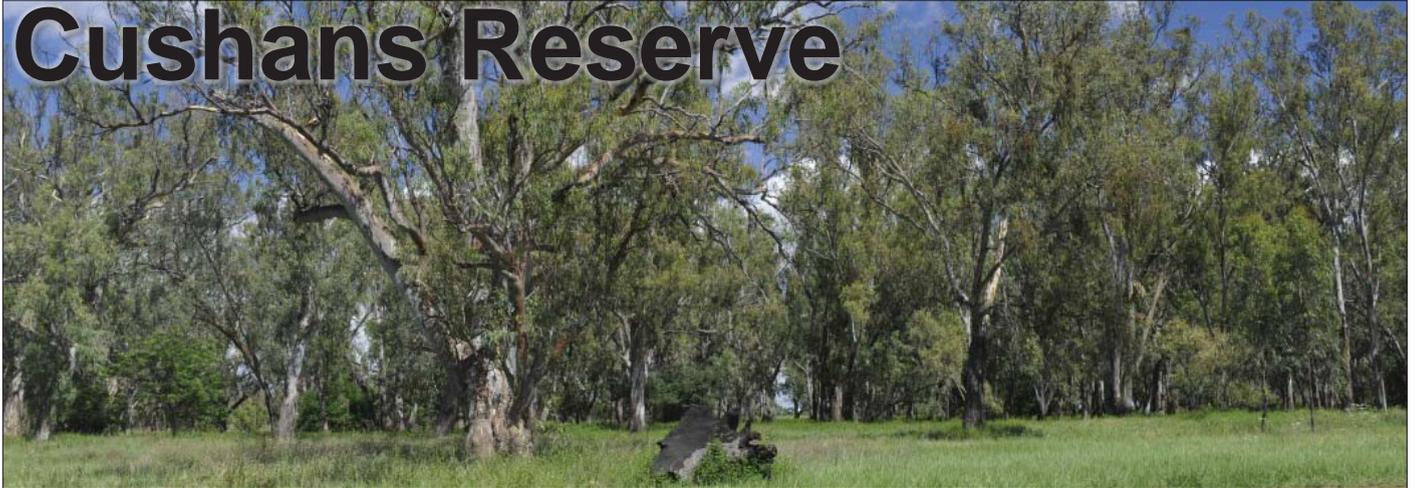


New campdrafting yards



<sup>1</sup> Campdrafting’s first event was held in 2008 and it is hoped that it can become an annual event

# Cushans Reserve



*Address:* Henry Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Undeveloped

*Size:* 9.2 hectares

*Description:* Cushans Reserve has no developments or improvements beyond a few basic tracks that appear to have been formed through casual access rather than a deliberately created road. The Reserve is located just outside the town boundary.

Users appear to use the area to get access to the Namoi River—for fishing, swimming and other activities.

The area is used by off-road motorcyclists, illegally, with a few small jumps and a series of trails throughout the Reserve.

*Future Options:* Cushans Reserve is another great access point to the Namoi River, similar to those within the town's reach of the River. Increasing public access to the Namoi River is a high priority in Gunnedah, however, this report has recommended that the open space between Donnelly Fields and the Namoi River should be Council's first priority.

As such, this Reserve should receive the minimum level of maintenance to keep it in a safe condition until demand or resources allow its further development. Signage to indicate allowed activities should also be reviewed.

The Namoi River at Cushans Reserve (at high water flow)



# Donnelly Fields



*Address:* Maitland Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Sport Park and Conservation. A further area is not developed.

*Size:* 11.7 hectares dedicated to sport, 3.57 hectares are conservation and 4.6 hectares are not developed. A further area that is used for recreation is discussed under Namoi River Parklands.

*Description:* The Donnelly Sporting Fields is a high quality field-sport space. Junior cricket has rights to an area that has five synthetic cricket pitches (the western section) while the eastern area has two cricket wickets and back-nets for use by baseball and softball. The area is (mostly) irrigated and an amenities building, built up so that it less affected by floods, is located between the two areas.

*Future Options:* Improvements to this space are mostly outside the field of play as the playing surface is very good. A masterplan should be prepared to develop Donnelly Fields into a multi-purpose sporting venue.

Future park improvements should focus on visual and functional amenity. Specifically, Council should, when funds allow:

- continue kerb and channel in Maitland Street to Rosemary Street
- seal Rosemary Street between Bloomfield and Maitland Streets
- seal the access road adjacent to the amenities block and create a car park
- undertake extensive tree planting adjacent to the fields in Maitland Street, Rosemary Street and Bloomfield Streets to create shade for players and spectators
- in consultation with the users, consider some shade facilities on the field of play. Temporary structures would probably be the best option (e.g. pop-up shade tents) as they can be removed at the end of a game so there is no vandalism, maintenance or interference with mowing.

Discussions with Gunnedah Softball suggested that two more back-nets would be appreciated for use by social softball, baseball and school sports.

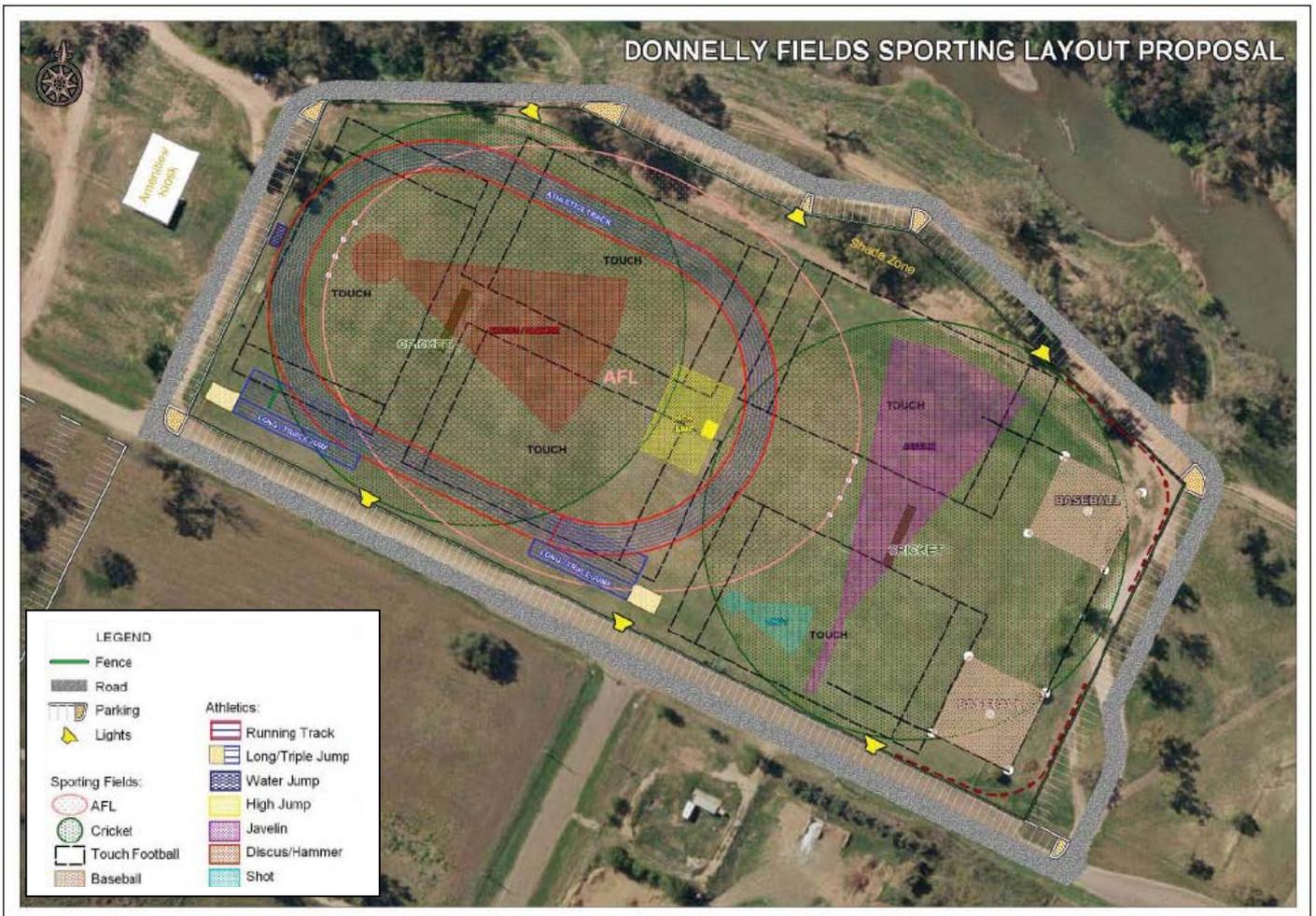
A relocation of athletics from Wolseley Park has also been suggested as this would allow for a 400m track of the correct dimensions. It would also provide adequate and safe space for the “throws” disciplines of javelin, discuss etc. An indicative layout for the athletics track and other sports is shown overleaf.

External fence that needs breaks added. Trees should be planted on the outside edge of the fence



The entrance road needs to be sealed and a car park created







*Address:* South Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* The main area of the Showground has been recognised as Specialised Sport (Note: this area does not include Longmuir Fields). The indoor sport facilities have been included in the open space system as Sport Parks

*Size:* 13.6 hectares

*Description:* The Gunnedah Showgrounds is a large area with significant infrastructure, though much of it is old and in need of significant maintenance. The Showground is not Council-controlled land unlike other parks and reserves forming part of this study but is included here because of its size and its long-term importance to the recreation and sport of the town.

Infrastructure exists to run a show but also many horse, cattle and rural animal events. The halls and pavilions are used occasionally for functions, displays and the like. Council leases two areas for indoor sport facilities. Council also maintains the Arena (mowing, watering, fertilising, pest control etc).

*Future Options:* No particular analysis of this space has been undertaken as part of this study. The Showground needs to be the subject of a master and management/ business plan to determine a strategic direction for the facility both in terms of its management and its redevelopment/ development. The master plan should also consider potential additional and alternative uses.

As part of that study it is recommended that consideration is given to a strategic link to the Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre (AELEC) at Tamworth as a secondary centre, holding various events, training clinics and the like.

The Showground could also be the home of a new tennis centre should it be moved from Wolseley Park. As the Gunnedah High School has five courts adjacent to the Showground it may be possible to design a joint facility sharing the courts between the School and the Tennis Club.



Grandstand and arena area



*Address:* Curlewis

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—Local Park and Sport

*Size:* The recreation park is 0.93 hectares while the area used for sport (tennis) is 0.41 hectares.

*Description:* The central area of this Park, among the pine trees is very pleasant. However, the improvements within the Park, excepting the barbecue, are run down and/ or in need of major maintenance. There are two playgrounds, one originally provided by the Council and the other, it is understood, by the tennis club so that it was closer to the clubhouse. The tennis club has not operated for over three years though the Curlewis Progress Association has attempted to keep the courts available for anyone wanting a game (e.g. the courts are reasonably free of weeds and there are nets on three courts). The clubhouse has been destroyed by vandals.

The playgrounds are run down and in need of repair, particularly the equipment originally installed by Council. Some of it is broken and there is a lack of softfall and shade. The items have been dispersed around the Park instead of being concentrated together for easier control of children.

The Park has the only public toilets available in the Village, and they are locked—presumably to keep them clean and undamaged—but this makes them unavailable to visitors. The Park has a 1.2m chain-wire fence around it that restricts entry to two points. One of these entrances is through war memorial gates. The picnic shelter is a poor design—the roof structure is very low (approximately 1.8m).

*Future Options:* The Park has been rundown to such an extent that it needs a serious rethink before any funds are spent on it. The Pine trees at its core should be the focus. The Council needs to work with the Curlewis Progress Association to develop a design that will meet the needs of the community for a community gathering space, children’s and youth’s play and possibly tennis courts.

The number of play items appears to be well in excess of requirements. A small contemporary playground with shade, close to the barbecue and “new” picnic shelter would replace all items within the Park. The basketball court should be fixed and a concrete pad laid to provide some activity for teenagers that were noticed “hanging” in the Park on separate visits. If funds allowed, a small ramp park/ skate park may also be well used.

The toilets need to be made available during the day. If there is the possibility of vandalism then a local needs to be engaged to lock them and report any damage. Cleaning may also need to be organised.

The Park would be made more inviting if the chain-wire fence was replaced with bollards but this is less important than other improvements.

Some images from the park, including the vandalised clubhouse





*Address:* High Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—Local Park

*Size:* 0.63 hectares

*Description:* This Park is highly visible being constructed on a sweeping bend in High Street. It has a number of shady native trees along the road verge and within the Park.

It has a small playground with equipment for young children only. The playground is showing signs of age and in need of some maintenance and/ or upgrading. There is no shade and some of the soft-fall needs repair.

Oddly, the Park name sign is located about 50m from the road near the children’s playground.

There is a desire line through the Park indicating that it is used as a short cut when walking/ jogging along High Street.

*Future Options:* There is little to be done to the Park except for maintenance noted elsewhere. Some improvements would be shading the playground (with tree plantings) and perhaps adding some elements for older children. Moving the Park name sign to be opposite Douglas Street would improve local knowledge of the Park’s name.

A view across the Park



A section of the playground





*Address:* Jaeger Place, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—Local Park

*Size:* 0.41 hectares

*Description:* This Park is essentially a flat grass area surrounded on all sides by Jaeger Avenue. The only improvements are a picnic shelter and table, and some stunted/ small trees on the perimeter. Houses on the outside of Jaeger Avenue look onto the Park. While classified as a local park it almost falls into the “undeveloped” category as there are almost no improvements on the site.

*Future Options:* The Park is not needed as a local park as there are nearby options at Jae-High Park, Ken Green Park, Wandobah Reserve and McAndrew Park.

While the view of the green space may be missed by residents, Council should consider a medium density development on the site that would provide some funds toward the improvement of other areas.

A view of the entire Park





*Address:* Wandobah Road/View Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Sport Park

*Size:* 5.5 hectares

*Description:* The John Longmuir Sporting Fields are part of the Showgrounds (i.e. within the fenced boundary) but are used for sport rather than typical showground activities. The northern end of the grounds are used for netball while the southern end is used for softfall, cricket, rugby league, Oz Tag among others.

Gunnedah Netball has suggested a number of improvements to its space that were covered earlier (see the Consultation Section of this report). These included:

- increasing the number of hard courts from four to ten and upgrading the lighting
- more natural and artificial shade
- improved access and car parking.

These improvements will replace grass with bitumen but is required by the sport.

The southern end of Longmuir Fields are used for field sports and the organisations have not requested any significant improvements, however, the provision of shade around the perimeters of the fields would appear to be a worthwhile improvement.

*Future Options:* An earlier recommendation was that the Gunnedah Showground is subject to a master plan that will establish its future direction from an asset, facility and business perspective. As part of that study, the John Longmuir Fields should also be considered. The Netball Association's future plans need to be considered and also the need for lighting, shade, access and car parking.

These are not urgent needs but will need to be addressed over time and a master plan will ensure that resources are directed where they are needed the most and can benefit the community as widely as possible.

Longmuir playing fields



Netball Clubhouse





*Address:* McAndrew Street through to Stewart Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—Local Park

*Size:* 0.54 hectares

*Description:* This Park is a very pleasant local park with excellent access stemming from its two road frontage. Turf cover is soft as the Park is irrigated (though the system is one of the older, labour intensive systems).

There is a fenced playground for very young children with a slippery dip for older children, adjacent.

*Future Options:* The Park is sufficiently pleasant that it could draw local residents for a barbecue or picnic gathering in the evening. A large shelter for group gatherings and a barbecue near the playground and shade would be a well-used improvement.

The slippery-dip and a view across the Park





*Address:* Corner of Johnston and Beulah Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—Local Park

*Size:* 0.27 hectares

*Description:* This Park is quite small. There are a few very old items of play equipment strung around the back fences of the Park. The rest of the Park is open to allow kicking a ball or games.

The Park is used for illegal backyard access (car tyre tracks are worn into the Park) and this needs to be stopped immediately as there is the possibility of an accident.

The Park is too small to have any feelings of privacy. Neighbours' backyards are just too close. The only way to screen the Park is to heavily plant the boundary against the fences.

*Future Options:* All play equipment should be replaced with a modern playground with softfall and natural shade planted if required. The chain-wire external fence could be replaced with a bollard fence. Review the plantings and add more along fences against the houses.

The illegal access through the Park should be stopped by closing and locking the gates.

Consideration could also be given to the sale of a portion of the park, subject to extensive community consultation with affected parties and in accordance with legislative requirements.

Play items are old, have no soft-fall and little shade



Illegal access through the Park to residential back yards





*Address:* Conadilly Street (Oxley Highway) , Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Sport Park mainly though a corner is used as a Local Park

*Size:* 4.1 hectares is used for sport and a small area of 660m<sup>2</sup> is used as a local park.

*Description:* This Park is Gunnedah’s premier sportsfield regularly hosting high level rugby league and cricket games that attract paying spectators. The turf is of a very high standard and lighting is adequate for night play (and was recently upgraded so is reportedly in good condition). The ground is fenced so an entry charge can be levied.

The dressing sheds are suited to high level games and there is an open, constructed, grandstand as well as grassed banks for more casual seating. There is little shade or rain protection for spectators. Public toilets, a canteen and storage are incorporated into the main pavilion

Within the Park there are also two artificial grass tennis courts and two basketball courts. The tennis courts are dangerous, the surface having lifted. The fence is also in need of repair.

Adjacent to the tennis courts there are two basketball courts that are also in poor condition. Despite their condition they are used for school sport. Access to the basketball courts is via Osric Street and not via the Park.

Council has almost completed the construction of a new public toilet block adjacent to the playground. The playground is old and tired though Council has purchased a new playground that will be installed in early 2009.

There is some unused land in the north west corner of the Park that the rugby league club has suggested could be used for training and warm-up purposes, and would assist in scheduling training in the few weeks that the rugby league season overlaps with the cricket season.

Council has long planned that the tourist information centre will be relocated to this Park, as it would have better visibility from the Oxley Highway, though it is not likely to occur for 10-15 years.

*Future Options:* This Park is Council’s premier sport venue and should be retained as such. Clubs that use the Park have not expressed any need for major infrastructure. Adding rain and sun protection to part of the grandstand may be a project that Council could pursue through a grant or when resources allow.

Removing the tennis courts and basketball courts will happen as their condition deteriorates. They should not be replaced at this location with these spaces being used to support activities on the main field.

The tennis courts need to be consolidated with the tennis club when it is relocated from Wolseley Park. The area of the existing tennis courts will be used for the Visitor Information Centre in the long term.

The demand for the basketball courts needs also to be assessed. It appears that there is only use by a local school or schools, who may have other options. If, and when, the courts are deemed too dangerous for further use they should be removed and the area incorporated back into Kitchener Park proper.



*Address:* Wandobah Road, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Sport Park and Local Park

*Size:* 2.7 hectares

*Description:* McAndrew Park is nearly all Sports Park with cricket (turf wicket) being the predominant activity. A playground in the south west corner offers a local park experience for nearby residents. There is a toilet block adjacent to the playground but it is only opened for sport activities. The building also contains a storage area. The turf is irrigated so the Park is always attractive and green.

The Park seems to attract inappropriate late night social activity. On a number of occasions litter, bottles, cigarettes etc have been observed in and around the picnic shelter. The shelter has a lot of graffiti and “carving” of its timber frame. The toilet block has suffered graffiti as well but Council has quickly painted this out—the correct response.

*Future Options:* Adding shade to the playground is one of the few improvements required. As Council prefers not use built shade Structures, tree plantings can be developed to shade the area for parts of the day. There is no seating beside the playground though there are a number of seats dispersed through the Park. Move some of these to be near the playground under the large shady tree so that parents can better supervise their children.

As the field is predominantly used for cricket trees could be planted around the boundary to create a “village green” setting. Deciduous trees such as oaks, elms, maples, London Plane Tree (*Platanus hispanica*) or similar would create the appropriate setting. These trees tend to have heavy shade in summer but lose their leaves in winter, some of them with spectacular colours. The trees should be all of the same species and planted equidistantly. The planting should allow for other sports that may use the Park e.g. soccer.

As with a number of other parks, the Park needs a sign to indicate its name.

Some of the vandalism damage to the picnic shelter





**Address:** off Collin Circuit, Gunnedah

**Classification and Hierarchy:** Recreation Park—Local Park

**Size:** 0.29 hectares

**Description:** This Park is unusual and unique in Gunnedah. It essentially has no street frontage and is basically the private Park for the houses that surround it—it is in reality, the extended back yard of the houses around it. It is acknowledged that it is a public Park but the perception is likely to be otherwise. The Park’s design does not offer any feeling of privacy and does not invite external use.

Access is via Collin Circuit (which is wide enough for a vehicle) or George Street (path width). The access from Collin Circuit is used extensively for illegal access to backyards and needs to be closed immediately.

Improvements include an old toddlers’ swingset that shows some signs of use, a bubbler and some very old seats and rubbish bins. The Park has been planted with Silky Oaks (*Grevillea robusta*) and Jacaranda Trees (*Jacaranda mimosifolia*).

**Future Options:** An immediate action must be to stop illegal access. Beyond that, if the Park is to be made to function as a Park, the process will be expensive. There is a limited supply of open space in this part of Gunnedah so, if at all possible, the space should be made more accessible.

For the Park to function as a park, it must have road frontage so that it appears to the community, to be a public space that is accessible to everyone. To do this, at this point, will require the purchase and removal of at least one house.

Should a house come on sale, preferably in George Street, then Council could consider its purchase and removal. The cost effectiveness of this action will need to be assessed as it is acknowledged that the return will be low. An interim measure would be to erect a sign on George Street highlighting the pathway access to the Park.

It is difficult to justify any significant expenditure to this Park unless visibility and accessibility is improved.

The main access to McDonagh Park



Houses and backyards overlook the Park





*Address:* Tambar Springs

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—Local Park

*Size:* 0.2 hectares

*Description:* This small local park is the only park in the Village. It is located in the main street (also the Highway) and is close to the Post Office, shops and businesses of Tambar Springs.

The cenotaph is reportedly the oldest in Australia erected in remembrance of those that lost their lives in World War I. The cenotaph was restored by local people and rededicated on Remembrance Day in 2003.

The community appear to be actively engaged in the Park. The garden at the front is watered and maintained by local people and was a winner in the ABC Radio 2007 Community Garden Scheme. When the Park was inspected, a new concrete path to the cenotaph had been laid and pavers removed.

The Park has a range of older playground items “sprinkled” throughout. We use the term “sprinkled” as the Park has not been designed but items appear to have been placed so that they fill the Park with about equal space between everything.

Playground items are old with some needing repairs. There is no shade over any of the play items.

*Future Options:* This is an important park for the community of Tambar Springs and the visitors to the village. Community involvement and interest is obviously strong so any changes or improvements need to be undertaken in consultation with the community.

Council should budget to replace the play items in the next few years.



Memorial Park's WWI cenotaph is reportedly the oldest in Australia



**Address:** Corner Anzac Parade and Hunter Street, Gunnedah

**Classification and Hierarchy:** Recreation Park—Local Park and Sport

**Size:** The area that functions as a Recreation Park is 0.2 hectares and the sport element is 0.18 hectares (total area is 0.38 hectares)

**Description:** This small Park is well used. The tennis courts are publicly available and are also used by the Gunnedah Tennis Club. The courts have lights for night-time use<sup>1</sup>.

There is a small playground with adjacent picnic table and shade trees. The Playground has a light to allow its use at night. Two swings, including one for teenagers, is nestled among the trees.

There is a picnic shelter and barbecue that appear to get regular use from the users of the tennis court at least. In fact the barbecue is locked and it is assumed that a key is obtained when the courts are hired. Though there is no sign to advise users of the arrangement.

A stormwater drain slices through the Park but it does not detract from the Park (and in fact, children would enjoy the change in landscape). There is a public toilet.

**Future Options:** The Park works quite well and is not in need of any significant improvements.

Natural shade over the playground and improving the softfall would encourage more day time usage.

Paving in the space between the picnic shelter and the courts would remove bare areas, caused by the high level of foot traffic in the space.

Repairs are required to the tennis courts fencing and light poles. Court surfaces will need replacement in a few years.



Views in Mornington Park



<sup>1</sup> At least one of the wooden light poles has been severely damaged by termites. All poles should be inspected and replaced where necessary.



*Address:* Mullaley

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—Local Park

*Size:* 0.86 hectares

*Description:* From discussion at the community meeting it became apparent that this Park is highly valued by the community—and it met the needs of the community in its current form.

The softfall was the only issue. Apparently it has caught fire (smouldering) a few times, lit by cigarette butts (on the morning of the inspection this was the case, the fire having just been put out before my arrival). It is not thought that the fires are deliberate but the result of adults (some of them travellers) sitting on the play equipment and dropping the butts.

This is unusual as the soft-fall is the same as used in other Council Parks where it has not been reported as a problem. If the problem continues it may be necessary to replace the woodchip soft-fall with sand.

As in Carroll and Breeza, the fire station has been placed in the middle of the Park creating dead spaces and/or areas that are blocked from view (making parental control harder). If fire sheds must go on a park, because there is no other site, then the shed should be positioned so it does not compromise the Park and reduce its functionality. Ideally, they should be in a corner so that, essentially, the park is reduced in size by the area used by the Shed, but is otherwise left intact.

*Future Options:* Shade over the play equipment is important. However, before that is undertaken a review of the layout of the play items should be undertaken. Some items are in the front half of the Park while others are in the back half, but no two items are close together. Some of the stronger, steel items, may be located under trees (natural shade) as they are strong enough to resist damage from small limb drops. Others should be placed to benefit from shadows.

The burning softfall that has been extinguished



The fire shed that has been positioned in the middle of the Park



# Mullibah Lagoon



*Address:* Wentworth Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Ecological Park

*Size:* 5.8 hectares

*Description:* This Park is a natural area encompassing a billabong that offers a unique park setting in Gunnedah. It is highly valued by the community as a pleasant place to walk, picnic, bird watch, and even to get married.

There were some comments about vehicles entering the area and damaging the vegetation but Council is currently undertaking works to protect the site from vehicles, one of the major issues raised by the community. The lack of a path makes walking difficult when the grass is long.

*Future Options:* As the area is a natural area Council does not want to overdevelop the Park. The current entrance is made of white painted steel pipe. There are a two bold signs asking users to “use the rubbish bins” and “preserve nature”. An interpretative sign is located several metres to the left of the entrance that should be moved to be adjacent to the entrance. This entrance, looks “unnatural” and would be much better if it had a timber fence and signs were made of wood. A formed deco path around the Lagoon would greatly increase usage during summer (snake) months. Signs should also be erected banning dogs from this sensitive area.

Eventually the community would like to see the area linked with the Namoi River Parklands and this is also a priority for Council. This should be pursued when the funding to develop, and maintain the additional open space, becomes available.





*Address:* Maitland Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—District Park

*Size:* 4.7 hectares

*Description:* This area is located between Donnelly Fields and the Namoi River. It is bounded by Kelvin Road to the east. This Park is the easiest point to access the Namoi River within the town. Throughout the Park there are many River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) that provide beautiful shade though Council needs to be aware of the renowned “widow maker” properties of the tree.

The Park is essentially undeveloped. The only improvements are a picnic table and rubbish bins. However, adjacent to the Park is Donnelly Fields that has an amenities block (though it is only opened for sport games). Throughout the Park there is a series of roads that appear to have developed informally over the years. There are English Willows and other exotics that should be removed when restoring the Park.

*Future Options:* Improving this Park is a high priority for the residents of Gunnedah. Council has also considered developing this area and extending the parkland through to Mullibah Lagoon, but the capital and operational cost for such a large park is too high at the present time. It is recommended that Council consider a more modest start and develop the area adjacent to Donnelly Fields to Kelvin Road in the first instance.

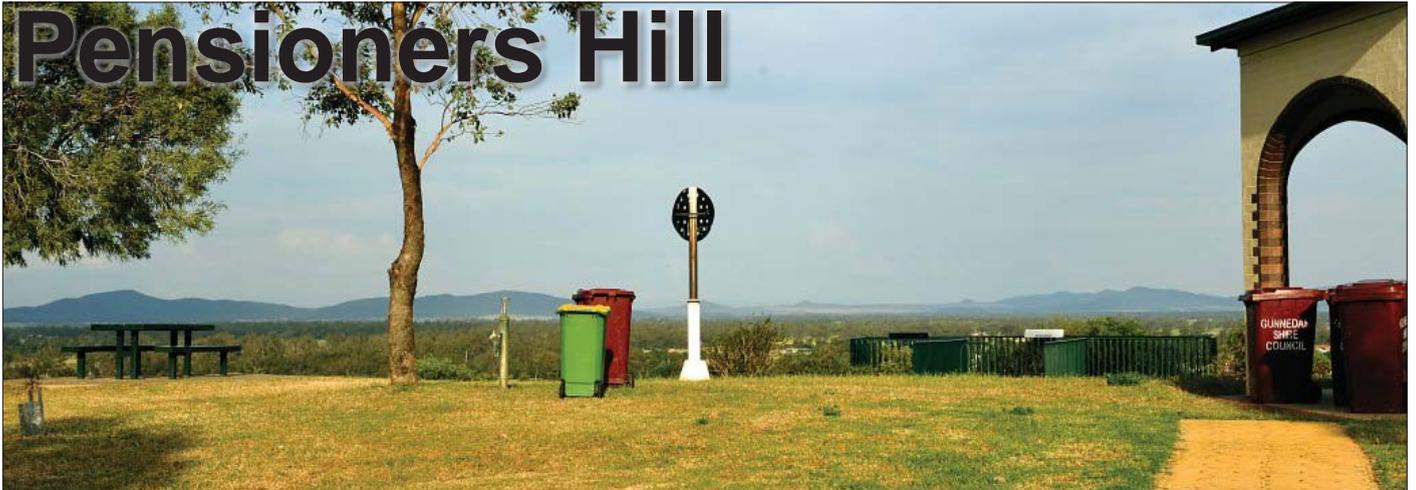
Council will need to review its master plan for this stretch of the parklands but the first step is to control vehicle movements within the Park. Possibly vehicles should only access a car park (which would also be used by Donnelly Fields) and not be able to drive through the Park, or to the River’s edge. Stopping vehicle traffic at the east and west end of Donnelly Fields would require the least amount of bollards, and thus cost. The car parks and access roads would also meet the needs of Donnelly Fields’ users.

There has been some suggestions of allowing overnight camping in the area but specific infrastructure is required for this to happen. Gunnedah has a range of accommodation types and unless this type of accommodation is required it is not recommended.

The River offers a number of places that would be suitable for launching a canoe or kayak and one location should be designated for this activity. Signs from the CBD and Highways need to be installed to make visitors aware of this Park.

Additional views across the Namoi River Parklands





*Address:* Lloyd Road, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Ecological and Amenity Park

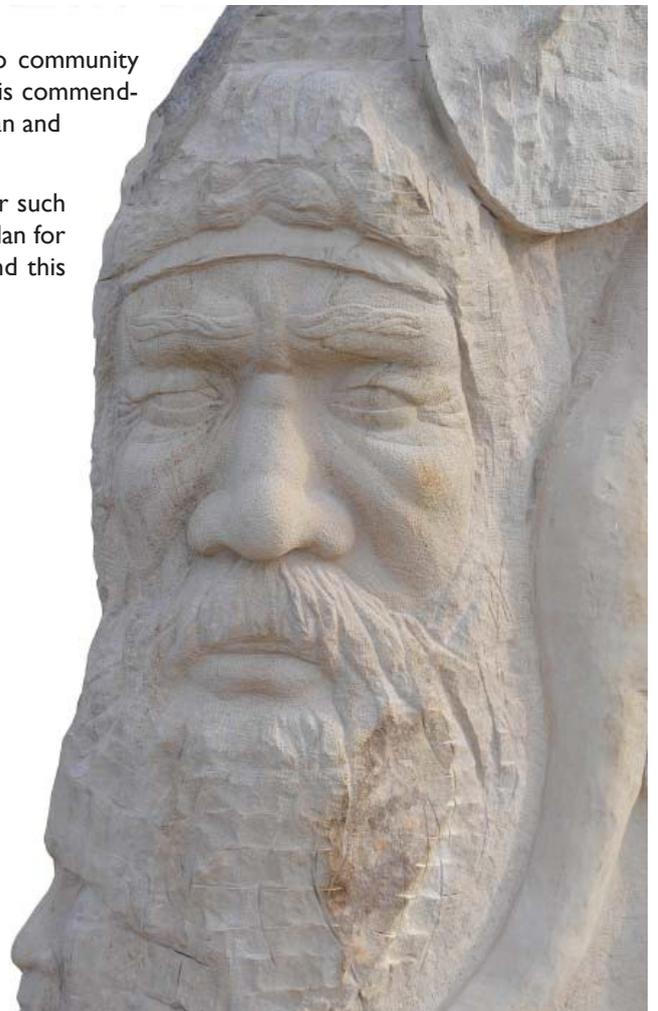
*Size:* 15.2 hectares

*Description:* Pensioners Hill is one of Gunnedah’s two lookouts. It is understood that most of the improvements (shelter, barbecues, gates, path, picnic elements etc) were put in place in 2001 by Gunnedah West Rotary Club, and using some of the bricks from a chimney that once stood on the site. Gunnedah West Rotary Club’s involvement is continuing. During 2008 the Club organised to have six rock sculptures created along the entrance walkway.

Apart from Gunnedah West Rotary Club’s involvement with the site the Gunnedah Urban Landcare Group also has an involvement with the ecological side of the Park. Many trees have been planted across the Reserve and a walking path constructed.

*Future Options:* This Park has benefited from the involvement of two community groups to date and it appears that their involvement will continue. It is commendable that the service clubs volunteer their time and resources. This can and does save Council’s resources that can be expended elsewhere.

The danger though is that the Park is developed in an ad-hoc manner such that a disparate range of elements are not integrated into an overall plan for the Park. However, in this case a master plan has been developed and this should be used to guide future development.



# Porcupine Reserve



*Address:* Apex Drive, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Most of the Reserve has been recognised as “Ecological” with the lookout area being nominated as Recreation Park.

*Size:* 83.4 hectares

*Description:* Porcupine Reserve has one of Gunnedah’s two lookouts. Throughout this large Reserve there are walking tracks that are popular with people observing nature or exercising.

The Reserve is an important biological remnant of the vegetation and ecosystems that once existed around Gunnedah, but for the most part, have now been cleared for agriculture.

*Future Options:* For the most part the Reserve should not be developed further. There is a need to maintain some of the trails and rest stops and Council needs to keep the community involved to assist in this process.

The lookout area requires maintenance that has been identified elsewhere.

Linking the Reserve to the Wallaby Trap and then to Mullibah Lagoon and the Namoi River open space should be the long-term plan for the Reserve. The detail of how this will be achieved should be established through a comprehensive assessment of bicycle and walking paths in the Shire.



*Address:* Linden Place, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—Local Park

*Size:* 0.22 hectares

*Description:* This Park is quite small but has a very attractive setting with lots of shade trees and a soft, inviting lawn.

The park has a small slippery-dip, seating and a bubbler. The Park also abuts an electricity easement that could be used to connect the Park into the broader open space system.

*Future Options:* The Park has no need, or space, for significant improvements. Parks staff indicated that they would like to replace the slippery-dip with a small playground as the slippery-dip, as a single item, does not sustain children’s interest.



The slippery-dip and seating within the Park



*Address:* Cnr of Ashford Street and Gallen Avenue, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—Local Park

*Size:* 0.9 hectares

*Description:* This Park has been developed by the Gunnedah West Rotary Club in conjunction with Council. Often these arrangements result in parks that are “bitsy”, however, this Park is reasonably well designed. Playgrounds, seating and shade have been arranged close to each other and a large area has been left open for ball games and active play.

The Park has a “rocket” that is closed for use as it was deemed a high risk item. Children are now known to limb on the outside of the structure, which is also a risk. Council should consider removing the item from the Park.

*Future Options:* This Park does not need any further development, though there are some items of backlog maintenance that need to be addressed.

The Park has a shaded playground, one of only two in Gunnedah at present



The “rocket” that is dangerous for play





*Address:* McAndrew Street through to Stewart Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—Local Park (only because it is mown. Otherwise it is undeveloped).

*Size:* 0.3 hectares

*Description:* This park is a mown area with a few trees but otherwise there are no improvements except irrigation. It stretches from McAndrew Street through to Stewart Street.

*Future Options:* This Park is not required as Ken Green Park is only 200m away in the next block and is an attractive park with play and picnic embellishments.

Council should consider selling this Park to help fund the upgrade of other areas (e.g. Namoi River Parklands), subject to extensive community consultation with affected parties and in accordance with legislative requirements.



*Address:* Stock Road, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Amenity

*Size:* 3.3 hectares

*Description:* Stocks Road has a large central traffic island. Through the centre is a meandering path with seats and garbage bins. The area is well treed with adequate shade.

*Future Options:* This area is popular with fitness walkers as well as recreational and commuter walkers and cyclists. It is not appropriate that there are elements added that would attract young children as it is the middle of a reasonably busy road.

However, it could be an appropriate place for fitness equipment. Typically, in these situations, fitness equipment is installed along the path every 100-200m. However, it is more sensible to place the equipment in a cluster where people can undertake their routine without having to move backwards and forwards to use the equipment in their preferred order. The photos below show fitness equipment installed in Queens Park, Warwick that is proving very popular with residents, and similar equipment could be installed in Stocks Road.



# Wandobah Reserve



*Address:* Wandobah Road, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—District Park

*Size:* 35 hectares

*Description:* The Reserve is a large area but has very little development. Much of the Reserve exists to assist with the management of flooding. Blackjack Creek flows through Wandobah Reserve and at times, can have very significant volumes of water.

Council has constructed a skate park in the Reserve and there is an abandoned, and disused, but heavily vandalised, BMX facility in the western portion that needs to be removed as soon as possible. In conjunction with GULP, some planting has occurred in the northern portion of the Reserve fronting Wandobah Road. The Reserve is used for walking though there are no formal paths within the Reserve.

*Future Options:* There has been discussion for many years of developing a wetlands on Blackjack Creek near the highway. There has even been a concept design prepared for the area.

However, this area is also important for flood plain management. Council, during 2009, will undertake further study into appropriate flood mitigation works in this part of Blackjack Creek. Whether a wetlands is appropriate will be considered as part of that study. Whatever the recommendation is for flood management, Council should work with the appropriate people to obtain the best possible recreation outcomes for the Reserve.

A dog leash free area should be integrated into the Reserve to be consistent with the walkway and cycle-way masterplan.

Vandals are destroying the BMX track's facilities and creating hazards for other users



Part of the skate park

Gunnedah Shire  
Kangaroos in the Reserve





*Address:* Conadilly Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Sport Park and Recreation Park—District Park

*Size:* 4.1 hectares with 3.0 hectares being used for sport and 1.1 hectares as a recreation park.

*Description:* Wolseley Park has as its main feature, a picket fenced cricket oval (actually a circle), Brock’s Court (including the miners’ memorial), two playgrounds, a tennis club, cricket scoreboard, a cricket pavilion, bandstand and park furniture are the other main improvements in the Park.

Wolseley Park is considered by residents as the best recreation park in Gunnedah. However, nearly 75% of the park is used for sport (cricket, athletics and tennis). Only about 1.1 hectares is used for recreation and this is effectively in two disjointed areas, separated by sporting activities.

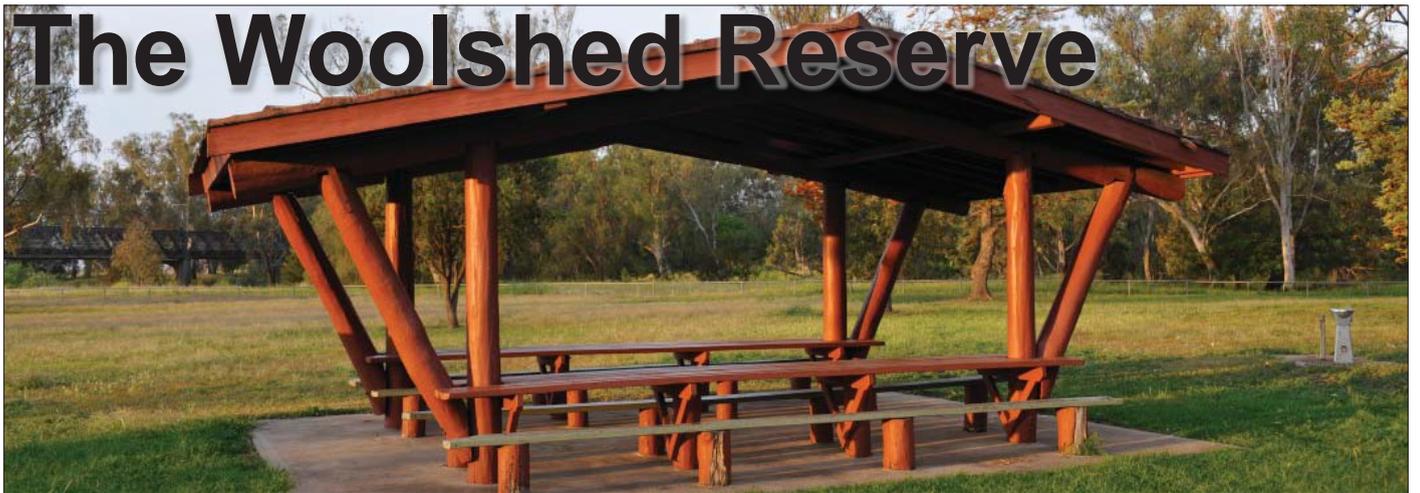
The Park needs to be enhanced if it is to be recognised as a premier park with a regional level playground facility and associated facilities. To do so, the Park needs more space. It is recommended that in the long term, the tennis club is relocated to the Showground. It is recognised that there is a considerable investment in the tennis club, so this move would not be envisaged until the infrastructure was worn down and in need of replacement. However, no major investments in extra courts or clubhouse upgrades should be considered by Council or the Club in the current location.

*Future Options:* The Park should be master planned so that over time, it can be developed as an attractive destination park that residents are proud of and visitors fondly remember. The master plan needs to consider:

- the relocation of the tennis club and reuse of this area
- creating a plaza to link Brock’s Court with the town hall and civic theatre
- creating a regional level playground in place of the two existing playgrounds
- the use of flowers and paths within the Park
- making a feature of the picket fence and cricket scoreboard.

The regional playground is envisaged as an exciting space using natural and built items to offer a different experience from that available at most park playgrounds in Gunnedah. Potentially, it could include a water playground as part of the design.





*Address:* Maitland Street, Gunnedah

*Classification and Hierarchy:* Recreation Park—District Park

*Size:* 1.4 hectares

*Description:* This Park has been given a “district” rating because it has the only dog off-leash area in Gunnedah. Unfortunately, it appears to get very little, if any, use. Mullibah Lagoon appears to be a more favoured location for dog walkers and when asked why, the interviewed walkers indicated it was safer for their dog as there was not as much traffic. Mullibah Lagoon, being an ecological area, should be a dog-free area.

The dog off-leash area is not fenced which may be a deterrent to its use. In any case, it is thought that the dog off-leash area should be closer to where people live and Athol Gallen Park has been suggested for Council to consider.

*Future Options:* The future of The Woolshed Reserve needs to be considered as part of the upgrade of the Namoi River Parklands. The Woolshed Reserve is a connector between the Donnelly Fields section of the Namoi River Parklands and Cohen’s Store.

# 10.0 Detailed Asset Condition Audit

Table 14 sets out a schedule to replace the irrigation systems over time. There are some significant costs involved. The “Rank” column is Council officer’s assessment of the priority order. These costs are incorporated into Table 15.

The information in Table 15 details the estimated backlog maintenance as well as some health and safety improvements, and improvements to the irrigation systems, necessary over the next fifteen years, for each park area. Detail is provided for Years 1-5 while the next ten years are aggregated.

Park	Rank	Year	Type	Area	Works Required	Estimated Cost
Long Muir Field Nth	1	1959	Manual	1.4ha	Replace AC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade QCV to Hunter i31, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$100,000
Longmuir Field Sth	1	1959	Manual	3.2ha	Replace AC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade SP to Hunter i31pop up, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$250,000
Jaeger Park	2	1961	Manual	1ha	Replace AC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade QCV to Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$100,000
Ken Green Park	3	1970	Manual	1ha	Replace AC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade QCV to Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$100,000
Rotary West Park	4	1971	Manual	1ha	Replace AC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade QCV to Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$100,000
Jae-High Park	5	1972	Manual	1ha	Replace AC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade QCV to Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$100,000
Mc Andrews Park	6	1976	Semi-automatic	2ha	Inspect/replace PVC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade SP to Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$150,000
Woolshed Reserve	7	1980	Semi-automatic	1ha	Inspect/Replace PVC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade SP to Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$100,000
Donnelly Fields	8	1980	Semi-automatic	3.4ha	Inspect/Replace PVC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade SP to Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$250,000
Kilcoy Park	9	1980	Manual	0.5ha	Inspect/Replace AC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade QCV to Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$40,000
Showground Arena	10	1980	Manual	2.1ha	Inspect/Replace PVC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade QCV to Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$150,000
Athol Gallen	11	1990	Manual	2ha	Inspect/Replace PVC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade SP to Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$100,000
Ron Pople Park	12	1991	Manual	0.5ha	Inspect/Replace PVC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade QCV to Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$40,000
Wolseley Oval	13	1999	Semi-automatic	1.6ha	Inspect/Replace PVC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade SP to Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$150,000
Kitchener Park	14	2001	Semi-automatic	1.3ha	Inspect/Replace PVC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, service/renew Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$150,000
Memorial Cemetery	15	2003	Semi-automatic	3.2ha	Inspect/Replace PVC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, service/replace Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$150,000
Anzac Park	16	2004	Semi-automatic	2.0ha	Inspect/Replace PVC mains to poly, inspect PVC laterals, upgrade QCV to Hunter i31pop ups, install back to base automatic computerised controllers	\$90,000

In addition to the maintenance required at each Park, Table 16 provides an estimate of costs that are aggregated for all the parks as the work would be undertaken across all, or many, parks at the one time.

The estimated cost of maintenance works in both tables is approximately \$1.57 million over the first five years. Of this cost, \$650,000 is allocated to repairing and replacing irrigation systems.

Table 15: Tasks that need to be undertaken across the whole resource

Park/Area/Asset	Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15
Asbestos Management	Carry out asbestos audit and labelling exercise	\$30,000						
General Building Maintenance	Allowance for minor maintenance across all buildings and structures		\$5,000	\$6,500	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$75,000	\$75,000
Irrigation	Repair/ Replace Irrigation	\$250,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$350,000	\$200,000
Park Furniture	Paint (as per schedule)	\$82,000	\$20,000	\$21,000	\$31,000	\$10,000	\$174,000	\$174,000
Playground Maintenance	Replace/ reinstate damaged or worn items	\$1,500		\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
Playground Soft-fall - Gunnedah Town Parks	Replace/ reinstate softfall/ playground edging	\$18,000			\$18,000		\$36,000	\$18,000
Playground Softfall - Village Parks	Replace/ reinstate softfall/ playground edging		\$7,500			\$7,500	\$7,500	\$15,000
Signs	General Replacement	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000		\$10,000
Termite Damaged Timber	Provision for additional replacement of timber	\$50,000						
Termite Inspection	Termite inspection of all timber	\$10,000						
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$446,500</b>	<b>\$137,500</b>	<b>\$134,000</b>	<b>\$164,000</b>	<b>\$132,500</b>	<b>\$654,500</b>	<b>\$504,000</b>

Table 16: Maintenance requirements for open space areas

Park/Area/Asset	Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15
<b>Anzac Park</b>								
Gunnedah Cycling and Triathlon Club	Overhaul evaporative coolers		\$1,000				\$3,000	\$3,000
Gunnedah Cycling and Triathlon Club	Repair/replace condensate pipework		\$700					
Gunnedah Cycling and Triathlon Club	Repair leaking downspout		\$400					
Gunnedah Cycling and Triathlon Club	Extend all downspouts to ground level		\$1,000					
Gunnedah Cycling and Triathlon Club	Remove all ex-bowling facilities incl. lighting			\$10,000				
Gunnedah Cycling and Triathlon Club	Install correct height handrail on veranda			\$3,000				
Gunnedah Cycling and Triathlon Club	Repair leaking water pipe union	\$400						
Gunnedah Shire Band Hall	Replace barbecue unit			\$3,500				
Gunnedah Shire Band Hall	Replace damaged external lighting	\$3,500					\$1,000	\$1,000
Visitor Information Centre	Repair fountain	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$15,000	\$250
Visitor Information Centre	Replace missing stone paving tiles	\$500	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$250	\$250
Visitor Information Centre	Replace bench seat	\$1,200					\$1,200	\$1,200
Visitor Information Centre	Replace missing downspout	\$500						

Park/Area/Asset	Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15
Visitor Information Centre	Review/repair/replace earthing of plumbing		\$4,000					
<b>Arthur Heath Park</b>								
Entrance	Install park name sign	\$500						
Playground	New Playground		\$20,000				\$3,000	\$3,000
Playground	Replace bench seat	\$1,200						
Playground	Replace regulatory sign		\$500					
Playground	Replace missing wheelie bin/ add new bin	\$1,400					\$1,800	
<b>Athol Gallen Park</b>								
Playground	Install soft-fall boundary	\$1,500						
Playground	Provide wheelie bin and post	\$1,000						
<b>Breeza Park</b>								
Perimeter	Remove pipe rail fence	\$1,000						
Perimeter	Relocate Ben Halls Wall sign	\$2,500						
Tennis Clubhouse	Replace broken glazing	\$1,000						
Toilet	Replace toilet with contemporary facility		\$25,000					
toilets and barbecue	Remove	\$2,500						
<b>Carroll Cemetery</b>								
Cemetery	Install directional road sign	\$2,000						
<b>Carroll Park</b>								
Old Tennis Courts	Remove and make good	\$5,000						
Perimeter	Install park name sign	\$500						
Playground	Relocate play equipment	\$2,000						
Playground	Install soft-fall boundary	\$2,000						
Toilets	Replace pans and cisterns with stainless steel units			\$7,000				
Toilets	Repair toilet directional sign	\$400						
Toilets	Replace Ladies and Gents signs		\$400					
<b>Curlewis Cemetery</b>								
	Paint entrance gates			\$500				
	Install cemetery name sign	\$500						
	Initiate rabbit population control		\$1,000					
<b>Curlewis Recreation Ground</b>								
	Remove shelter and make good	\$500						
	Remove commentators platform and make good	\$500						
	Remove and dispose of oil drums properly	\$500						
	Remove old clubhouse and make good – asbestos?		\$7,000					
	Remove barbecue	\$400						

Park/Area/Asset	Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15
<b>Curlewis Road Centre</b>								
Road Centre	Replace timber on picnic bench with steel	\$300						
<b>Donnelly Fields</b>								
Cricket and Softball	Replace artificial cricket turf					\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
Junior Cricket	Install park name sign	\$1,000						
<b>Hamilton Park</b>								
	Install park name sign	\$500						
	Consolidate Play items/ add new items			\$18,000			\$2,000	\$2,000
	Check tractor for sharp edges and make safe	\$250						
	Replace picnic shelter meeting building standards					\$15,000		
	Remove tennis clubhouse and make good - asbestos?	\$5,000						
	Remove weeds and repair tennis court surface	\$3,000					\$3,000	\$3,000
	Repair tennis court fencing	\$3,000					\$1,000	\$1,000
	Review and repair tennis court lighting	\$3,000					\$1,000	\$1,000
	Replace damaged external light fittings of toilet block	\$1,000						
	Replace toilet signs			\$500				
	Remove external water pipe dead leg (health hazard) or reinstate tap	\$800						
	Replace missing toilet seats	\$400						
Playground	Replace Shadecloth						\$8,500	
<b>Hunter Street Cemetery</b>								
Road	Replace bitumen road						\$25,000	
Toilet Block	Replace toilet with contemporary							\$25,000
<b>Jae-High Park</b>								
Park sign	Re-position park name sign (L-shaped sign)	\$1,000						
Playground	Replace bins with contemporary steel bins		\$2,000					
Playground	Replace all play items and soft-fall			\$18,000				
Playground	Install soft-fall boundary around small slippery dip and top up	\$3,000						
<b>Ken Green Park</b>								
Open Area	Replace picnic bench		\$2,500					
Open Area	Remove fence from around toddlers playground		\$2,000					

Park/Area/Asset	Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15
Toddler's Enclosure	Install soft-fall boundary around small slippery dip and top up	\$3,000						
<b>Kilcoy Park</b>								
Perimeter	Repair chain-link fence	\$400						
Perimeter	Lock gates to prevent illegal access to	\$300						
Playground	Replace bench seat		\$2,000					
Playground	Replace all play equipment				\$18,000			
Playground	Install soft-fall boundary and soft-fall	\$3,000						
Playground	Replace old bin with steel bin		\$2,000					
<b>Kitchener Park</b>								
Basketball Courts	Re-surface courts				\$15,000			
Basketball Courts	Replace part chain-link fencing				\$10,000			
Clubhouse	Structural Engineer's report required to address building movement	\$1,500						
Clubhouse	Repair concrete around external electrical connections	\$500						
Clubhouse	Remove graffiti from external surfaces	\$500						
Kiosk double roller shutter)	Replace external light		\$300					
Kiosk double roller shutter)	Re-connect sink to foul drain		\$400					
Kiosk double roller shutter)	Repair downspout		\$300					
Kiosk double roller shutter)	Varnish external doors				\$500			
Kiosk single roller shutter)	Repair gutter	\$500						
Kiosk single roller shutter)	Paint door, roller shutters, posts and soffit				\$1,200			
Kiosk single roller shutter)	Re-position bin post away from path	\$300						
Lighting	Replace lighting bulbs					\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
Oval	Paint grandstand and clubhouse (tender)					\$14,000		\$14,000
Playground	Shade		\$20,000					\$12,000
Scoreboard	Improve ladder access			\$2,000				
Scoreboard	Review/repair scoreboard earthing arrangement	\$500						
Scoreboard	Remove rubbish from beneath scoreboard	\$200						
Scoreboard	Install lock on lower door	\$250						
Tennis Courts	Repair and replace chain-link fencing		\$10,000					
Ticket Box	Remove and make good	\$1,500						
<b>Longmuir Playing Fields</b>								
Playing Fields	Replace chain-link fence (500m)			\$20,000				

Park/Area/Asset	Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15
Playing Fields	Remove damaged sign	\$100						
Playing Fields	Replace edge section of netball court surface		\$10,000					
Playing Fields	Re-mark bitumen netball courts			\$4,000				
Playing Fields	Repair clubhouse soffit - asbestos?	\$1,000						
Playing Fields	Repair tiling in Men's shower and above basin		\$700					
Playing Fields	Replace door locks		\$500					
Playing Fields	Improve floor drainage in toilets and seal floor		\$3,000					
Playing Fields	Replace urinal cistern chain		\$200					
Playing Fields	Replace missing basin in Ladies toilet		\$700					
Playing Fields	Replace missing toilet seat in accessible toilet		\$150					
Playing Fields	Install accessible toilet grab rails to AS1428		\$1,500					
Playing Fields	Install accessible hand basin with lever tap		\$700					
Playing Fields	Replace light fittings in toilets	\$500						
Playing Fields	Improve drainage outside accessible toilet - ponding	\$1,000						
Playing Fields	Replace broken downspout on brick building	\$500						
Playing Fields	Replace damaged conduit on brick building	\$500						
Playing Fields	Repair fibro gable on brick building - asbestos?	\$3,000						
Playing Fields	Repair soffit on brick building - asbestos?	\$500						
Playing Fields	Remove twigs and leaves from brick building gutter	\$200						
Playing Fields	Repair/replace missing mesh on eaves of galvanised store	\$750						
Playing Fields	Review/repair earthing of galvanised store	\$500						
Playing Fields	Replace corroded downspout of galvanised store	\$900						
Playing Fields	Securely board up windows of galvanised	\$500						
<b>McAndrew Park</b>								
Picnic Shelter	Repair metal roof	\$500						
Roadside	Replace missing park name sign	\$500						
Toilet Block and Store	Replace missing toilet signs	\$250						

Park/Area/Asset	Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15
<b>McDonagh Park</b>								
Entrance	Install bollards to prevent vehicle access	\$2,500						
Entrance	Install park name sign/directional sign	\$2,000						
New Playground			\$20,000					
Park	Replace bubbler	\$2,000						
<b>Mornington Park</b>								
Picnic Shelter	Replace missing seat and deteriorated timber beams	\$3,000						
Picnic Shelter	Replace missing roof tiles	\$400						
Picnic Shelter	Paving to edge of courts		\$10,000					
Tennis Courts	Repair chain-link fence	\$5,000						
Tennis Courts	Replace termite damaged light poles	\$5,000						
Toilet Block	Replace missing male toilet sign	\$250						
Toilet Block	Remove/paint over graffiti	\$2,000						
Toilet Block	Replace charred toilet seat	\$150						
<b>Mullaley Park</b>								
Shade Structures	Replace electric barbecue surround	\$2,500						
Woodfire barbecue	Remove	\$700						
<b>Mullibah Lagoon</b>								
Signage	Replace interpretative signage					\$5,000		\$5,000
<b>Porcupine Reserve</b>								
Cairn	Remove graffiti	\$400						
Lookouts	Replace/repair damaged fencing	\$2,000						
Map	Replace vandalised map	\$2,000						
Picnic Shelter	Remove graffiti from roof	\$500						
Signage	Replace missing sign	\$1,000						
<b>Ron Pople Park</b>								
Park	Replace bin with wheelie bin and post		\$1,000					
Park	Relocate picnic benches under shade	\$400						
Perimeter	Install park name sign	\$500						
Playground	Replace slippery dip with small contemporary playground		\$8,000					
<b>Rotary Park West</b>								
Entrance	New park name sign	\$500						
Park	Replace bench seat timbers	\$500						
Park	Provide missing wheelie bin	\$300						
Playground	Replace shade sail							\$10,000

Park/Area/Asset	Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15
<b>Showground</b>								
Basketball	Install handrails on fire escape	\$2,000						
Basketball	Repair downspouts	\$1,000						
Basketball	Replace missing light fitting	\$300						
Basketball	Remove trip hazard over drain inspection point	\$1,000						
Basketball	Repair and paint fibro wall cladding at high level	\$1,000						
Basketball	Remove graffiti from brickwork	\$500						
Basketball	Repair gable of bull-nose roof	\$1,000						
Lyle and Griffith Centre	Remove graffiti	\$600						
<b>Wandobah Reserve</b>								
Ex-BMX Track	Demolish all structures and make good		\$10,000					
Skate Bowl	Replace missing roof peak	\$1,000						
Skate Bowl	Install anti-traffic barriers			\$10,000				
<b>Wolseley Park</b>								
Bandstand	Repair lights not working	\$400						
Brock's Court	Replace faded sign	\$1,000						
Entrance	Clean sign	\$200						
Metal Picnic Shelter	Remove/paint over graffiti	\$300						
Oval	Replace rotten light/ power poles	\$5,000						
Park	Replace missing bubbler	\$1,500						
Pavilion	Dedicate one paint mix/ wash area. Clean other area.	\$300						
Pavilion	Replace missing Ladies symbol sign	\$200						
Pavilion	Replace missing section of downspout	\$400						
Pavilion	Replace missing basin in Men's toilet and repair tiles	\$1,000						
Pavilion	Repair walls and ceilings in toilets	\$1,500						
Pavilion	Repair gutter	\$400						
Public Toilets	Repair lights not working	\$400						
Public Toilets	Replace missing wall tiles	\$600						
Public Toilets	Install new hand dryers	\$2,000						
Public Toilets	Clean gutters	\$250						
Scoreboard	Repair gable - asbestos?	\$1,000						
Scoreboard	Direct downspout away from building	\$400						
Scoreboard	Replace oil drum with wheelie bin and post	\$1,000						
South Playground	Repair broken equipment	\$2,000						

Park/Area/Asset	Task	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6-10	Year 11-15
South Playground	Shade Sail		\$20,000					\$12,000
Timber Picnic Shelter North	Replace rotten timbers	\$2,000						
<b>Woolshed Reserve</b>								
Picnic Shelter	Replace rotten timbers	\$2,000						
Picnic Shelter	Replace missing roof tiles	\$500						
Rocker Toy	Remove broken rocker toy and make good	\$300						
Woodfire barbecue	Remove and make good	\$300						
<b>Total</b>		\$145,950	\$189,100	\$96,650	\$44,850	\$75,150	\$106,750	\$134,700

# 11.0 Guide to Park Embellishment

Gunnedah's open space system is significant element in the residents' and tourists' perception of the attractiveness and liveability of the town and Shire.

A well designed and legible open space system will assist in portraying a positive image to visitors and residents. This will engender pride and ownership within the community.

Trees and hard landscape elements form a significant and visible component of the Shire's public open space. The design and implementation of these elements contribute to the experience of the resident. It is critical to the 'feel' of the Shire that these elements are well designed, implemented and maintained. A simple urban design guide has been composed to assist Council in developing a unique and strong 'Shire Image' across the open space system.

The information to be included here will cover:

- signage and way-finding
- lighting
- public toilets
- furniture elements
  - shade shelters
  - seats, benches and picnic settings
  - barbecues
  - bollards
  - bicycle racks
  - drink fountains
  - rubbish bins
- playscapes
- materials and finishes.

The information is a starting point for Council to develop a unique look for the Shire.

At present there is some inconsistency across the parks. For instance there is no consistent park name sign.

## Signage and Way-Finding

Signage is an important landscape element in all urban areas. It is important for both cyclists and pedestrians; residents and visitors. It plays a role in identity, interpretation and way-finding.

Placement, graphic language and style, and scale in the landscape, are all important factors in designing a signage strategy. Systems of way-finding need to respond differently to conditions of urban centres, street corridors and parks.

Signage for Gunnedah should be:

- easily readable and not cluttered with information
- informative
- cost effective
- durable and robust
- consistent in style, incorporating common themes to establish a local image
- vandal resistant
- of high visual quality
- integrate with other signage to minimise clutter (where possible).

A suite of signage should be designed for the Shire. The suite should include all types of signage that will be used—from control signs to interpretive and entrance signage. Major signage should incorporate lighting if at all possible. Orientation signage should include maps.

There should be a hierarchy of signs across Gunnedah (and to a lesser extent the Villages). There are four major signage categories. Within each category there is a scale of importance. More important signs should be larger and more complex, while less important signs should be smaller and more subtle.

### Name Signage

Name signs should be simple and succinct and readable at a distance.

- major entry signage
- minor entry signage
- site precinct areas
- buildings.

### Orientation and Directional Signage

These signs include a level of information to assist, predominantly, visitors find their way around the City, highlighting key nodes and attractions.

- visitor information
- local area mapping and wayfinding
- mapping of routes
- route markers.

### Interpretive Signage

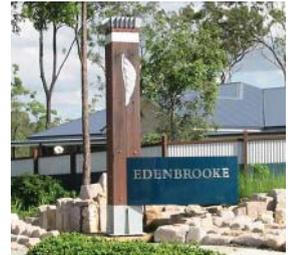
Interpretive signage includes a high level of graphic detail including photographs, sketches and detailed explanations.

- site history
- informative
- stories and myths
- artworks.

### Regulatory Signage

These signs should be integrated with other signage to minimise visual impact.

- intended use signs (shared pedestrian/cycle pathways)
- pedestrian crossings
- dog on-leash
- private property



Major entry signage



Minor entry signage



Site precinct signage



Building signage



Visitor information signage

Local area directional signage



Intended use signage



Local area mapping and wayfinding



Interpretive signage



Integrated signage and furniture



Site history signage



Regulatory signage



## Lighting

Ensure that lighting levels are consistent and the level of illumination reflects the use and function of any particular space. Major parks should have a strong after dark character created by a hierarchy of light levels. It is crucial, however, that the lighting levels do not compromise the safety of the site.

Lighting encourages use at night. Where there may be a safety issue it is sometimes better not to light the area so that people do not enter the space. This is particularly the case where there are low levels of surveillance. By not lighting the space potential users are likely to stay on streets and footpaths which have higher levels of surveillance.

Lighting fixtures should be well designed and continue with a common theme throughout the Shire that is harmonious with all hard landscape elements.

Lighting throughout the Shire should consider the following key objectives:

- major pedestrian/ cycle path networks should be well lit
- light key intersections, crossings and junctions
- isolated zones where there is little or no opportunity for natural surveillance should have minimal or no lighting to encourage people to use alternative safe routes at night
- provide high level lighting links through public spaces
- entry lighting should be unique and prominent
- minimise light pollution where possible
- use sensor lights and timers where possible to minimise wastage of energy
- use feature lighting to create focus and focal points in the landscape
- public artwork lighting should accentuate the art piece

All lighting throughout the Shire should be site specific. Different areas require different lighting approaches such as:

- areas of high recreation use should be well lit
- areas with poor surveillance should not be lit to discourage night access
- pathways adjacent to residential areas may need to have modified lighting
- pathways next to sensitive natural areas should have little or no lighting.

## Australian Standards

All design of lighting must comply with the following Australian Standards:

- AS1158.3.1 Prime Public Lighting Code
- AS4282 Control of Obtrusive Effects of Outdoor Lighting
- AS1798 Lighting Poles
- AS3000 & 3008 Cabling

Contemporary column lighting



Cast aluminium column lighting



Feature up-lighting



## Public Toilets

Using the public toilet, if it has been an uncomfortable experience, is often part of the memory of a particular day out or a visit to a park or public facility. Anyone who has even been in an overcrowded or uncomfortable public toilet, will value a good toilet design.

Toilets located in public settings need to be inclusive and safe environments. They need to be facilities that patrons feel confident to use, are easy to maintain, and are resource efficient.

To achieve this, toilets need to be well located, well designed and effectively managed. A successful public toilet hinges on a good design and layout and also needs to be:

- clean and dry
- well ventilated
- easy to maintain
- disability friendly.

The first question to be asked though is—Is a public toilet needed?

Public toilets are expensive to build and consume high levels of resources in their maintenance and operation, including cleaning.

Toilets that are rarely used may be a burden on Council, drawing resources from other areas of open space provision.

## Design Considerations

Within a public toilet there a number of different activity spaces:

- space occupied by the appliances
- space required by the user and
- space for their belongings or circulation.

Placing the appliances in order of use simplifies the circulation and reduces the distance travelled by the user.

No unsupervised installation can prevent vandalism. Even with the most vandal-resistant appliances, an unsupervised facility will eventually become sub-standard. In most cases, cleaners and maintenance personnel play an important role in well-maintained toilets. However, all designs should allow for individual items to be replaced. Pipe work, traps and electrical supplies should be concealed for aesthetic and hygiene reasons.

Single entrance and exit plans work satisfactorily provided the path of the users do not cross each other and the entrance/ exit is wide enough. Dispensing with the entrance door to the public toilet not only helps to improve the ventilation within the toilet but also minimises hand contact for hygiene reasons. In many toilets, doors have been replaced by offset entrance maze which blocks the view yet allows easier, hands-free access. This approach eliminates the need for doors and helps meet disability access guidelines. Public toilets should be designed to minimise hand contact as far as possible for hygiene reasons.

The location of the toilets should not be too remote from the patrons so as to avoid long walks. The location should also be well signed, as people often need to find these facilities “in a hurry!”

Lighting should make use of natural light to save energy and create a softer, friendlier environment. Poor design, or discoloured fittings are often behind a dingy toilet experience and the impression that the toilet is not clean, even when it is.

Materials used should be durable and resistant to vandalism and neglect. In a park setting extensive use of steel, colourbond, and cement is recommended. Traditional brick toilets often appear dark and unfriendly and graffiti, that cannot be easily removed from brick surfaces, adds to the illusion of poor safety.

Use colours to brighten the toilet, create interest, and produce a

conducive environment. Colour, achieved with materials and lighting, is one of the vital ingredients in creating ambience.

The ambience of public toilets can be enhanced further by the use of plants (looscaping). In high traffic areas they may be potted plants within the building or grounded plants for external areas (keep in mind though that they should not create spaces that are not visible to causal surveillance).



Unisex design reduces the number of pans required (urinals are male only). Designs such as this are also good for parents with an older child of the opposite sex (e.g. a mother and her son) as the parent wait outside the cubicle while there child is inside.



Wash basins are located outside the toilet facility adding to safety and minimising costs. Cleaning is undertaken by high pressure hose.



Use of steel for strength and mesh to stop illegal entry while providing high ventilation.



In this design, security gates are closed when the toilets are not in use but completely open during matches. Again, it is a unisex design with high visibility of all areas outside of the cubicles.



The use of colour can brighten a public toilet.



This design has separate male and female toilets but wash basins are within each cubicle. Again, supervision and safety is improved as parents know where their child is at all times.



Some designs such as this, are self cleaning and sturdily built to resist vandalism.

## Furniture Elements

Furniture elements and hard landscape materials include shade shelters, seats, tables, bollards, bin enclosures, barbecues, drink fountains, playscapes and bicycle racks. They form a significant and visible component of Gunnedah’s public open space.

It is imperative that an integrated suite, of well-designed furniture elements, is implemented throughout the town and villages. This will ensure that the ‘feel’ of the Shire is one that offers a unique experience for the resident and visitor.

All furniture elements should be functional, safe, vandal and graffiti resistant, and designed for all ages and abilities. Although it will be necessary to design furniture elements that are site specific, there should be a harmonious theme and relationship carried across the whole of the open space system.

The celebration of Gunnedah’s rural and mining heritage can be reflected in the design of furniture elements. Themed elements will allow visitors to explore and understand the rich history and heritage of the district. The use of robust industrial materials for furniture design will assist in creating beautiful environments with low maintenance costs.

## Shade Shelters

Shade shelters should be provided in areas that attract large numbers of users—generally areas used for picnicking, play spaces and sporting activities. Shelters should vary in shape and size according to user needs at the proposed location.

Design of shade shelters should be responsive to each site. Parameters such as flood levels and soil types should be considered. All shelters must be certified by a structural engineer at the detail design stage.

timber shelter



steel and timber shelter  
custom built shelter  
and furniture elements



custom built shelter and  
furniture  
elements



custom built themed  
shelter



kit-form shelter



## Seats, Benches and Picnic Settings

Seats, benches and picnic settings should be designed for comfort, resistance to vandalism, low maintenance and offer equitable use.

Locations for seats and benches should consider:

- taking advantage of existing views
- setbacks from paths so not to cause hazards for cyclists, joggers or the less able
- placement at regular intervals along path networks
- placement in parks to encourage group gathering
- placement under canopy trees to provide shaded seating opportunities
- mounding and planting behind seating to anchor them to the landscape and offer prospect refuge for users
- layout of seating to encourage conversation between people of all ages
- CPTED principles.

When designing seats and benches for the Shire, the following should be considered:

- ensure custom made seats and benches are responsive to site and setting. Form, lines and finishes should reflect a unified theme of the park or the Shire
- consider elements to deter use by skate boarders
- ensure all fixings are below final finished surfaces.

## Barbecues

Barbecues should be positioned in high use zones throughout the Shire and, generally, located near large shade trees or shelters and adjacent to pathways and picnic settings.

Off-the-shelf picnic setting



Off-the-shelf timber and cast aluminium seat



Custom built stone seating



Custom built seating for groups



Off-the-shelf cast aluminium wall mount seat



Off-the-shelf cube seats



### Bollards

Bollards should be used in locations to ensure safe separation between conflicting uses, such as pedestrians and vehicles. They can also assist legibility of open spaces.

Design can range from highly ornamental bollards constructed of stainless steel, to cost effective bollards constructed of recycled timbers, or even steel.

Typically, bollards are placed at 1800mm centres when used to delineate areas for vehicular access.

Bollard height should be kept low, say 600mm, to reduce visual impact. However, where vehicles are present they should be higher, say 900mm, with potentially a reflector attached. The purpose being to stop vehicles backing into the bollards and Council having to repair them.

### Bicycle Racks

Bicycle racks should be provided at key gathering points, regular rest spots along major path networks and town centres.

### Drink Fountains

Drink fountains should be provided in all parks, sports grounds and at some key locations along long distance path trails.

Design of drink fountains should take into consideration use by disabled persons. All drink fountains should incorporate auto shut off.

### Rubbish Bins

Bins should be located near major seating and picnic nodes, along pedestrian/ cyclist routes and play spaces. The location should also be easily accessible by maintenance crews.

Custom built bollards



Off-the-shelf bollards



Off-the-shelf bicycle racks



Off-the-shelf drink fountain



Off-the-shelf rubbish bin



Custom built furniture elements



## Playscapes

Playscapes have been discussed in detail earlier in this Strategy—refer also to that section for a discussion of the theory of play.

Playscapes throughout Gunnedah Shire should consider the following key objectives:

- provide a space that will challenge children’s skills and provide opportunities to learn new ones
- provide a safe environment for children to play
- provide a space that encourages the exercising of mental, physical and social skills
- providing a variety of spaces for all age groups and abilities.

When designing playscapes the following should be considered:

- playscapes should provide ample shade. Where possible locate new playscapes near existing trees to utilise shade
- shrubs and ground-covers should be kept below 600mm in height to allow direct surveillance across the space
- clear trunk trees should be used to allow surveillance under branches as well as provide shade
- provide shaded seating for supervisors
- playscapes throughout the Shire should offer a variety of off-the-shelf play equipment and custom made play equipment
- cater for a diversity of ages and abilities:
  - playscapes should offer a mix of active play, active non-structured play and creative/ imaginative play opportunities
  - location of play zones, catering for different age groups, should be carefully positioned to avoid conflicting activities
  - parent/ supervisor zones should be centrally located between activity zones to allow observation of multiple activities at same time
  - provide areas in teen playscapes for ‘hanging out’ and observation
- ensure playscapes are physically accessible for all abilities—link playscapes to path networks
- ensure user safety by adopting CPTED principles
- use appropriate fencing for junior play zones
- provide generous planting throughout the playscapes to offer a natural, sensory-rich environment

### Timber play equipment

Unstructured play elements



Off-the-shelf play equipment



Off-the-shelf climbing equipment



Custom made dual purpose totem poles



Custom built seating for playscapes



### Australian Standards for Playgrounds

ensure the construction of all play equipment complies with the following Australian Standards:

- AS 4685:2004 (Part 1 to 6) sets out the general and specific requirements for playground equipment in six parts
  - AS 4685.1: 2004 Pt 1 General safety requirements and test methods
  - AS 4685.2: 2004 Pt 2 Particular safety requirements and test methods for swings
  - AS 4685.3: 2004 Pt 3 Particular safety requirements and test methods for slides
  - AS 4685.4: 2004 Pt 4 Particular safety requirements and test methods for runways
  - AS 4685.5: 2004 Pt 5 Particular safety requirements and test methods for carousels
  - AS 4685.6: 2004 Pt 6 Particular safety requirements and test methods for rocking equipment
- AS/NZS 4422: 1996 Playground Surfacing - Specifications, Requirements & Test Methods
- AS/NZS 4486.1: 1997 Playgrounds and Playground Equipment - Part 1: Development, Installation, Inspection, Maintenance and Operation
- AS 2155: 1982 Playgrounds: Guide to Siting and to Installation and Maintenance of Equipment
- AS 2555: 1982 Supervised Adventure Playgrounds - Guide to Establishment and Administration
- AS 1428.3: 1992 Design for Access and Mobility - Requirements for Children and Adolescents with Physical Disabilities.

An indicative furniture schedule is provided in Table 16.

unique custom made elements

play elements accessible for all abilities



imaginative play



Table 16: Furniture schedule

	Regional Parks	District Parks— Recreation	Sports Fields	Local Park	Natural Reserve	Recreation Park— Dog Park	Pedestrian/Cyclist Corridor
Shade Shelters	▲	▲	▲	▲			
Seats/Benches	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Picnic Settings	▲	▲		▲	▲		
Barbecues	▲	▲					
Bollards	▲	▲	▲	▲			
Bicycle Racks	▲	▲	▲				▲
Drink Fountains	▲	▲	▲	▲		▲	▲
Rubbish Bins	▲	▲	▲	▲		▲	▲
Playscapes	▲	▲		▲			

## Materials and Finishes

Materials and finishes including various pavements and ground materials also form a significant and visible component of Gunnedah’s public open space.

Materials and finishes should be related to a hierarchy of use. Highly used spaces should have a high level of detail whilst less used spaces should have a basic finish only. Pathways through play nodes should receive special artistic treatments to provide a high level of interest.

### Asphalt or Bitumen

Asphalt or bitumen is an economical material suitable for high volume areas and a variety of recreation uses. Asphalt or bitumen can be complemented by other materials such as insitu concrete, paving, gravels and stone. When used in conjunction with other materials, it can be used to cover large areas at minimal cost and dressed up with higher quality materials.

Asphalt or bitumen is suitable for pathways, secondary roads, car parks, local streets, parks and plazas. It is preferred by some cyclists and skaters as a smoother finish. It can also be coloured if desired.

### Insitu Concrete

Insitu concrete is a durable hard landscape material, requiring minimal maintenance. It is suitable for high volume traffic and a variety of uses. Insitu concrete can be coloured, saw-cut, treated for exposing of aggregate and used successfully as a complimentary material to other materials and finishes.

Insitu concrete can be used for the following:

- pathways
- streets
- parks and reserves
- roads
- crossings
- junctions and intersections
- park entries
- plazas.

There are several finish treatment options for insitu concrete. These include:

- broom finish
- shot blast
- exposed aggregate
- honed
- saw-cut
- coloured.

Pathways can compose of a combination of the above finishes to provide a high quality appearance. Expansion and contraction joints can be integrated with ground patterns to give a continuous visual effect.

Bitumen roadway and coloured concrete and pathway



Asphalt path



Exposed aggregate



Pressed patterns in coloured concrete



Concrete stepping stones with pressed pattern



Cobble unit pavers with exposed aggregate



Pressed patterns in coloured concrete

## Unit Paving

Unit paving can enhance selected feature areas of high pedestrian zones and park entries in Gunnedah. Unit paving gives a high level finish and is aesthetically pleasing. It is also highly durable if laid properly, theoretically outlasting concrete and other finishes.

Unit paving can be integrated with other materials such as insitu concrete, asphalt and gravel to enhance variety and interest. A change in materials and surface texture can be used to indicate a change in path type or recreation activity.

Unit paving is available in a wide range of natural stone and concrete. There is also a variety of colours, finishes (such as honed, semi-honed, shot blast, exposed aggregate), shapes and sizes to select from.

Pre-cast unit paving is well suited for areas such as:

- town squares
- CBD spaces
- park footpaths
- entry statements
- major park street intersections
- major park entries.

## Gravel

Gravel is an attractive, less expensive material. Stabilised gravel such as decomposed granite is a suitable material for informal use areas. In some areas, a gravel surface may be more in character with informal park settings. Gravel is well suited for environmentally sensitive areas where informal paths are required with minimal intrusion on the landscape.

Gravel can be used as a supporting element to other pavement types. It is also a very good material for areas where little or no maintenance is required. Gravel requires minimal maintenance apart from resurfacing, depending on intensity of use. If light vehicular traffic is intended on any gravel surface, it is recommended to incorporate a cement stabiliser when installing.

Gravel can also be used as an alternative to mulch in garden beds.

Gravel is available in numerous forms and a range of colours, dependent on material availability.

Gravel is suitable for the following areas:

- along median strips as an alternative to irrigated grass
- entry statements
- informal pathways through environmentally sensitive areas
- informal car park bays
- passive recreation parks
- garden beds.

Cobble unit pavers, pressed concrete and exposed aggregate



Unit pavers in mixed colours



Feature inserts



Feature insert in unit paving



Pebble feature with concrete



Fun patterns ideal for playspaces



Gravel mulch

