



**MELBOURNE EAST
FOOTBALL FACILITIES STRATEGY
VOLUME 1
NOVEMBER 2019**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PROJECT PARTNERS

The preparation of the Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy has been a collaborative effort by a number of partner organisations including AFL Victoria, the Eastern Football League, Yarra Junior Football League, AFL Outer East, the Victorian Amateur Football Association and seven Local Government Authorities comprising the Melbourne East Region.

Input and advice from the Melbourne East regional football communities has also assisted the development of this document.

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THE MELBOURNE EAST FOOTBALL FACILITIES STRATEGY IS DELIVERED IN TWO SEPARATE VOLUMES.

Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy (This Document)

The **Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy** provides the principles and strategic framework to support the future development, governance and growth of football in the Melbourne East Region. It also provides key strategic directions and recommendations, as well as identifying critical priorities and actions for Melbourne East Leagues and Clubs, AFL Victoria and project partner LGAs.

Key Findings Report

The **Key Findings Report**, updated in April 2019, provides an overview of key issues and focus areas identified through extensive research, analysis, facility investigation and consultation.

The **Key Findings Report** includes an overview of AFL and netball participation statistics and demographics for the Region, as well as commentary on the state of local leagues and clubs. An analysis of issues, opportunities and challenges impacting football across the Melbourne East Region is provided to inform future opportunities for facility improvement. Sports development opportunities, club structure, volunteer capacity, sport governance and competition structure were also considered in the **Key Findings Report**.

Relevant information from the **Key Findings Report** have been incorporated into the **Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy** where required.



DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following definitions and abbreviated terms are used within this document.

ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
AAA	Access for all abilities - AAA is a Victorian Government initiative coordinated by Sport and Recreation Victoria. The program supports and develops inclusive sport and recreation opportunities for people with a disability throughout Victoria
AFL	Australian Football League
AFL OE	Australian Football League Outer East
AFL Victoria	AFL Victoria is the State Sporting Association that governs Australian football in Victoria
AFLW	Australian Football League Women's competition
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities
EFL	The Eastern Football League competition governing body
FIDA	Football Integration Development Association
Heartland Strategy	AFL Victoria <i>Growing the Heartland Football Facilities Development Strategy 2017-2022</i> sets the strategic direction for future investment in AFL facility development in Victoria.
LGA	Local Government Authority
NV	Netball Victoria - the State Sporting Association that governs netball in Victoria
Region	References throughout this the document are made to the 'Region'. The term 'Region' refers to the whole Melbourne East Region (study area).
SRV	Sport and Recreation Victoria which is located in the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.
Strategy	References throughout this the document are made to the 'Strategy'. The term 'Strategy' refers to the project as a whole.
Synthetic turf	Also referred to as artificial grass made from synthetic fibres that can withstand significantly more use than natural grass
NAB League	State League U18 Australian Football pathway competition for youth boys and girls. The competition is based on geographic regions throughout country Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne and provides an avenue for young Victorian players to transition to the VFL / VFLW and AFL/AFLW.
VAFA	Victorian Amateur Football Association competition governing body
VFL	Victorian Football League men's competition governing body
VFL Women's	Victorian Football League women's competition governing body
YJFL	Yarra Junior Football League competition governing body



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy aims to identify, prioritise and plan for the development of football facilities to better address the future needs of the Melbourne East Region. The Strategy identifies the gaps in current provision and where the capacity of existing facilities can be increased. Potential upgrades and proposed new projects based on need and demand have also been identified.

The recommendations provided in this Strategy are based on extensive research and consultation with local, regional and state level stakeholders. Insights from government, football and community clubs, as well as individuals involved in the support and provision of football at the community level, were considered in the development of recommendations.

A key outcome of the Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy is to further build on collaboration between project partners. Local government is the major provider of football facilities in Victoria and their support of local clubs, administrators and volunteers is vital to the development of the sport.

LGAs are dedicated to not just supporting football but all sports across the region, and appreciate the social value sport brings to their communities. This is demonstrated through their continued and sustained facility investment and commitment to supporting participation growth and sport development opportunities wherever possible.

LGAs in the Region also have an established Sport and Recreation Reference Group which meets regularly to share information and collaborate on planning and development projects.

The existence of this group, which also has representation from Sport and Recreation Victoria, presents an opportunity to embed this Strategy into the broader sport and recreation framework for Melbourne East.

However, the financial pressures of rate capping and ageing facilities, combined with planned development of new facilities, requires all partners to approach infrastructure investment collaboratively to ensure the best outcomes for communities.

The Region has enjoyed sustained growth in football participation across all player categories, with particularly high participation in the female and junior cohorts. Female participation has increased by 323% since 2016 to 6,886 and sits well above the Victorian metropolitan average. Overall football player numbers for the 2018 season were 35,436. This is an increase of 6.2% from 2017 and an additional 2,098 extra participants playing the game.

This growth has created two main challenges for football stakeholders in Melbourne East - building the capacity of existing facilities and providing new facilities that cater for a more diverse participation base.

IMMEDIATE NEED

Detailed auditing of 147 facilities (255 grounds) across the Region found that most facilities had some level of improvement required to meet preferred provision as outlined under the *AFL Preferred Facility Guidelines*. Upgrades to player and umpire amenities to cater for female participation continues to be a challenge for LGAs, along with appropriate lighting provision and ongoing management of turf ovals to meet increased demand.

Although substantial investment has been made to provide unisex facilities, there are still approximately 70% of change rooms and umpires rooms that have open showers and are not catering for female participants.

Investigating options that deliver all gender player and umpire change rooms is critical to catering for and retaining female participants. This includes consideration of modular design and the installation of temporary structures in the short term until permanent amenities can be provided.



Approximately 6% of the Region's facilities have no lighting and an estimated 86% have lighting which is below the minimum training standard (50 lux). Having a select range of venues with match quality lighting is important for scheduling flexibility and can be a mechanism to improve integration of teams into the traditional club environment.

Across all player categories, the Melbourne East region average penetration rate is 4% of the total population (7% of 5-39 year old are participating in football). The highest participation rate is in the 5-9 age cohort, with 10,559 participants or 30% of total registrations. This is followed by the 10-14 age cohort with 10,123 participants or 29% of total registrations.

The female participation rate for the Region is 2.8% in the 5-39 age cohort. This is above the State metropolitan average of 2.2%. Female participation increased by 24% from the previous season, with an additional 1,333 female participants. The highest growth was in senior female competition (20-39 age cohort), with a 63% increase (+560 participants) from the previous season.

Catering for these participation increases and growing ground capacity issues to address current and future need is the biggest challenge for the Region.

Co-planning and investment of school facility upgrades, and new developments that are fit for football, provides opportunity to address potential facility gaps. This is particularly relevant for land locked municipalities or where ground shortages exist due to rapid participation growth.

These opportunities should extend to under-utilised venues and options to promote cross municipal access to Clubs to ensure competition structures continue to accommodate growth.

FUTURE DEMAND

The estimated Melbourne East region population aged 5–39 (typically the key football playing age) in 2018 was 494,370. By 2026 the region's population within this age cohort is forecast to increase by 6% to 525,170 people. The majority of growth will be in the municipalities of Manningham, Monash and Whitehorse.

By 2026 the football market across Melbourne's East is projected to be 36,991 participants. This is a 4% increase, or an additional 1,555 participants. Participation increases range from 1% growth in Boroondara to 11% growth in Monash.

The highest growth is anticipated in the senior category (20-39 age cohort), with an increase of % projected (+529 participants), followed by 6% in the 15-19 age cohort (374 participants). Participation will need to be tracked annually to ensure ground access and capacity meets demand.

An increase of individual LGA penetration rates of just 1% would result in an additional 373 players, most likely to be achieved through the continued growth in female football participation.

A 1% increase in individual LGA penetration rates would also result in the need to access two additional grounds by 2026.

Building ground capacity to support projected growth will be crucial. In combination with school and alternate venue access, capacity can be further achieved through the installation of AFL synthetic fields and the use of synthetics or alternate (hybrid) turf in high traffic areas. Further information on the benefits of synthetic and hybrid turf surfaces for football are provided via case studies in the appendices section of the Key Findings Report (Volume 2).

With some of the Region's LGAs struggling with ground capacity issues due to overuse, alternate surface options such as synthetic must be considered. An aspirational but justified target is that all Melbourne East Region leagues have access to at least one synthetic field to support capacity needs in the next 10 years.

PARTNERING TO MEET DEMAND

Since 2013 Melbourne East LGAs have provided 81% of all financial investment into football related infrastructure projects. LGAs also have approximately \$37M worth of facility investment planned for the 2018-19 financial year alone.

Projects include the provision of new and upgrades to existing pavilions, modular building programs, ground reconstructions, lighting upgrades, unisex change room provision, player and coaches shelters and goal post replacement.

This investment is indicative of the importance LGAs place on maintaining pivotal infrastructure and facilities to ensure club sustainability into the future. Investment has been supported by financial commitments from AFL, AFL Victoria, local leagues and community clubs to facility renewal.

Competing needs for new facilities, replacement and major refurbishment of existing facilities, funding gaps and balancing club and community expectations places all levels of government under financial pressure.

Funding available to LGAs does not match ongoing facility renewal and new development costs. Sourcing multiple funding partners or more innovative approaches to funding will be essential if project partners are to meet funding shortfalls in facility renewal and investment, particularly to cater for the growth in female participation.

Core local differences across the Region make it difficult to align all elements of the Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy. However, clear directions are provided that focus on improving facility provision, building ground capacity, supporting participation growth and diversity, developing elite pathway venues and planning greenfield sites that support both regional level and local priorities and accommodate the widest community audience.

Six actions are considered critical to the improvement of football across the Region and will require immediate planning to commence (refer page 43). These six critical actions also set the foundation for the remainder of regional and local actions and will require a cohesive and coordinated regional approach to implement them.

Achieving aligned thinking, commitment to the regional vision and establishing a Region based LGA and football network that is delivering consistently and collaboratively will have the single greatest influence on regional improvement for football, their clubs and participation levels. This will also support LGAs to prioritise and target facility investment that addresses need.

The Strategy identifies 3 key priorities for the Region to guide future facility provision:

PRIORITY 1 - EXISTING FACILITIES

Objective: Increase the quality and functionality of existing facilities to maximise their use and carrying capacity.

PRIORITY 2 – NEW FACILITIES AND TALENT PATHWAYS

Objective: Plan and develop new facilities in key football growth areas that respond to regional need and activates program, competitions and talent pathways opportunities.

PRIORITY 3 – ENHANCE RELATIONSHIPS

Objective: Continue to enhance relationships between football, government and other key stakeholders in the planning and provision of facilities and programs.



1. CONTEXT



INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy provides a strategic planning approach to guide the future direction, support and resourcing of existing and new football facilities across the Melbourne East Region. The Strategy also provides a framework for the integrated planning, development and funding of facilities that address current and future projected demand for football.

For the purposes of this Strategy, the Melbourne East Region incorporates the following LGAs:

- Boroondara
- Knox
- Manningham
- Maroondah
- Monash
- Whitehorse
- Yarra Ranges

The study area includes all 147 venues within project partner municipalities. Funding for the project has been provided by AFL Victoria, YJFL, EFL, AFL Outer East, VAFA, Netball Victoria and project partner LGAs.

AFL Victoria continues to deliver strategic planning for a range of metropolitan and country regions across Victoria. The cross-municipality distribution of football, league structures and AFL Victoria regional boundaries, may mean that project partner LGAs may be party to more than one Strategy in the future.

Clubs affiliated with the YJFL, EFL and VAFA are spread between the seven municipalities referred to in this Report as the Melbourne East Region. It is important to note that not all clubs within these municipalities are associated with these leagues and may belong to other Leagues.

The EFL supports clubs and participants in all municipalities across the study area. Similarly, the VAFA also covers all municipalities, with the exception of Knox.

The YJFL has clubs and players located in Boroondara, Manningham and Whitehorse and the AFL OE services Maroondah and Yarra Ranges within the study area.

Participation analysis identified as the Melbourne East Region in this Strategy includes all seven project partner LGAs regardless of League affiliation.

The purpose of this Strategy is to:

- Undertake a strategic planning approach to support the development of football infrastructure improvements and club and sport development in the Region.
- Engage with key sport and government stakeholders to understand the existing issues, barriers and health of football in the Region.
- To support planning for football league based netball, identifying trends in netball participation, projected growth and future venue provision, access and planned developments.
- Develop a strategic framework for the integrated planning and development of facilities that addresses the projected demand for football.
- Provide a communication and decision making tool for government and football stakeholders that identifies regional and local priorities for facility provision, club and sport development and associated investment.
- Identify the short, medium and long-term Strategic Directions and roles of all project stakeholders in the resourcing and delivery of an aligned, sustainable and innovative model for football participation and development across the Region.





PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The following diagram represents the project methodology and steps that were undertaken to prepare the Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy.

PROJECT ESTABLISHMENT (JUNE TO JULY 2018)
Includes development of an agreed consultation plan and project newsletter to key stakeholders.
SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS (JULY TO AUGUST 2018)
Review of relevant documents and delivery of stakeholder workshops.
KEY FINDINGS REPORT (SEPT 2018 TO APRIL 2019)
Analysis of all club facilities in the Region and delivery of Key Findings Report
DRAFT STRATEGY (SEPT 2018 TO JUNE 2019)
Feedback from key stakeholders on Key Findings Report and development of Draft Strategy.
FINAL REPORTING (JULY TO NOVEMBER 2019)
Presentation of Draft Strategy and development of Final Report.

PROJECT GOVERNANCE

The following project governance structure was established to support the delivery of this project.

PROJECT CONTROL GROUP (PCG)

Provided high level strategic direction and approved draft and final reports:

Included representatives from the municipalities of Boroondara, Knox, Maroondah, Manningham, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges, the Eastern Football League, Yarra Junior Football League, AFL Outer East, the Victorian Amateur Football Association, AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria.

PROJECT REFERENCE GROUPS (PRG)

PRGs were split between sport and government representation and provided technical advice and input into the project from a local perspective.

Project partner LGAs, Sport and Recreation Victoria, the School Building Authority and Parks Victoria made up the **Government Reference Group**.

The **Sport Reference Group** included project partner League representatives, AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria, Cricket Victoria, Box Hill Hawks Football Club (VFL) and Eastern Ranges Football Club (TAC Cup).

FIGURE 01 | MELBOURNE EAST LGAS AND STUDY AREA



QUICK FACTS – MELBOURNE EAST REGION

- 7 Local Government Authorities
- 3 Metropolitan Leagues
- 1 AFL Victoria Regional Commission
- 4 Football Umpire Associations
- 255 Grounds
- 35,436 Registered football participants (2018)
- 6,886 Registered female football participants (2018)
- 6,203 Registered NAB AFL Auskick participants (2018)
- 29,440 Registered league based netball participants (2017)
- 581 Netball participants registered to Eastern Football League (2017)
- 963 Netball participants registered to AFL Outer East (2017)



CONSULTATION

In developing the Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy, the following stakeholder consultation activities were undertaken:

- Project meetings with the Project Control Group (PCG).
- Government and sport focused workshops with representation from SRV, project partner LGAs, AFL Victoria regional staff, Netball Victoria, Cricket Victoria, Eastern Ranges TAC, Box Hill Hawks VFL and local football leagues.
- Infield Facilities Audit, completed by local league and AFL Victoria staff utilising a purpose built audit tool for football facility provision.
- Presentation and review of a Draft Key Findings Report by the PCG.
- Review of project partner LGA, AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria, Cricket Victoria, local football leagues strategies, capital works programs, historical funding outcomes and planned future works.
- Project newsletter distributed to all clubs, leagues and key stakeholders across the Region.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

AFL Victoria's *Growing the Heartland Football Facilities Development Strategy (2017-2022)* guides the development and improvement of football facilities across the State. The *Heartland Strategy* recommends the development of detailed regional plans to strategically address facility needs.

The initial *Heartland Strategy* was developed in 2014 and updated in 2016 to ensure strategic directions remained relevant and assisted partners in meeting the football communities' requirements.

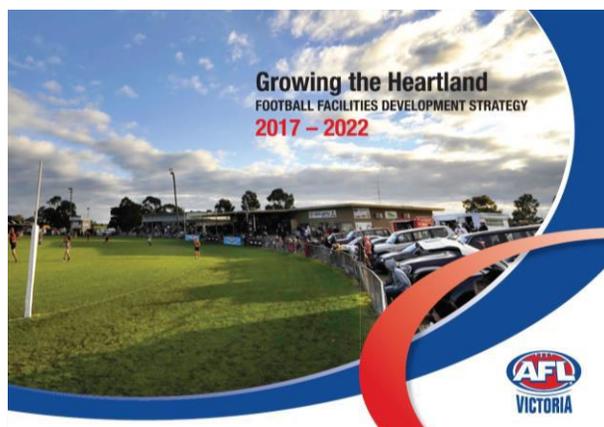
The most significant changes in community football throughout this period included:

- The extraordinary growth of female football which resulted in 100 new female teams in 2016 and an estimated 300+ new female teams in Season 2017;
- The need to align the *Heartland Strategy* with AFL Victoria's Strategic Plan and the AFL Football Development Reserve. This alignment ensures facility investment opportunities are clearly defined and supported at the State level through to the highest level of the AFL;
- A focus by Government on areas such as female participation, unisex design and access for all abilities;
- Recognising the increased financial pressures being faced by local government through rate capping and reduced funding opportunities;
- Rapid demographic change in some areas of the State which requires planning now for future communities; and
- The need to explore alternate facility options such as school venues and use of synthetic grounds to ensure participation growth opportunities are capitalised on.

The revised *Heartland Strategy* captures these changes through initiatives such as the inclusion of population and participation projections in key growth areas.

New strategic commitments were also established in key areas such as:

- Ongoing facility audits and venue assessments to support future investment needs;
- Research and promotion of synthetic surfaces to address ground carrying capacity issues;
- Supporting planning processes that prioritise unisex change room provision;
- Implementing a venue improvement program for second tier venues to support player pathways and implementation of female football at the elite level;



- Strategic support for two oval venues at greenfield sites;
- Capitalising on school ground access opportunities as they become available; and
- Partnering with State Government to maximise funding and provide flexibility in funding programs and categories.

Melbourne East Regional Sport & Recreation Strategy (2016)

The Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Strategy was developed to support and guide Melbourne East Councils and stakeholders in the planning and delivery of regional level sport and recreation facilities and shared recreation trails.

The following priority areas were identified through the development of this Strategy and are a key focus for Councils and other regional stakeholders in the planning and future development of regional level facilities.

- Governance and partnerships;
- Knowledge and understanding of the region;
- Sustainable, flexible and efficient facility development;

Of particular relevance to the Regional Football Facilities Strategy is the recommendation to upgrade the Kilsyth Recreation Reserve to a regional venue and partnerships with the Education Department for shared land use.



WHY A REGIONAL APPROACH?

A regional approach to football facility planning provides an opportunity to coordinate and align facility provision based on current and future demand and facility usage levels. It also ensures greater access to higher quality facilities now and into the future.

Addressing the issues and gaps in football facility provision on a regional scale provides many benefits to project partners. Regional planning provides opportunity to optimise planning policies and resource allocation and improves the financial viability and sustainability of facilities.

Improved Investment Opportunities

As the focus of the Strategy is at a regional level, State and Local Governments have the opportunity to implement actions in a planned, prioritised and coordinated manner.

The commitment of government and peak sporting bodies allows for greater collaboration. This assists the targeted provision and future investment in facilities and services, directly impacting a larger portion of the Victorian community.

The Regional Strategy will assist project partners to secure funding for community football facilities and attract investment from alternate providers such as commercial and sponsorship partners.

The first Regional Football Strategy (G21 and AFL Barwon) secured external investment to address 90% of recommendations. Similarly, the Western Metropolitan Region secured over \$40M in facility investment based on identified strategic priorities since Strategy completion.

Collaboration with Project Partners

Through regional planning, project partners have achieved a collaborative approach to facility provision that has enhanced investment and increased usage levels. In addition, regional planning ensures higher quality facilities for communities now and into the future, critical as population changes.

Regional planning provides a communication and decision making process for government and sport that identifies regional and local priorities for football facility provision and sport development.

The collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders, and the ongoing relationship building, will ensure that community sport remains resilient and sustainable.

This approach also enables development of appropriate infrastructure that supports the growth of football, whilst also benefiting primary partner sports such as cricket and netball.



WHAT THE STRATEGY WILL DELIVER

The Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy investigates the issues and opportunities facing football now and in the future, and makes recommendations to address these at a regional level.

The Strategy is designed to assist the seven LGAs, football leagues, clubs and other partner sporting organisations to advocate and attract additional funding for community football facilities.

For project partners, the Strategy delivers:

- an audit of all football facilities within the Region;
- an assessment of participation and growth, club sustainability, governance and associated planning and potential future partnerships;
- identification of key issues relating to access to suitable facilities to support club sustainability;
- known future facility investment;
- analysis to inform club and sport development support resources;
- identification of facilities that enhance talent pathways and/or support regional events; and
- opportunities to increase the use of existing facilities including school venues.

- provide a strategic response to guide potential North East Link investment into future facility development across the region.

The Strategy highlights the key deficiencies in existing venues and provides clear direction and recommendations that support football in the Melbourne East Region.

The Strategy does not provide:

- a prioritised list of facility investment requirements;
- individual club/venue master plans;
- Detailed costings or future capital works programs.

These will continue to be developed at the discretion of LGAs, in consultation with users, and a further analysis of identified facility gaps and venue usage requirements.

Key actions and recommendations from the Strategy will be subject to future budget processes and a review of priorities by project partner LGAs.

THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY FOOTBALL

The benefits of investing in football extends beyond sports participation. Football provides economic and social outcomes that positively impacts local communities through inclusiveness, diversity, female participation and a commitment to welfare and wellbeing.

AFL Victoria's 'Value of a Community Football Club' study was developed by La Trobe University in 2015. The research identified that for every \$1 spent in operating a community football club, there is at least a \$4.40 return in social value. Further detail on this research can be found in the appendices section of the Key Findings Report – Volume 2).

This "social value" is measured in terms of increased social connectedness, wellbeing and mental health status, employment outcomes, personal development, physical health, civic pride and support of other community groups.

The study identified that the reach of a football club is significant and extends beyond club players and volunteers within the club; *"for every 1 player, football clubs reach 10 people in their community."*

The economic impact of football has also been well documented. An independent economic contribution assessment completed during the 2017 season estimated that AFL Goldfields contributed \$51.637M to the regional economy.

This increased by 8.29% since 2012 off the back of significant participation growth. With similar participation growth such estimates are comparable for leagues operating in the Melbourne East Region.

AFL Victoria's *Heartland Strategy* estimates that football participation contributes \$3.1 billion per annum to Victoria, with community football estimated to account for 45% of the total. This highlights the significant impact the sport has on local communities.

Each project partner has their own rational and strategic view as to why investing in sport and recreation is important. What is consistent across all stakeholders is the ongoing commitment and support to grow football across the Melbourne East Region.

Put simply, LGAs provide funding, programming and education to develop community sport and recreation infrastructure that meets a local need and delivers physical activity opportunities for their residents.

Football benefits directly from this ongoing commitment from LGAs, which enables leagues and clubs to offer the sport to their local and regional communities.





2. SUMMARY STATE OF PLAY

FOOTBALL PARTICIPATION SNAPSHOT

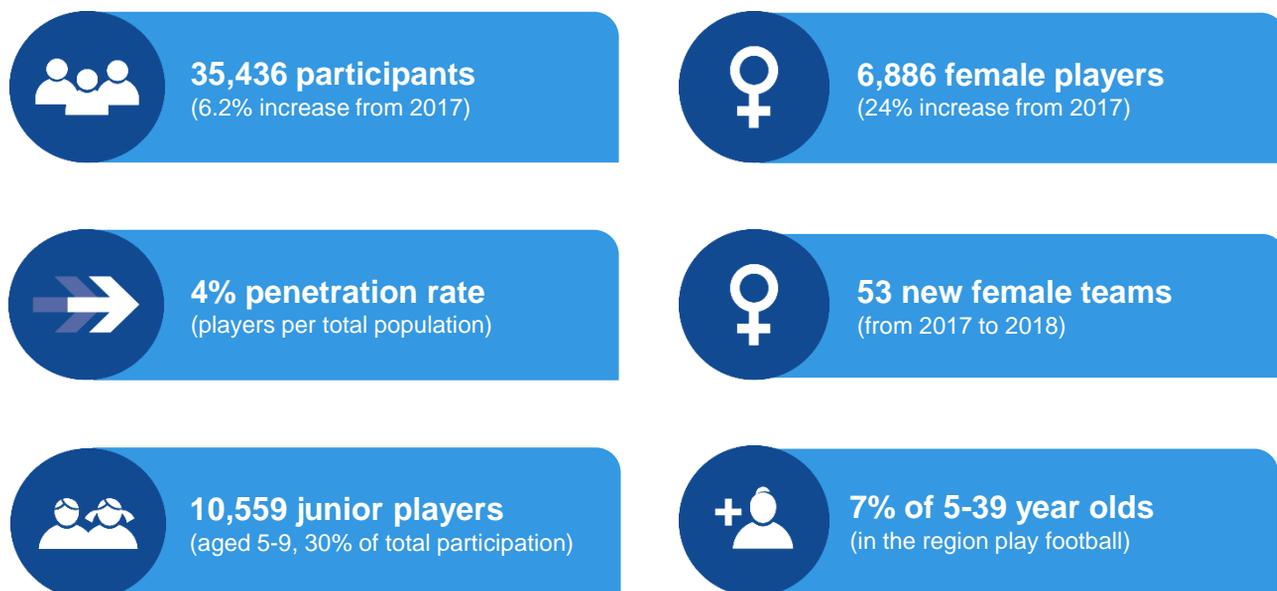


FIGURE 02 | MELBOURNE EAST ALL (MALE AND FEMALE) AFL PARTICIPANT REGISTRATIONS SEASON 2018 (BY PLAYER CATEGORY AND LGA) AND CHANGE FROM 2017

LGA	AGE					TOTAL	CHANGE FROM SEASON 2017
	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-39	40+		
Boroondara	2413	1960	701	1497	83	6654	+612
Knox	1692	1707	1075	899	104	5477	+219
Manningham	984	1198	905	1296	96	4479	+461
Maroondah	1258	959	615	672	76	3580	+267
Monash	868	882	642	1246	135	3773	+200
Whitehorse	1444	1340	888	905	114	4691	+49
Yarra Ranges	1900	2077	1148	1532	125	6782	+290
TOTAL	10,559	10,123	5,974	8,047	733	35,436	+2,098

Please note that the participation baseline data below represents a point-in-time during the development of the Strategy. Each year participation figures will be updated and progress reports provided to LGAs. The Key Findings Report provides a more detailed analysis of the football participation data in the Melbourne East Region.

FOOTBALL FACILITIES SNAPSHOT

The location, provision and condition of 147 football facilities across the Melbourne East Region were audited by local leagues and AFL Victoria staff. Audits were carried out using the AFL National Sports Facility Auditor tool.

The audit program assesses provision and condition. It analyses compliance with Australian Standards and AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines and criteria.

Audit data has been used to provide a rating for each facility, identifying gaps in provision (what amenities a facility has) and standards (condition, size and general provision).

Facility Condition Ratings are a guide to identifying strengths and gaps in football facility and amenity provision. They also support priority investment into facility renewal and development at a regional level (refer Key Findings Report – Volume 2).

Ratings used to determine the condition of club facilities are outlined in the Detailed Criteria for Rating Facility Infrastructure and Amenities (provided in the appendices of the Key Findings Report).

Each year all facility audits will be undertaken by AFL Victoria and figures will be updated and progress reports provided to LGAs.

Following is a brief snapshot of the hierarchy of existing football facilities in the Melbourne East Region and key highlights from the facilities audit. A detailed analysis of the facilities audit can be found in the Key Findings Report.

4	State level facility
7	Regional level facility
92	Local club level facilities
32	Junior grounds
3	Secondary school ground
1	Primary school ground
8	Potential future venues



- 9% of fields have no lighting.
- 86% of are below the minimum standard for training of 50 lux (estimate only)



- 59% of fields have no fencing.
- 43% of fields have an automatic irrigation system.



- 39% of change rooms had a condition rating of poor or very poor



- 70% of change rooms and umpire rooms have open showers.



- \$46.4M required to address existing facility gaps and deliver new facilities to cater for growth.



NETBALL

The focus for the Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy is the current and future needs of football. However, due to AFL Outer East and the Eastern Football League both offering netball competitions, background information on netball in the Region has been provided.

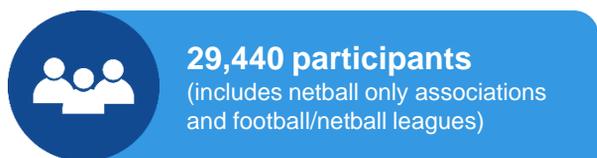
Detailed audit information of netball facilities were not available prior to the development of this Strategy. Netball Victoria is in the process of undertaking audits of all association and league netball facilities using a similar process and software that has been utilised for all AFL audits.

Facility audit information is critical to the development of this Strategy and is required before any evidenced based strategic directions regarding netball facilities could be developed.

In the absence of facility data, the analysis of netball in Melbourne East is limited to participation projections and potential future investment opportunities. Key insights regarding netball are provided below.

- LGAs in the region are facing pressure from local clubs to invest in courts for training at football club venues.
- LGA investment priorities will continue to be multi-court venues that house a number of users over single court options at football club venues.
- The Yarra Ranges Council remains committed to the football-netball club model of facility provision.
- Growth in the EFL netball competition is being hampered by the availability of venues and team numbers may need to be capped due to a lack of venues.

PARTICIPATION SNAPSHOT (2018)



SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Key findings identified during the development of this Strategy highlighted a range of facility and sports development issues being experienced by stakeholders in the Region. These issues are generally being caused by the high participation growth in football, limited capacity of existing facilities to cater for a diverse user market, the growing asset renewal gap and limited access to true pathway venues.

1. Sustained growth in female participation, (323% growth since 2016), which sits well above Victorian metropolitan average

2. LGAs are innovative and willing to investigate new options to accommodate growth

3. There is opportunities to deliver additional amenities and increase the capacity of existing venues to cater for participation growth and diversity

4. Collaboration and open communication is required between the AFL, state government and LGAs to facilitate community access to school facilities

5. Club sustainability will be impacted without a strong volunteer base and support to clubs to address governance and facility issues

6. Competition structures will need to consider participation as well as competition to ensure the sport remains accessible and vibrant

7. Project partners face significant challenges to fund future facility renewal and improvements

8. More venues with the appropriate amenities to support finals and talent pathway programs are required



PROJECTED FOOTBALL MARKET

The estimated Melbourne East region population aged 5–39 (typically the key football playing age) in 2018 was 494,370. By 2026 the region's population within this age cohort is forecast to increase by 6% to 525,170 people.

Manningham's 5-39 year old population is forecast to increase by approximately 3,870 people, Monash by 9,050 people and Whitehorse 8,900 people by 2026.

Population projections for other project partner LGAs range from 1% growth in Knox (+520 people), 2% growth for Yarra Ranges (+1,110 people) 5% for Maroondah (2,480 people) and 6% for Boroondara (+4860 people) in the 5-39 age cohort.

It should be noted that some project partner LGAs utilise alternate population data tools such as forecast.id. Such data tools may provide population projections exceeding those provided by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Victoria in Future 2016 data release utilised for this Report.

LGAs are using these alternate population demographics and are planning facility provision based on these forecasts and current participation trends. Refer to the Study Limitations provided in Volume 2 – Key Findings Report for further information.

The potential football market to 2026 is developed by analysing population projections against current (2018) individual LGA penetration rates.

By 2026 the football market across Melbourne's East is projected to be 36,991 participants. This is a 4% increase or +1,555 participants.

Participation increases range from 1% growth in Boroondara to 11% growth in Monash. Translating to participant numbers, the most significant participation increases are projected for Monash (+419), Manningham (+294), Maroondah (+225) and Whitehorse (+309). These are followed by Yarra Ranges (+142), Knox (+91) and Boroondara (+75).

Football participation increase estimates to 2026 are across all player categories. The most significant growth is anticipated in the senior category (20-39 age cohort) with 7% growth projected (+529 participants), followed by 6% in the 15-19 age cohort (374 participants).

The latest industry research suggests that there is a participation drop off for late teenagers (17+ years) in most sports. This trend should be considered in future facility planning and provision as well as the potential impact on competition structures and programming.





3. THE STRATEGY



STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The following strategic framework and structure is being recommended to achieve the vision for football facilities in the Melbourne East Region. The PCG have developed the Strategy based on this framework.

Three priorities have been identified to guide future facility provision and will be underpinned by regional strategies and actions that can be implemented at the local level. These are consistent with AFL Victoria’s Growing the Heartland Strategy.

VISION FOR THE MELBOURNE EAST REGION

“Collectively enhance, improve and develop facilities that increase the capacity of the Region to support the identified growth of AFL activities in Melbourne’s East”

**PRIORITY 1
EXISTING FACILITIES** Increase the quality and functionality of existing facilities to maximise their use and carrying capacity.

**PRIORITY 2
NEW FACILITIES** Plan and develop new facilities in key football growth areas that respond to regional need and activates program, competitions and talent pathways opportunities.

**PRIORITY 3
ENHANCE RELATIONSHIPS** Continue to enhance the relationship between football, government and other key stakeholders in the planning and provision of facilities and programs.

► **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**
(Defined for each Objective)



PRIORITY 1

Increase the quality and functionality of existing facilities to maximise their use and carrying capacity.

There is ongoing commitment from LGAs and sports stakeholders to invest in the upgrade and development of community facilities in the Melbourne East Region.

Pending capital works and funding availability, all LGAs are planning future football projects, whilst continuing their commitment to essential maintenance and renewal requirements to football infrastructure.

LGAs reported that capital funding programs do not adequately meet infrastructure investment needs, and there is reduced financial capacity to address facility renewal costs. This needs to be recognised and further supports the need for a collaborative approach between all stakeholders.

Priority 1 identifies opportunities to strategically sustain and grow football through the development of existing sites. Projects that can maximise the use and capacity of existing sites should be supported.

Increasing access to non football sites such as schools and open space and improving ground management practices are other initiatives that will contribute to delivering Priority 1.

HOW WILL PRIORITY 1 BE ACHIEVED?

A range of opportunities are available to the Region to support the delivery of Priority 1. These are designed to improve amenity provision, address oval capacity issues and support participation diversity, particularly female football:

- **Investment in oval upgrades, maintenance equipment and developing alternate playing surfaces such as synthetic fields** to improve carrying capacity.
- **Improved lighting provision** to Australian Standard to increase access options.
- **Increase the use of school facilities and alternate 'non traditional' football venues** to address the shortfall of ovals.
- **Expanding the number of all gender player amenities, including modular designs and temporary structures**, to retain and grow female participation.

AFL Victoria has expressed a desire for existing facilities to meet preferred minimum provision as outlined in the *AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines*.

Based on AFL National Audit Program outcomes and extraordinary participation growth, the AFL recently reviewed these guidelines to better advise on preferred provision. The revised guidelines provide updated change room provision advice and further detail on the planning, development and use of synthetic surfaces.

BUILDING OVAL CAPACITY

In general, playing surface conditions across the Region are excellent, and the majority of ovals being used for competition are meeting preferred minimum dimensions.

However, some LGAs are have ongoing challenges with maintaining ovals that are heavily used and impacted by inclement weather. This affects overall ground usage and access, severely disrupting competition and training.

Providing advice and guidance to clubs and grounds staff, having access to alternate surfaces such as synthetic and hybrid turf can further extend carrying capacity and address some of these challenges.

The value of expansive oval upgrades such as installing new sub-surface drainage, automatic irrigation and new turf is still being measured. However, anecdotal evidence from LGAs with rolling upgrade programs like Ballarat City Council indicates that ovals previously regarded as 'unplayable' mid season are now accessible all year round.

Ballarat reference the Marty Busch Oval Redevelopment (Sebastopol), 2017 winner of the AFL Victoria Best Community Facility Award. The oval quality is now regarded as state of the art, accommodating increased usage from not only community club football but VFL and TAC Cup training. The ground hosted a total of 82 games in Season 2017 compared to only 57 games pre upgrade in Season 2016.

Continued participation growth is having an immediate impact on LGA capacity to meet access demands. Whilst priority access will continue to be given to community club football, the situation highlights an urgent need for AFL Victoria, Leagues and LGAs to collaborate in identifying initiatives to increase oval capacity.

To address the issues some local leagues are capping oval use. For example, the Southern Metropolitan Junior Football Leagues have initiated reduced game and break times to ensure more games can be scheduled in a day, but with the same amount of usage hours.

Innovative fixturing and game modification, supported by oval upgrade investment and use of alternate venues, will continue to be critical to meet access demands. Establishing a focus group to identify these initiatives, particularly in land locked municipalities, will be critical in the short term.

SYNTHETIC FIELDS AND SPACES

AFL endorsed synthetic fields can offer the equivalent use of three natural turf fields. They can also cater for growing demand for sports fields in both football and partner sports like cricket. Synthetic turf technology is constantly evolving and is now commonly used by many major sports globally. Synthetic turf also relieves pressure on natural turf fields which are less likely to be impacted by overuse problems where synthetic is available.

Reinforced natural turf (hybrid turf) combines the positive properties of natural grass with the strength of synthetic turf to create a consistent, higher quality year-round playing surface. Hybrid turf is able to sustain wear, increasing carrying capacity from approximately 25 to 40 hours per week, has multiple uses and can be installed at approximately half the cost of a full synthetic field.

Considering Melbourne's variable climate, a mix of synthetic fields, hybrid and natural turf would best meet the Region's future need. Growth area LGAs should continue to consider the use of synthetic multi purpose AFL fields and hybrid turf to build capacity, cater for current demand and future proof projected oval requirements.

Options should also be investigated to use synthetic or hybrid turf in high traffic areas such as goal squares, rather than full investment into synthetic oval installation or oval resurfacing, where funds are limited.

Pre-season training requirements and participation growth is driving the need to explore open space areas where synthetic installation could support community access needs. There are examples where some LGAs are planning multi-lined synthetic fields to cater for a range of uses. The fields are multi-lined for different sports and can be accessed by the community outside competition and training times.

Additional resources and tools on the use of synthetic fields for football were provided to LGAs by the AFL in early 2018. These tools will support LGAs to advocate to elected members and Government for increased investment into synthetic surfaces.



LIGHTING

Upgrading or introducing adequate lighting to a football oval can significantly contribute to addressing the capacity issues the sport is currently facing. Football is unable to leverage participation growth and expand their competition structures if there is a shortage of quality floodlit ovals. This can also cause overuse of ovals that are well lit and premature wearing of grounds where players are restricted to training in certain areas.

A 2018 audit identified that 9% of the Region's football venues have no lighting and 86% are below the minimum training standard of 50 lux. Only 3% of venues provide lighting to the minimum requirement suitable for club competition (100 lux) and there were no venues identified as having 150 lux or better, the AFL's preferred standard to enhance spectator viewing (approximates only)

A basic requirement for the illumination of a football oval is that the ball is adequately illuminated at all times while in play. The Australian Standards specific to the lighting of Australian Rules football deals with training and competition, and takes into consideration spectator viewing requirements. 50 lux is the recognised standard suitable for training at a local club level. 100 lux is the minimum requirement suitable for club competition and match practice, but provides minimal viewing distances for spectators. Spectator viewing is better accommodated at 150 lux which has been highlighted in the updated *AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines*.

SRV's *Community Sporting Facility Lighting Guide* recommends that where a club based night football venue is being developed, a minimum of 150 lux should be considered if contemporary viewing expectations of spectators are to be taken into account.

The use of LED lights are preferred as they future proof maintenance costs, increases lighting life span and ensures lighting uniformity across ovals. LED lights also provide dimmable options that ensure uniform lighting around the playing area.

AFL Victoria are considering options for a pilot program to retrofit lighting structures to LED lights. This presents an opportunity for the Region to identify an appropriate venue for the pilot which can be actively supported at a regional level by all project partners.

Lighting upgrade projects should consider facility usage levels based on current player and team numbers. Prioritising venues with high facility usage, those that are regional and/or finals venues, and those that cater for junior and/or female competition is recommended.

In order to better determine lighting upgrade priorities for the Region, AFL Victoria will work with project partner LGAs to continue to implement formal lux level testing of ovals as a key strategic direction.

Planning for lighting upgrades should also extend beyond core infrastructure to include additional power requirements and associated installation and permit costs. AFL Victoria have a process to assist clubs and LGAs in planning and costing lighting projects that considers these additional requirements.

Further information on the benefits of lighting are provided via case study in the appendices section of the Key Findings Report (Volume 2).

SCHOOL AND ALTERNATE VENUE ACCESS

Limitations in LGA capacity to meet facility renewal gaps and resourcing participation growth has increased the need to access alternative venues. Partnering with schools that have growing student numbers is becoming a feasible option. These schools historically require access to existing municipal community assets to support school activities and would benefit from the development of a shared facility.

Joint use of appropriately developed school facilities provides opportunity to capitalise on participation growth, implement flexible competition structures and address access issues. This is particularly relevant for land locked municipalities or where ground shortages exist due to rapid participation growth.

Partnerships with schools to improve access and identify mutually beneficial facility projects at the local level is a key strategic focus for AFL Victoria. AFL Victoria has been invited to work with the School Building Authority to reform the way school ovals and associated amenities are designed so they are more value to community football. This is an opportunity for project partners to collaborate with AFL Victoria and identify investment opportunities at school sites that will support participation growth.

School venue access could be expanded further through collaboration with School Sport Victoria. This will assist in the delivery of the State Government's new directive to increase student physical activity by 20% over the next 10 years. This could also be supported through the implementation of AFL introductory programs where the sport is given access to school sites for community club use.

Partnerships with schools at the local level to improve community access and identify mutually beneficial facility projects is a key focus for AFL Victoria.

AFL Victoria have strategically committed to pilot projects that demonstrate the benefit of joint facility investment. This investment opportunity should be harnessed by project partners who are currently accessing school venues to support football participation or alternatively provide access for school competitions that impact community club use.

Where possible, AFL Victoria also intends to include school venues accessed for football as part of the AFL National Facility Audit Program. Site audits and understanding current provision at schools will support co-planning and investment of school facility upgrades to ensure they are accessible and fit for football.

Pre-season creep also places increased demands on venues and contributes to overuse and potential conflict with tenant sports. This can be addressed through encouraging club acceptance of non traditional venues for pre-season training such as gyms, trails and pools, and the application of the *AFL Victoria's Pre-season Training Guidelines for Community Football*.

Project partners should also collaborate on identifying opportunities to access under-utilised venues that could support increased oval demands. The facility maps provided in the Key Findings Report highlights currently under-utilised venues as identified by project partner LGAs during consultation.

Further discussion on existing provision, options and barriers to accessing these venues and Leagues and Clubs participating across municipal boundaries to support demand is essential.

It is critical that key stakeholders and potential funding providers adopt a coordinated approach to the scoping and delivery of actions and recognise the need for joint funding and resourcing. Continued collaboration across key sport, government and community stakeholder groups will enable project partner LGAs to secure funding for facility renewal and upgrades identified through this Strategy.



ALL GENDER PLAYER AMENITIES

Modular designs and temporary structures

Providing suitable facilities to adequately accommodate the extraordinary growth in female football, new teams and leagues is critical to retaining players.

From a national survey of clubs, participants and volunteers in 2015, one of the top three barriers to female participation was the lack of female friendly change rooms and amenities.

As female participation continues to grow, competition structures will need to accommodate additional games. Reduced training hours and innovative fixturing should be considered for all football competitions where ground usage capacity and night competition lighting is available.

Should female participation continue to increase at the current rate the challenge of supplying suitable facilities will be further enhanced. By 2026 it is estimated that there will be an additional 420 female players in the Region in the 5-39 year age cohort that will require access to female friendly facilities.

Game scheduling to meet increasing female football demand continues to be an issue for LGAs and Leagues. Reviewing competition structures to cope with this demand and continued collaboration with LGAs to ensure ground access availability is essential.

A lack of appropriate facility provision and ground availability to accommodate the Regions female football participants further highlights the critical need to grow ground capacity, access alternate venues, review lighting provision and consider innovative options to address unisex change room provision.

The need to retro fit player amenities and change rooms to all gender has exposed the heavy cost of addressing currently inadequate building structures.

Options to utilise modular buildings to meet all gender amenity shortages may be more cost effective for LGAs. The estimated cost for relocatable change rooms, which include 2 player change rooms and 1 umpire change room with toilets and showers is approximately \$500,000. Amenities meet AFL preferred provision and can host back to back male and female competitions if required.

Although substantial investment has been made in the Region to address all gender provision, 70% of changerooms do not cater for female participants.

The consistent increase in female participation over the past 4 years including a 24% increase since 2017 is making it difficult for LGAs to provide sufficient grounds and all gender football change room facilities to cater for this increase in demand.

Female friendly infrastructure grants available through AFL Victoria and Sport and Recreation Victoria provide an opportunity for the Region to target change room upgrades based on existing and projected female participation on a facility by facility basis. Collaboration with Cricket Victoria to identify venues with high participation across both cricket and football provides further opportunity to maximise these funding options.

AFL Victoria has increased its community funding program and now provides larger grants of up to \$100,000 (previously \$50,000). Female football has also been given a higher weighting with this funding program.

There is also potential for a new AFL Victoria endorsed funding program that provides temporary and portable change rooms to support the immediate need for female participation until more permanent structures can be built.

AFL Victoria is continuing to advocate for an increase in funding that will address ground capacity regarding female participation in high needs areas of Victoria. This may ultimately provide some benefit to the region through investment into increased ground usage options.

Accessing funding to support the following three high priority initiatives will support and sustain female football, and enable increased venue capacity across the Region:

- all gender change rooms;
- targeted lighting upgrades at venues supporting female football;
- amenity innovation with consideration for modular design, temporary structures, synthetic surfaces and hybrid turf.



Recommendations to increase the quality and functionality and maximise the use and carrying capacity of existing facilities:

- 1.1 **Prioritise change room upgrades for application to SRV and AFL Victoria Grants Programs to cater for all gender use.**
- 1.2 **Project partners to use the existing Melbourne East LGA Reference Group to implement recommendations from this Strategy, with a focus on resolving ground capacity issues in land locked LGAs..**
- 1.3 **Commit to exploring options to increase existing ground capacity through the use of synthetic surfaces, surface upgrades, advanced maintenance practices and lighting provision.**
- 1.4 Explore opportunities to advocate for access to school facilities and develop ongoing partnerships with schools.
- 1.5 Project partners to identify opportunities for temporary change room structures at key locations that will address player amenity provision for female football.
- 1.6 Project partners work collaboratively to bring facilities with no or low lighting up to minimum standards and where possible to 100 lux to support alternate fixturing.
- 1.7 AFL Victoria, leagues and LGAs identify a public school within the Region for a potential joint facility investment pilot project.
- 1.8 Project partners collaborate on options for access of under-utilised venues that could support increased oval demands.
- 1.9 AFL Victoria provide education tools and resources to LGAs and clubs regarding ground management, including the use of non traditional venues for pre season training and synthetic fields.
- 1.10 AFL Victoria continues to investigate innovative competition and fixturing models to support participation growth.
- 1.11 AFL Victoria continue to foster partnerships with the School Building Authority to identify opportunities for school facility access and joint investment.
- 1.12 Project partners reference Universal Design Principles as outlined in SRV's Design for Everyone Guide for all new and existing facility upgrades.





PRIORITY 2

Plan and develop new facilities in key football growth areas that respond to regional need and activates program, competitions and talent pathways opportunities.

Significant population growth is predicted for the Melbourne East Region, particularly in the municipalities of Manningham, Monash and Whitehorse. This will positively impact future football participation, but also put further pressure on existing facilities that are, in some cases, already at capacity.

Project partner LGAs are committed to supporting football in their municipalities, and have a strong appreciation for the social value sport brings to their communities, beyond participation.

This Priority outlines the projected demand and the planning and development opportunities that will ensure future provision aligns with demand.

The key themes for this priority include the provision of new facilities that are multi-purpose and inclusive.

HOW WILL PRIORITY 2 BE ACHIEVED?

Delivery of Priority 2 can be achieved through collaboration in the planning of new football projects. Considering regional, umpire and talent pathway needs in amenity and ground surface provision will be a key focus for this priority.

- **Collective support** of identified regional projects;
- **New facility and amenity developments** that consider all gender, Universal Design, sport and club growth, community demand and regional facility needs;
- **Continuing to support innovation** in facility design and ground surface provision;
- **Planning to match** projected ground requirements.

Anticipated population growth in the Region may see the establishment of new clubs in growing areas. New infrastructure is being planned for and will be created to service a growing participation base.

AFL Victoria will play a key role in any new club establishment through providing seed funding, guiding governance processes and identifying potential facility user partners.

Where possible new developments should consider regional level provision that incorporates two ovals at the site (or capacity to plan for an additional oval in the future), all gender player and umpire rooms, suitably sized pavilion and night competition level lighting.

Provision to this level would better support projected future participation growth, serve wider catchment areas and create economic efficiencies by catering for more than one sport or activity. Regional venues provide opportunity to share facilities and administration and help maximise stakeholder return on investment through shared overheads and financial contributions.

An extensive list of all current and planned football facility projects is provided on the following page. These projects are being developed by all project partner LGAs, with support from AFL Victoria, and are classified as having either state or regional level significance. Regional projects have been identified in the AFL Victoria Statewide Facilities Framework.

STATE LEVEL FACILITY INVESTMENT

City of Whitehorse - Box Hill City Oval

An extensive \$5M venue improvement program is planned for the state level Box Hill City Oval.

The capital works program includes the provision of a multi-purpose pavilion and amenities, quality unisex player change rooms and lighting upgrades to State League standard.

The upgrades will provide opportunity for competition expansion, accessible coaching, statistical and broadcast media infrastructure and improved spectator seating and amenities.

REGIONAL PRIORITIES

All LGAs

Conversion of existing buildings and change rooms across the Region to all gender player amenities is a high regional priority for all partner LGAs. Indicatively, these works have been costed at \$154.7M.

City of Boroondara - Glenferrie Sportsground

This project includes a redevelopment of the heritage listed Tuck Stand. This Stand is unable to be used and the oval is currently only accessed for U9 football and Auskick, with temporary toilet portables in place.

City of Boroondara - Lynden Park

The planned upgrade of Lynden Park includes new lighting and pavilion and coaches amenities upgrades to better service participation growth.

City of Boroondara / Yarra Ranges Council - School site

This is a joint sport and education planned project to deliver a shared use synthetic oval at a nominated school site in a key growth area.

City of Knox - Fairpark Reserve

A shared sport and community building is being developed to service the growing needs of football, netball and community user groups.

City of Knox - Wantirna Reserve

Wantirna Reserve will received a lighting upgrade to 100 lux to enable night matches and support additional programming needs.

City of Maroondah - Ringwood Secondary College

The City is partnering with Ringwood Secondary College to develop shared football and netball facilities, which links sport, education and community.

City of Maroondah - Springfield Park

The pavilion redevelopment at Springfield Park will include provision of all gender player amenities and improved facilities for the Eastern Football League Umpire Association.

City of Whitehorse - Surrey Park

Ground lighting on the East Oval of the Surrey Park Sporting Precinct is being delivered to address capacity issues and to cater for the growth in junior and female participants.

City of Whitehorse - Walker Park

The redevelopment of Walker Park includes an upgrade and expansion of the existing pavilion to address junior participation growth.

City of Whitehorse - Morton Park

Pavilion redevelopment.

City of Whitehorse - Elgar Park

Pavilion redevelopment and dual oval upgrade.

Yarra Ranges Council - Lilydale Heights College

This is a joint project that will deliver shared access to a synthetic oval that will improve community access and support participation growth and ground capacity.

Yarra Ranges Council - Kimberley Reserve

Kimberley Reserve is being redeveloped to support club growth and sustainability. The project involves the construction of a new pavilion to support the multiple users groups at this dual oval venue.

Yarra Ranges Council - Mt Evelyn Football Ground

The Powelltown Football Ground is receiving a pavilion upgrade to better cater for sport and community use.

Other sites identified by the Eastern Football League as opportunities for future development include Bayswater Oval, Jubilee Park (VFL level), Tomore Reserve, Central Reserve and Scoresby Oval (Regional level).



FINALS VENUE PREFERRED AMENITY PROVISION

The following information is provided as a guide only to better inform stakeholders on football's preferred amenity provision to host finals and meet regional level facility provision:

- Dual oval site with a suitably sized senior playing field (between 135 to 185 metres in length and between 110 metres and 155 metres in width with 4m boundary line);
 - Four unisex player change rooms with associated massage/strapping areas;
 - Two unisex umpire change rooms;
 - Scoreboard and timekeepers room provision;
 - Pavilion / social rooms meet the recommended size (150m²) to facilitate social interaction, support club growth and club sustainability;
 - Site fencing (temporary acceptable) and spectator amenities such as toilets, hard stand viewing areas and car parking;
 - Sports lighting at 150 lux level to support night competition at both ovals. The Australian Standard for training level lighting is minimum 50 lux and for match play 100 lux.
- AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines recommend 100 lux to accommodate a range of activities. There is a preference for 150 lux for match play in order to enhance the viewing experience for spectators;
 - Where netball forms part of the league competition structures, netball provision includes two compliant netball courts with associated player and umpire amenities (where competition can be facilitated at the same site as football). Stakeholders should refer to the Netball Victoria Facilities Manual in measuring the adequacy of amenity provision in addition to the two compliant courts. Please note that for finals the majority of netball competitions would use indoor venues.
 - Specific to talent pathway, state level venues can also have access to a pool, gym and allied health professionals.
 - The co-location of regional personnel across partner sports, site capacity for growth and consideration of player catchment areas, accommodation and education opportunities are also key factors when identifying suitable locations for these elite level facilities.

NORTH EAST LINK (NEL)

The NEL is Victoria's largest ever road project and will provide a new freeway connection between the M80 Ring Road and the Eastern Freeway. In addition to road widening works, to better manage existing and future traffic volumes, a new interchange connecting the Eastern Freeway with the NEL will be constructed.

To enable this project to occur, Bulleen Park Oval 1 and adjacent land parcels will be permanently secured by State Government. The potential loss of Oval 1 at Bulleen Park will severely impact existing tenants, including the Yarra Junior Football League (YJFL).

The YJFL is one of the largest junior football leagues in the state, administering football competitions for 33 clubs and 10,000 participants. Boroondara has 3,400, Manningham 1,811 and Whitehorse 707 footballers registered in the YJFL.

North East Link Authority are working with the City of Manningham, YJFL and other park tenants on a re-design of Bulleen Park to be implemented as part of the NEL project. Options to create a new community hub with enhanced football amenity to current AFL guidelines is being considered.

The YJFL is concerned about displacement and the impact on junior football during the construction period (planned for commencement in 2020 and completion in 2027).

The project does however provide an opportunity to develop new football facilities at Bulleen Park that can better meet the needs of the YJFL and deliver regional venue that can cater for a range of programs, competitions and talent pathways.

At the time of writing the YJFL were considering their long term options whilst awaiting the outcomes from the Inquiry and Advisory Committee Panel and recommendations from the Planning Minister. The league have declared a preference to develop new facilities at a greenfield site on Templestowe Road in Templestowe Lower (Henderson Seed Farm).

AFL Victoria are supportive of the following plans that NEL have for Bulleen Park and believe the site remains an "option" for the long term home of the YJFL.

- If the YJFL return to Bulleen Park - 1 football only oval and 2 football/cricket ovals plus supporting pavilions (including administration space for YJFL)
- If the YJFL do not return to Bulleen Park 3 - football/cricket ovals plus supporting pavilion



TALENT PATHWAY VENUES

The continued expansion of talent pathways and league competition structures is driving the need to further invest in regional and state level venues. Currently only 8% of Melbourne East venues fit these higher classification levels, falling below the metropolitan average of 11%.

A higher level of facility provision is essential for supporting league finals, pathways, regional events, coordinating staff resources in central locations and growing competition structures. Regional facilities can also enable football staff to better support local clubs.

At a community sport level, it is estimated that one regional League final provides an additional net economic benefit of almost \$250,000 per annum to the host municipality.

The challenges of balancing the needs of elite pathway teams with community need and access are well known. Currently these challenges are not being met, with talent bodies often working alone to identify opportunities for the talent pool they represent. Better facility and pathway outcomes may be realised where partnerships are truly developed.

Consultation with football and government stakeholders identified a desire to investigate options to develop venues that support talent pathway programs. A regional or state level venue could potentially act as a dedicated umpire site whilst providing options for pre-season access, interleague, TAC Cup, Next Generation Academies and other pathway options as they continue to expand to accommodate growth and female participation.

Sports stakeholders expressed a preference for a state level venue to be located in the Eastern Ranges Zone to support TAC Cup programs. Netball provision would also be required if interleague and finals matches are planned. Such a venue could also potentially house the AFL Outer East Umpires Association who are in need of a new facility to support growth.

The lack of appropriate higher level facility provision and inconsistent levels of access to existing quality facilities impacts the community talent arm of football. A regional footprint of facilities and options for access to synthetic ovals should be considered to supporting expanding talent programs.

A range of venues were identified by sports stakeholders that have upgrade potential to address pathway venue gaps as outlined above. During consultation, sport stakeholders identified a number of other venues that could be considered for additional investment to support league finals or talent pathways.



Identification was based on existing amenity provision, options for development and location to existing talent venues. Further discussion is required by LGAs and sport stakeholders regarding options prior to any strategic direction being included in the final Strategy.

City of Knox

- Knox Gardens Reserve
- Lewis Park (Wantirna South)
- Marie Wallace Oval (Bayswater)
- Schultz Reserve (Wantirna)
- Wally Tew Reserve (Ferntree Gully)

City of Maroondah

- Jubilee Park (Ringwood)

City of Monash

- Central Reserve (North and South)

City of Whitehorse

- Forest Hill College

Yarra Ranges Council

- Don Road Sporting Complex (Healesville)
- Kilsyth Recreation Reserve
- Pinks Reserve
- Lilydale Heights Secondary College

City of Manningham

- Bulleen Park

PRIORITY 2

Plan and develop new facilities in key football growth areas that respond to regional need and activates program, competitions and talent pathways opportunities.

PROJECTED GROUND REQUIREMENTS

AFL Victoria recommend that ideally no more than 7 teams use one natural turf ground at one time, however localised factors such as the ages of those teams and the condition and maintenance regime of the natural turf should be taken into account at each venue.

The estimated growth of 4% in football participation by 2026 equates to the need for access to an additional 9 grounds across the Melbourne's East as a whole.

Projected increases in participation based on current penetration rates would result in the need for access to an additional two grounds in Manningham, Monash and Whitehorse. Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges are projected will require access to one additional ground each.

Additionally, an increase of individual LGA penetration rates of just 1% would result in an additional 373 players, most likely to be achieved through the continued growth in female football participation. A 1% increase in individual LGA penetration rates would result in access to two additional grounds being required across the region by 2026.

PROJECTED LEAGUE GROUND REQUIREMENTS

Participation projections for the EFL will require access to additional ovals in Maroondah, Monash and Whitehorse.

The YJFL's projected participation growth is focused mainly in Melbourne's North where league will require access to two additional ovals in Banyule. It is not anticipated that projected growth in Melbourne's East will impact YJFL oval access needs.

Projected participation growth will see the VAFA require access to one additional oval in Boroondara and one in Manningham.

PROJECTED GROUND PLANNING

For land locked municipalities with significant projected growth, consideration of synthetic multi purpose AFL fields to provide capacity to cater for growth and existing demand will be critical.

As a minimum, population growth LGAs should consider installation of at least one synthetic field combined with options for hybrid turf at other venues to meet increased demand.

Partner LGAs should also investigate opportunities to cross promote venue usage in other municipalities that have existing oval capacity, and provide synthetic public spaces to support training and pre-season needs.

Importantly project stakeholders will need to continue to collect and monitor football participation and plan accordingly. Initiating annual State of Play Reports to ensure a collective understanding of participation across the Region will be essential to support identification of facility investment priorities.

Whilst new facility investment is crucial to meeting projected participation growth, Leagues will continue to be challenged by ground access and capacity issues.

New and alternate formats of the game, such as AFL 9s and AFL X, also present new scheduling demands. Options that encourage and accommodate participation through changes to the coordination and delivery of AFL activities will require ongoing exploration by Leagues in partnership with AFL Victoria and LGAs. These options include match scheduling, use of non traditional AFL venues and game modifications to lessen ground access requirements.





Recommendations to plan and develop new facilities in key football growth areas that respond to regional need and activates program, competitions and talent pathways opportunities..

- 2.1 Collectively lobby for investment into identified regional level venues that support wider catchment areas, events, league finals and player pathways.
- 2.2 AFL Victoria and the City of Manningham to provide support to the YJFL and clubs impacted by the NEL to ensure appropriate displacement facilities are provided and new facility development projects meet the needs of football stakeholders.
- 2.3 AFL Victoria, leagues and project partner LGAs investigate options for the installation of one synthetic oval in each Melbourne East municipality with supporting funding models.
- 2.4 Project partner LGAs and AFL Victoria investigate facility and ground capacity requirements for elite pathways to support competition expansion.
- 2.5 Collaboration to continue between AFL Victoria, leagues and Melbourne East Region LGAs in the planning of new facilities. The facility requirements from the *AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines* to be considered where the facility will cater for football.
- 2.6 New facility innovations and products continue to be considered by project partners to increase carrying capacity and reduce ongoing maintenance costs.
- 2.7 AFL Victoria to continue to provide a Club Establishment Fund towards any new clubs that may be established in the future.
- 2.8 Project partners reference principles outlined in SRV's *Design for Everyone Guide* and *Female Friendly Sport Infrastructure Guidelines* for all new and existing facility upgrades.



PRIORITY 3

Continue to enhance the relationship between football, government and other key stakeholders in the planning and provision of facilities and programs.

As the majority of football facilities are provided on land owned and/or managed by local government, LGAs carry the burden of funding the renewal and upgrade of these assets.

The introduction of rate capping, ageing infrastructure and demand for a range of flexible facility options presents ongoing challenges for local government.

Securing external funding from State and Federal government and peak sports bodies will be crucial to meeting funding shortfalls for facility renewal projects.

This Strategy formalises the steps project partners have taken to collaboratively plan future investment and facility upgrades.

Strategic initiatives are targeted to direct investment priorities and sustain and grow football participation from community club to regional level provision. Targeted investment ensure facilities and amenities are delivered beyond what clubs 'desire' to what is actually required for the Region.

HOW WILL PRIORITY 3 BE ACHIEVED?

Enhancing existing relationships into the future will be achieved through:

- Ongoing support and resourcing of the established Melbourne East Region **Local Government Reference Group** to review the implementation of this Strategy.
- **Continued LGA support** of the AFL Victoria Local Government Forum.
- Initiating regular **State of Play Reports for the Region**.
- **Collaborative partnerships with local clubs** to manage sustainable participation growth.

These initiatives will ensure strategic directions remain current and reflect the Regions' facility needs in the future.

Beyond this Strategy, collaboration between the Leagues, LGAs, and AFL Victoria should continue through the already established Melbourne East Local Government Reference Group.

This is the key consultative group for issues affecting football that relate to local government facility provision, ground access and services in the Region.

Continuing to collaboratively plan facility renewal based on participation trends and projections will maximise facility usage, strategically direct new developments and support football participation growth into the future.

The Melbourne East Region Local Government Reference Group meet regularly to share information, discuss issues affecting sport and work towards implementing recommendations provided in the Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Strategy.

A key aim of the Reference Group is to explore ways to fund regional projects and share overall capital investment requirements. This group recently delivered a regional plan for recreation trails and hockey, and is considering a sub-regional approach to planning for future tennis provision.

Regional planning and major facility funding for regional and sub-regional community infrastructure is a key focus for Sport and Recreation Victoria. This provides an incentive for AFL Victoria and partner LGAs to work together and develop clear projects and priorities that will benefit both the sport and local communities within the Melbourne East Region.

To secure significant capital funding for a regional or state level project, collaboration will need to extend beyond current project partner LGAs. The inclusion of key stakeholders such as AFL Victoria, Sport and Recreation Victoria, VicHealth and the Department of Education and Training onto the Reference Group will provide opportunity to secure external funding support for regional projects.

Partnerships with Cricket Victoria to investigate facility investment priorities based on joint identified need in the female participation space will also be important. Such partnerships enhance funding opportunities to government and ensure facility investment considers multi-users across a number of sports

AFL Victoria continues to support investment into its sport by increasing resources at the regional level. The implementation of its *Heartland Strategy* has seen the roll out of regional planning across the State, the implementation of specific funding programs and subsequent facility development and renewal into known facility gaps.

The implementation of AFL Victoria's *Community Club Sustainability Program* across Melbourne East educates clubs on the value of re-directing funds into facility renewal projects, particularly where investment is required beyond core amenity provision.

It is recognised that LGAs have a strategic commitment to providing facilities and participation opportunities for all types of sport and recreation. This can result in high levels of competition for funding between sporting codes, and pressures in balancing the needs of a diverse range of groups.

Developing annual Football State of Play Reports will ensure a collective understanding of current and future participation needs across the Region. It will also provide a strategic approach to facility investment based on participation growth and identified need.

LGA investment could be further supported by State Government with provision of alternate funding models. New funding models could consider the capacity of LGAs to combine existing multiple applications, provision of alternate funding streams and support of investment that recognises current participation and supports 'retention and stability' of participation not just participation growth.

AFL Victoria is currently working with State Government to review funding models. LGAs should be prepared to capitalise on any new funding opportunities that SRV may provide following this consultation.





Recommendations to continue to enhance the relationship between football, government and other key stakeholders in the planning and provision of facilities and programs.

3.1 Ensure the continuation of the Melbourne East Local Government Reference Group and expand the role of this group to include the implementation of recommendations from this Strategy.

3.2 AFL Victoria, LGAs, leagues and Cricket Victoria to collaborate and identify project opportunities where female participants is strong across both sports.

3.3 Project partners to actively engage with state and federal government and work collaboratively to identify alternate funding streams that support infrastructure investment.

3.4 Melbourne East LGAs, via the Melbourne East Local Government Reference Group, to continue to advocate for funding that supports future facility investment at agreed regional level venues.

3.5 Melbourne East LGAs continue to support and attend the AFL Victoria Local Government Forum and identify opportunities to present projects where participation in football has been enhanced.

3.6 Initiate annual Football State of Play reports, ensuring collective understanding and progress of participation, sports development, facility improvement and new development activities.



4. IMPLEMENTATION



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

DELIVERING THE MELBOURNE EAST FOOTBALL FACILITIES STRATEGY

Through the implementation phases of the Strategy there will be three key roles for stakeholders to play:

INITIATE

Planning and scoping the range and timing of Strategic Directions, programs, activities and service provision.

DELIVER

On the ground delivery of Strategic Directions, activities and services to the Melbourne East community.

SUPPORT

Support for program, activity and service delivery through the provision of people, skills, funding, equipment and promotion.

The Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy has been developed to provide Strategic Directions that are practical and realistic.

Many Strategic Directions will require further stakeholder consultation. To ensure key actions can be achieved in a timely manner, continued collaboration between sport and government is crucial.

Proposed Strategic Directions have been allocated a level of priority based on their relative impact on delivering the desired outcomes for the Region.

The level of priority should be used to inform each project partner of the relative importance of a particular action, as opposed to an expected delivery timeframe. A description of each priority level is provided below:

CRITICAL ACTION

A Strategic Direction that has a major impact on ongoing service delivery, and without achievement other Strategic Directions cannot be progressed, or will be severely hindered in their implementation.

MEDIUM

Strategic Direction that contribute to meeting the overall regional Strategy objectives.

LOW

Strategic Direction that contributes to overall regional Strategy improvement activities.

ONGOING

Strategic Direction that will require ongoing commitment of sport and government stakeholders.



CRITICAL ACTIONS

The Melbourne East Football Facilities Strategy has been prepared to guide the development of football within the Melbourne East Region. It addresses a range of issues and provides clear direction regarding future infrastructure provision that will support projected participation growth. It also makes recommendations regarding stakeholder roles and responsibilities.

To support the achievement of proposed objectives and to ensure the immediate needs of football are met, **five Critical Actions** have been identified. These Critical Actions are considered high priorities and should be used to inform each project partners immediate response to this Strategy. It is not expected that all project partners will be able to deliver all Critical Actions in the short term.

CRITICAL ACTION #1

Prioritise and identify locations with the greatest need for all gender player change room and submit funding applications to SRV and AFL Victoria Grants Program.

CRITICAL ACTION #2

Project partners to use the existing Melbourne East LGA Reference Group to implement recommendations from this Strategy, with a focus on resolving ground capacity issues in land locked LGAs.

CRITICAL ACTION #3

Commit to exploring options to increase existing ground capacity through the use of synthetic surfaces, surface upgrades, maintenance practices and lighting provision.

CRITICAL ACTION #4

Collectively lobby for investment into identified regional level venues that support wider catchment areas, events, league finals and player pathways.

CRITICAL ACTION #5

AFL Victoria and Manningham Council to support the YJFL who will be impacted by the NEL to ensure appropriate displacement facilities are provided and new development projects meet the needs of football stakeholders.



PARTNERSHIPS

Implementation of identified facility priorities, planning, sports development and partnership objectives will require collaboration, investment and a commitment of resources from leagues, associations, AFL Victoria, government and industry stakeholders.

The following Implementation Plans are provided to guide football and LGAs financial and human resource commitment into the future. By creating a focus on collaboration, planning and support for key projects, football can continue to build its capacity to realise many of the potential outcomes identified in this Strategy.

Competing investment priorities, funding pressure and the broader focus of local government to accommodate a range of sports in facility renewal and development, will require football to continue to advocate for and on behalf of their sport in the Region.

Identification of funding streams beyond traditional funding partners and a coordinated approach to accessing funding will be critical to delivering strategic outcomes.

The Region's LGAs and leagues should look to implement a planned approach to state and federal government for funding provision. Particularly relating to the Female Friendly Facilities Program, Better Indoor Stadiums Fund, State and Regional Level facilities and any new funding programs that may be made available in response to female participation growth.

Other funding options available to achieve facility improvements are the AFL Victoria Female Facilities Change Room Fund and any new funding streams under development by AFL Victoria. LGA Capital Works Programs, Club contributions and the AFL Victoria Football Development Fund can also fill the gap in infrastructure renewal, generally overlooked by other funding bodies. Non traditional funding partners such as Community Bank Programs, commercial investment and sponsorship should also be investigated.

Implementation objectives are set out in a priority framework. However, annual goal and target setting will be required by Strategy partners. Formal evaluation of the Strategy by the project partners will be required to ensure ongoing and consistent alignment with football and LGA objectives. Strategy implementation will also need to recognise and accommodate the differing decision making processes and priorities of each project partner within the Region.

PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Increase the quality and functionality of existing facilities to maximise their use and carrying capacity.

RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITY		
		INITIATOR	DELIVERER	SUPPORTERS
1.1 Prioritise change room upgrades for application to SRV and AFL Victoria Grants Programs to cater for all gender use.	Critical	AFL Victoria, Leagues & LGAs	LGAs	AFL Victoria, Leagues & State Government
1.2 Project partners to use the existing Melbourne East LGA Reference Group to implement recommendations from this Strategy, with a focus on resolving ground capacity issues in land locked LGAs.	Critical	AFL Victoria, Leagues & LGAs	AFL Victoria, Leagues & LGAs	State Government
1.3 Commit to exploring options to increase existing ground capacity through the use of synthetic surfaces, surface upgrades and lighting provision.	Critical	AFL Victoria, Leagues & LGAs	AFL Victoria & LGAs	Leagues & State Government
1.4 Explore opportunities to advocate for access to school facilities and develop ongoing partnerships with schools.	Medium	AFL Victoria, Leagues & LGAs	AFL Victoria, State Government & LGAs	Leagues & Clubs
1.5 Project partners to identify opportunities for temporary change room structures at key locations that will address player amenity provision for female football.	Medium	AFL Victoria, Leagues & LGAs	AFL Victoria & LGAs	Leagues & State Government
1.6 Project partners work collaboratively to bring facilities with no or low level lighting up to minimum standards. Where possible to 100 lux to support alternate fixturing.	Medium	Leagues & LGAs	LGAs	AFL Victoria
1.7 AFL Victoria, leagues and LGAs identify a public school within the municipality for a potential joint facility investment pilot project.	Medium	AFL Victoria, LGAs	AFL Victoria & LGAs	State Government & Leagues
1.8 Project partners collaborate on options for access of under-utilised venues that could support increased oval demands.	Medium	AFL Victoria, Leagues & LGAs	AFL Victoria, State Government, LGAs	Leagues & Clubs
1.9 AFL Victoria provide education tools to LGAs that support increased ground management and capacity, including the use of synthetic fields.	Medium	AFL Victoria	AFL Victoria	Leagues, LGAs and Club
1.10 AFL Victoria continues to investigate innovative competition and fixturing models to support participation growth.	Medium	AFL Victoria & Leagues	AFL Victoria & Leagues	LGAs
1.11 AFL Victoria continue to foster partnerships with the School Building Authority to identify opportunities for school facility access and joint investment.	Medium	AFL Victoria	AFL Victoria	Leagues & LGAs
1.12 Project partners reference Universal Design Principles as outlined in SRV's Design for Everyone Guide for all new and existing facility upgrades.	Ongoing	State Government & LGAs	LGAs	AFL Victoria, Leagues & Clubs

Priority 2: Plan and develop new facilities in key football growth areas that respond to regional need and activates program, competitions and talent pathways opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITY		
		INITIATOR	DELIVERER	SUPPORTERS
2.1 Collectively lobby for investment into identified regional level venues that support wider catchment areas, events, league finals and player pathways.	Critical	AFL Victoria, Leagues & LGAs	AFL Victoria, LGAs & State Government	Leagues & Clubs
2.2 AFL Victoria to provide support to the YJFL and clubs impacted by the NEL to ensure appropriate displacement facilities are provided and new facility development projects meet the needs of football stakeholders.	Critical	Leagues, Boroondara & Manningham LGA	NELP, LGAs	AFL Victoria, State Government
2.3 AFL Victoria, leagues and project partner LGAs investigate options for the installation of one synthetic oval in each Melbourne East municipality with supporting funding models.	Medium	AFL Victoria, Leagues & LGAs	AFL Victoria, LGAs & State Government	Leagues & Clubs
2.4 Project partner LGAs and AFL Victoria investigate facility and ground capacity requirements for elite pathways to support competition expansion.	Medium	AFL Victoria & LGAs	AFL Victoria & LGAs	Leagues & Clubs
2.5 Collaboration to continue between AFL Victoria, leagues and Melbourne East Region LGAs in the planning of new facilities. The facility requirements from the AFL Preferred Facilities Guidelines to be considered where appropriate.	Medium	AFL Victoria & Leagues	AFL Victoria, LGAs & State Government	Leagues & Clubs
2.6 New facility innovations and products continue to be considered by project partners to increase carrying capacity and reduce ongoing maintenance costs.	Medium	AFL Victoria, LGAs	LGAs	Leagues & State Government
2.7 AFL Victoria continue to provide a Club Establishment Fund to provide seed funding for the establishment of any new football clubs. .	Medium	AFL Victoria	AFL Victoria	Leagues & LGAs
2.8 Project partners reference principles outlined in SRV's Design for Everyone Guide and Female Friendly Sport Infrastructure Guidelines for all new and existing facility upgrades.	Ongoing	State Government & LGAs	LGAs	AFL Victoria, Leagues & Clubs

Priority 3: Continue to enhance the relationship between football, government and other key stakeholders in the planning and provision of facilities and programs

RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY	STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITY		
		INITIATOR	DELIVERER	SUPPORTERS
3.1 Ensure the continuation of the Melbourne East Local Government Reference Group and expand the role of this group to include the implementation of recommendations from this Strategy.	Critical	Leagues	AFL Victoria & LGAs	Clubs
3.2 AFL Victoria, LGAs, leagues and Cricket Victoria to collaborate and identify project opportunities where female participants is strong across both sports.	Medium	AFL Victoria & Leagues	AFL Victoria, Leagues & Cricket Victoria, LGAs	LGAs
3.3 Project partners work collaboratively to identify alternate funding streams to support infrastructure investment.	Medium	AFL Victoria & Leagues, LGAs	AFL Victoria, Leagues & LGAs	Clubs & State Government
3.4 Melbourne East LGAs, via the Melbourne East Local Government Reference Group, to investigate options for developing a sinking fund that supports future facility investment at agreed regional level venues.	Medium	LGAs	LGAs	AFL Victoria & Leagues
3.5 Melbourne East LGAs continue to support and attend the AFL Victoria Local Government Forum and identify opportunities to present projects where participation in football has been enhanced.	Medium	AFL Victoria	AFL Victoria	LGAs
3.6 Initiate annual Football State of Play reports, ensuring collective understanding and progress of participation, sports development, facility improvement and new development activities	Ongoing	Leagues	Leagues	AFL Victoria & LGAs



STAKEHOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

AFL VICTORIA

AFL Victoria will play a lead role in Strategy implementation and continued collaboration with project partners.

AFL Victoria will need to drive collaboration between elite pathway stakeholders to identify facility development options, support infrastructure projects and identification of funding opportunities.

AFL Victoria will provide advice on facility requirements that meet the needs of football, identifying new developments in sports infrastructure materials and technology that improves facility investment outcomes and continue to take a leadership role in sourcing funding that supports LGA investment in community facilities.

AFL Victoria will also:

- Managing State wide strategies that support participation projections.
- Support club governance, financial management and sustainability processes.
- Maintaining strong partnerships with State and Federal Governments to support facility investment.
- Source alternate funding streams.
- Providing a Club Establishment Fund for new clubs in growth areas.

EFL / AFLOE / YJFL / VAFA

League commitment to the delivery of football in a changing environment is critical. Leagues will need to participate in facility planning and provide information and advice to LGAs on participation trends, strategic directions and goal setting.

Leagues will need to continue to coordinate sport development related initiatives through directing staff work plans and priorities. Implementation of female football and introductory and junior program expansion will continue to be core development opportunities for leagues to expand participation and grow their base. Innovative methods will be required to manage growth such as reviews of competition structures and fixturing and modifications to training and game times. Leagues will also need to support school and alternate venue access opportunities at the local level to address capacity issues.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Project partner LGAs will continue to deliver sport and recreation planning, maintenance and sport development initiatives across all sports. LGAs will need to consider the implementation of Critical Actions and use Strategy directions to inform facility investment priorities, internal planning, policy and capital works programs and securing partner investment. LGAs are encouraged to facilitate three-way communication between leagues and clubs and adopt Strategy objectives and priorities, utilising them as the basis for future planning.



CLUBS

Clubs will continue to deliver football to their communities. Specific to Strategy implementation will be their commitment to adapting to the changing environment of sport, implementing policies and processes from their State and Regional bodies, harnessing participation opportunities and supporting facility renewal through planning and direct investment.

Also essential to Strategy implementation will be developing Club understanding regarding core facility provision that directly supports participation growth against provision that is 'nice to have' and improved match scheduling to enhance participation opportunities and equity.

SCHOOLS

Schools in the Region will play a key role in supporting and growing the sport through embracing participation opportunities, and supporting facility access and investment where gaps in provision exist at the local level.

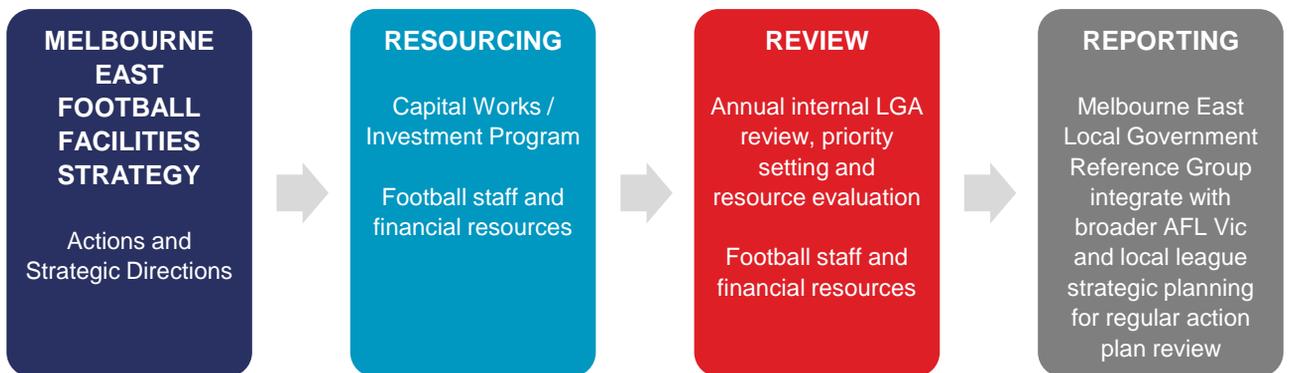
STATE / FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Government will play a key support role in the funding of strategic initiatives. It will also be responsible for ensuring continued focus is provided on the delivery of Strategy actions for greater benefit of the Melbourne East community. As a funding partner, SRV's Community Infrastructure Team plays a role during the design phase to develop facilities that are fit for purpose, consider environmentally sustainable and accessible design principles and serve the needs of the community.



MONITORING, MEASURING AND EVALUATING

To ensure stakeholders are successful in achieving mutual objectives in an efficient and effective manner, regular reviews of strategic directions are paramount. The following implementation, monitoring and reporting system is provided for stakeholder guidance and consideration in measuring the success of the Strategy.





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