

Sports Strategy 2026-2036

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians
of the places we live, work and play.

We recognise and respect the enduring
relationship they have with their
lands and waters, and we pay
respects to the Elders past,
present and emerging.





Contents

Executive summary	4	Current situation - local sports participation	17
Purpose of the strategy	6		
Scope	6		
Strategy methodology	6	Sports facility needs assessment	20
Strategic context	7		
Our community (demographic profile)	10	Sporting profiles by townships	24
Sports facility provision in Strathbogie	11	Euroa and District	22
Community and stakeholder engagement	12	Nagambie and Kirwans Bridge	24
Key findings/issues	13	Violet Town and district	26
		Avenel and district	28
		Rural North West	30
Sports facility planning framework	14	Sports Strategy recommendations	32
Vision and principles	14		
Strategy outcomes	15		
Council's role in sport	1s		

Sports Strategy Background Report

The *Sports Strategy Background Report* is an accompanying report to the Sports Strategy 2026-2036. It contains background information and data that helped inform the development of the strategy.

Acknowledgements

The involvement and assistance provided by Reserve Committees of Management, sports clubs and associations, and other stakeholders is appreciated. Special mention to Strathbogie Shire Council staff and Councillors for their input and guidance to develop the strategy.

Executive summary

The Strathbogie Shire Council Sports Strategy provides a 10-year framework for planning, managing and investing in community sport across the municipality. Community sport is a significant strength and contributes to the local community's overall health and wellbeing.

The Strategy is informed by demographic and participation data, facility and policy analysis, and community consultation with residents, clubs and associations, reserve committees, sporting bodies, government, Council staff and Councillors. Community consultation identified ageing infrastructure, rising maintenance costs, limited volunteer capacity and financial constraints for clubs and community as barriers to sports participation in Strathbogie.

The Strategy's vision is to support the health and wellbeing of the local community by providing accessible and inclusive sporting opportunities. The key principles that have been established to support this vision include providing strategic justification for decision-making with a strong evidence-based approach, ensuring sports facilities are

inclusive and equitable when improved or upgraded with priority given to facilities that encourage multi-use. In addition, all future improvements and supports should have a financially sustainable approach.

The Strategy delivers on Strathbogie's Council Plan 2025–2029, Objective One: Connect; by recognising sport as a key contributor to Strathbogie's health and wellbeing, social connection, inclusion, volunteerism, community capacity and rural resilience.

The sports facility assessment found that most existing assets can meet demand to 2036, and that emphasis should be placed on maintaining, upgrading and better use of current facilities rather than substantial expansion. Each township has unique characteristics that should be considered and appropriately planned for and supported.

The Strategy positions Council to move from a largely reactive role to an active planner, partner, advocate and co-investor. Decisions should be transparent and consider demonstrated community need, public benefit, accessibility, participation outcomes and value for money.

This document sets out priority recommendations to guide Council's commitment to sport over the next 10 years, with a strong focus on increasing participation, supporting community groups and clubs, and improving facilities to ensure equitable community access.

Strathbogie Shire is a rural municipality in central Victoria, about 125 kilometres north of Melbourne. It had an estimated population in 2025 of 11,840 across five townships.

Euroa & district

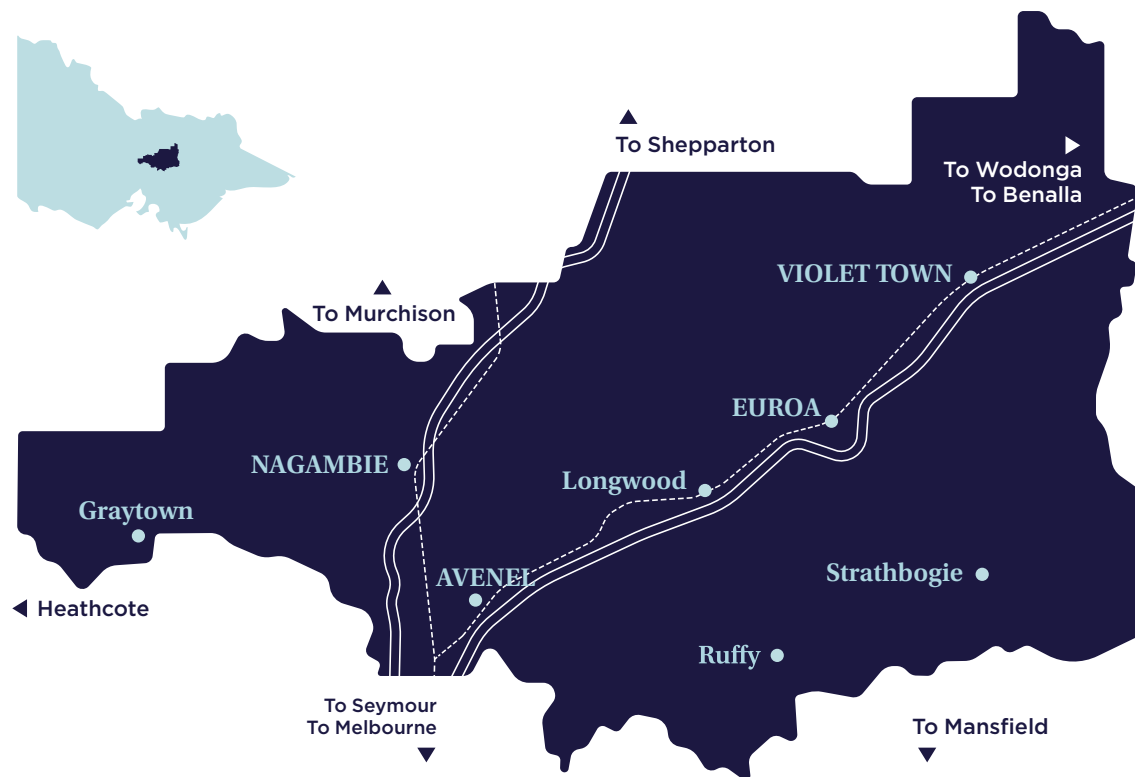
Nagambie - Kirwans Bridge

Violet Town & district

Avenel & district

Rural North West

Sport plays an important role in the lives of Strathbogie Shire residents, whether they participate as players, coaches, officials, volunteers or supporters. An estimated 3380 residents were active players across 44 sports clubs and associations throughout the Shire in 2025.



This represents an average Shire sports participation rate of 29%, which is higher than the participation rate throughout Regional Victoria of 17%.

The 2025-2029 Council Plan highlights the importance of sport, with its first strategic

objective, CONNECT, and is supported by the following strategy:

build a healthy, resilient, connected and engaged community

and supported by the key initiative:

develop a Strathbogie Shire Sports Strategy.

Purpose

The Sports Strategy 2026-2036 provides clear direction for the provision, development and management of high-quality sports facilities, infrastructure and sporting opportunities.

It sets out priority recommendations to guide Council's commitment to sport over the next 10 years, with a strong focus on increasing participation, supporting community groups and clubs, and improving facilities to ensure equitable community access. The strategy and its vision and principles will guide the planning, design and development of all Council-managed sports facilities.

Scope

 Athletics	 Equestrian	 Netball
 Bowls	 Football	 Rowing
 Cricket	 Hockey	 Soccer
 Croquet	 Indoor sports	 Tennis

Methodology

01

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Understanding the current situation

- Review of background reports
- Demographics
- Sports facility review
- Participation analysis

02

ENGAGEMENT

Gathering community input

- Community survey
- Reserve Committee meetings
- User group meetings
- Staff & Councillor workshops

03

SPORTS STRATEGY

Strategy development, review and finalise

- Vision and principles development
- Sports facility needs analysis
- Strategy recommendations
- Draft strategy and public exhibition
- Final Sports Strategy



Strategic context

Background reports and plans

The following planning reports and strategies were important references to inform the development of the Strathbogie Sports Strategy.

State plans and sports strategies

- **Active Victoria 2022-2026, Sport and Recreation Victoria:** The Victorian Government's *Active Victoria 2022-2026* framework remains an important reference point for Victorian council sports strategies. It positions sport and active recreation as contributing not only to participation, but

also to health, wellbeing, social connection, economic activity and liveability.

The current Victorian infrastructure funding framework is also increasingly *outcomes-led approach*, with emphasis on inclusion, accessibility, sustainability and improving participation among groups that participate less.

- **Relevant state sporting association strategies.** Council will maintain strategic partnerships with relevant state sporting associations to ensure the ongoing alignment of this Sports Strategy with state-level sport and recreation priorities, policies and participation objectives. Through these partnerships, Council will seek to coordinate

planning, advocacy and investment opportunities that support the sustainable development of sporting infrastructure, strengthen participation pathways, enhance club and volunteer capacity, and promote long-term growth and sustainability of community sport across Strathbogie Shire.

Council reports and strategies

- **Community Vision 2035.**
- **Council Plan 2025-2029.**
- **Annual Action Plan 2025-2026, including**
- **Council's Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion Plan.**
- **Fair Access Policy (2024).**
- **Play and Open Space Strategy 2024-2034.**

Legislative requirements for sport in Strathbogie

The delivery of community sport is governed by legislative and policy requirements that establish shared, but distinct, responsibilities for Council and sporting clubs and groups. Council is responsible for embedding gender equality, child safety and appropriate safeguarding requirements in its policies, services, facility allocation, funding arrangements and partnerships. Clubs and groups are responsible for applying these requirements in their governance and day-to-day operations, including equitable access to facilities and opportunities, child-safe policies and reporting processes, and appropriate screening of people undertaking child-related work.

The following requirements are particularly relevant to community sport in Strathbogie Shire.

1. Gender Equality Act 2020 & The Fair Access Policy Roadmap

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* directly targets local councils and it is a legal requirement for Council to promote gender equality in relevant policies and services. The Fair Access Policy Roadmap is a policy framework whereby councils must support gender-equitable access to community sports infrastructure moving forward.

Local sports clubs must show clear actions toward equal allocation of premium training slots, game times, coaching and facility use. Failure to comply with this legislation may prevent Council or local sporting clubs and Committees from receiving State infrastructure grants, due to being non-compliant and becoming ineligible for future funding.

2. Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Victorian Child Safe Standards)

Compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards is a compulsory legal requirement for any community sport organization that interacts with children under 18 years of age.

Sports club strategies should establish an internal reporting framework verifying that every club utilising Council assets has an active Child Safe Policy and a designated Child Safety Officer.

3. Working With Children Act 2005

The Working With Children Act governs the vetting of adult volunteers, coaches, referees and committee members. It is a criminal offence for a sports club to permit an individual to engage in child-related work (including volunteering) without a valid Working With Children Check (WWCC).

Strathbogie Shire Council Plan 2025–2029

The Council Plan identifies the importance of building a healthy, resilient, connected and engaged community, and creating opportunities for connection between townships and interest groups. It also recognises the role of strong networks, partnerships and community capacity in achieving better outcomes for the Shire.

Sport plays an important role in delivering these outcomes. Sporting clubs, recreation reserves and community facilities provide places where people can participate, volunteer, connect and build relationships. In a rural municipality such as Strathbogie Shire, these places and organisations can also provide important opportunities for connection between communities, generations and interest groups. They become more than a sporting facility, playing an important role as a community centre or hub.

The Strathbogie Sports Strategy provides a framework to guide Council's future role in supporting, planning for and investing in community sport. In doing so, it contributes to the delivery of a range of strategic directions, indicators and initiatives identified in Council's Plan under **Objective One: Connect**.

The Strategy therefore provides both a direct response to the Council Plan and a framework for translating the broader aspirations of **Connect** into practical actions, priorities and future investment decisions.

Through this approach, the Strathbogie Sports Strategy will help ensure that sport is considered not only in terms of facilities and infrastructure, but also for its broader contribution to community connection, health and wellbeing, inclusion, partnerships, volunteerism and community capacity. This positions sport as an important part of creating connected communities and supporting the long-term aspirations of Strathbogie Shire Council.

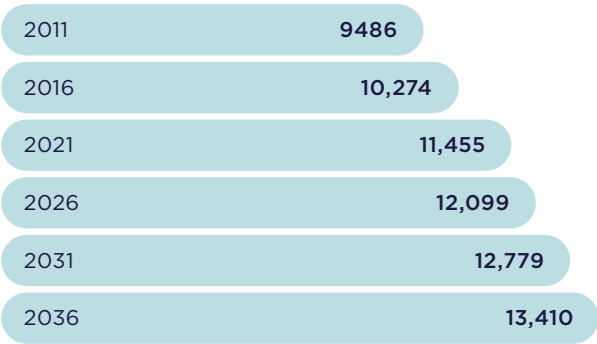


Our community

Strathbogie Shire’s demographic profile is characterised by modest population growth, an ageing community and ongoing affordability pressures. These trends indicate that sports planning should focus on accessible, affordable and age-inclusive participation, efficient use of existing facilities and targeted upgrades that deliver the greatest community benefit.

POPULATION CHANGE

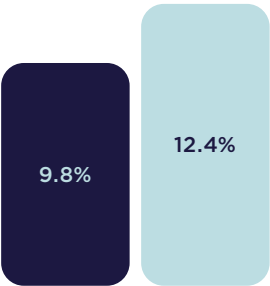
In 2021, 11,455 people lived in Strathbogie Shire, and this is projected to grow by 17.8% to 13,410 in 2036, with an annual average increase of 1.1% (compared to 1.7% for all of Victoria).



The projected population increase of approximately 2000 residents is unlikely to generate demand for substantial additional sports facilities. However, Strathbogie’s older population profile — a median age of 53 compared with 43 across regional Victoria — will influence participation needs. Council should therefore continue to support traditional sports while creating opportunities to attract and retain older adults through activities such as bowls, croquet, indoor sports, pickleball and tennis.

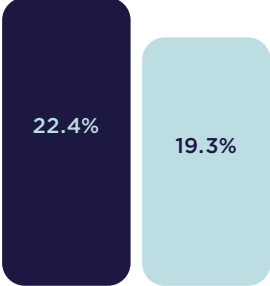
RESIDENTS BORN OVERSEAS

The proportion of residents born overseas is less than all of regional Victoria.



HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The proportion of households with a weekly income less than \$650 is higher than for all regional Victoria.

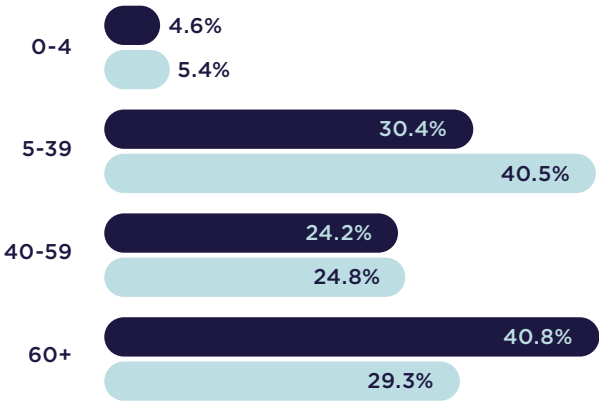


There is also opportunity to ensure that every life stage is catered for and opportunities are identified. This may include young people, families and young children.

The Shire’s demographic and socio-economic profile will also continue to affect residents’ capacity to afford participation fees and clubs’ capacity to contribute to capital facility upgrades. Maintaining affordable participation opportunities and prioritising equitable investment will therefore remain important.

POPULATION AGE COHORTS

Shire has an older age profile compared to regional Victoria.



Sports facility provision in Strathbogie



Athletics

Tracks	Clubs	Players
1	1	81



Bowls

Greens	Clubs	Players
7	4	195



Cricket

Pitches	Clubs	Players
9	3	250



Croquet

Courts	Clubs	Players
2	1	34



Equestrian

Grounds	Clubs	Players
2	3	49



Football

Fields	Clubs	Players
5	5	713



Hockey

Field	Clubs	Players
1	1	37



Basketball

Courts	Clubs	Players
2	2	116



Netball

Courts	Clubs	Players
10	5	504



Rowing

Course	Clubs	Players
1	1	32



Soccer

Pitches	Clubs	Players
2	2	215



Tennis

Courts	Clubs	Players
46	5	397

Community and stakeholder engagement

Consultation to inform the development of the Sports Strategy was undertaken with Strathbogie residents, reserve committees, sports clubs, sport peak bodies, State Government, Council staff, Councillors and other stakeholders.

Community survey

Overall, the feedback identified the need for modern, inclusive and safer sports facilities to meet the needs of the community.

Most popular sports		
1	Football	39% of responses
2	Cricket	37% of responses
3	Netball	34% of responses
4	Tennis	30% of responses

Participation type		
1	With a sports club	86% of responses
2	Play casually	30% of responses
3	Play with family/friends	30% of responses
4	Social competition	27% of responses
5	Tennis	30% of responses

Respondents indicated they would like to see additional facilities for soccer (32%) and basketball (6%).

Consultation with clubs and associations

A total of 44 sports clubs and associations completed the survey, with many also participating in follow-up meetings at recreation reserves.

While most clubs reported stable or increasing membership, consultation highlighted a range of connected pressures affecting their long-term sustainability.



Key findings and issues

Ageing infrastructure and rising maintenance costs are increasing the need for upgrades, while limited volunteer capacity and financial constraints affect clubs' ability to plan, fund and deliver improvements. Participants also identified gender inequity, accessibility barriers and gaps in supporting infrastructure — including lighting, seating and shelter — as key issues to be addressed. The findings are summarised below.

Infrastructure and facilities

- Provide fit-for-purpose, gender-inclusive change rooms and amenities.
- Upgrade or install sports lighting at football ovals and netball courts to support evening training and increase facility use.
- Improve drainage and irrigation for sports fields.
- Upgrade netball courts, cricket practice nets and tennis courts.
- Address inequities in capital funding for facility development arising from differences in land ownership and tenure.

Access and availability

- Provide additional or expanded indoor sports facilities.
- Provide additional sports fields for soccer, cricket and Little Athletics.
- Strengthen regional event capability to attract sports tourism.

Club health and membership

- **22 clubs** reported increasing membership.
- **19 clubs** reported stable membership.
- **3 clubs** reported declining membership.

For a complete account of stakeholder engagement activities and findings, refer to the Sports Strategy 2026-2036 Background Report.



Sports facility planning framework

Vision and principles

VISION

To support the health and wellbeing of the Strathbogie community through accessible, inclusive and sustainable sporting opportunities

PRINCIPLES

Strategic justification

Improvements to sports facilities will be supported by a strong evidence-based rationale including local, regional or state sporting plans that address community need and demonstrate community benefit.

Financially sustainable

Cost effectiveness will guide all sports facility development, with upgrades and renewals prioritised over new construction, where feasible.

Inclusive and equitable

Provide safe, welcoming and culturally appropriate sports facilities that are accessible to people of all ages, genders and abilities.

Multi-use

Multi-use and shared facilities will be prioritised, with flexible designs that adapt to changing community needs and meet future demand. Sports facilities should accommodate a diverse range of sports and support sustained participation.



Strategy outcomes

Implementation of the Sports Strategy 2026-2036 will deliver the following outcomes:

01

Smarter, impact-based investment

- Investment proportional to community benefit.
- Focus on multi-use facilities that deliver multi-benefit outcomes.
- Investment maximised and justified using solid data.

02

Evidence-based and data-driven decisions

- Use reports, data and metrics to guide decisions.

03

Stronger funding and grant leverage

- Use of the strategy to strengthen grant applications.
- Investment decisions will be strategic and future-focused.

04

Innovation in asset use and planning

- Think outside traditional models of provision.
- Innovate around how facilities are used and shared.

05

Strong partnerships between clubs and council

- Reliable and trusting relationships established.
- Clarity in hierarchy of use and participation.

06

Sports reserves as community hubs

- Multi-use shared community spaces.
- Facilities viewed as broader community assets.

07

Realistic expectations

- Acknowledgement that Council can't provide everything for everyone.

Council’s role in sport

Historical approach

Historically, Council has not invested in capital improvement projects on land it does not own or manage. This includes private land and Crown land reserves for which Strathbogie Council is not the delegated committee of management.

Community benefit and club capacity

Council supports sporting clubs and community groups to strengthen their governance, management and day-to-day operations. This includes providing club development opportunities through training, education and skills development for committee members, volunteers and the broader community. These initiatives aim to build club capability, improve sustainability and increase opportunities for residents to participate in sport. Council also promotes funding opportunities and provides advice and assistance with grant applications.

Community sports clubs across Strathbogie generally provide open access to membership and participation, regardless of the ownership or management of the land on which they operate. Most clubs are not-for-profit organisations managed by volunteers and have limited capacity to raise funds for major capital improvements. These constraints apply broadly across clubs, irrespective of land tenure or management arrangements.

Proposed way forward

Council should investigate an equitable approach to supporting sports clubs that provide participation opportunities and deliver health and wellbeing benefits for local residents, regardless of land ownership.

In considering support for capital projects on private or Crown land, Council should assess:

- demonstrated community need and public benefit
- accessibility and equitable participation outcomes
- land tenure, governance and long-term community access

- club capacity and opportunities for co-investment
- value for money and the expected return on Council’s investment.

The following activities outline Council’s role in sport in Strathbogie in partnership with local, regional and state sporting clubs, associations, peak bodies and all levels of government:

Plan

Council should plan for the development and management of sports facilities and services to cater for identified community sporting needs.

Deliver

Council should aim to deliver capital works and building maintenance that improve sports facilities and support participation, delivered through direct or shared funding, facilitated funding opportunities or access arrangements.

Partner

Council should partner with reserve committees, sports clubs and associations, education providers and the private sector to develop, maintain and manage sports facilities that meet community needs.

Advocate

Council has an important role in advocating to government agencies, private entities and public organisations on behalf of sports clubs and committees to secure funding and investment that benefits the community.

This may include supporting sport pathways from grassroots and community participation through to elite state and national-level training and competition within the Shire.

*Similar to all of Victoria

**Lower rate for basketball may be explained by the lack of indoor courts throughout the Shire and that some residents will be playing in associations outside Strathbogie.

Current situation - local sports participation

Sports participation in all sports across the shire

20 Sports

40 Clubs

3380 Sports club members
(29% of the shire population)

56%
Junior*

44%
Adult*

61%
Male*

39%
Female*

Sports participation in the 12 sports in scope for the sports strategy

12 Sports

36 Clubs

2623 Sports club members
(22% of the shire population)

Basketball & tennis have lower rates of participation compared to State averages.**

Football & netball have significantly higher rates of participation than State averages.

High rates of participation for **Bowls & croquet** are likely due to the older age profile of the Shire.

High rates of participation are consistent with regional Victoria having higher rates of participation in club-based sport compared to the Melbourne metropolitan area.

Shire participation compared with all of Victoria

Local participation exceeds the State average
Local participation is lower than the State average

Sports Club/ Association	Number of players		Participation rate Responsibility	
	Club total	Sport total	Shire rate	Vic avg.
ATHLETICS				
Nagambie Little Athletics	81	81	0.71	0.28
BOWLS				
Avenel Bowling Club	34	195	1.70	0.50
Euroa Bowls Club	90			
Nagambie Bowls Club	45			
Violet Town Bowls Club	25			
CRICKET				
Avenel Cricket Club	50	250	2.18	2.27
Euroa Cricket Club	120			
Nagambie Cricket Club	80			
CROQUET				
Euroa Croquet Club	34	34	0.77	0.04

Sports Club/ Association	Number of players		Participation rate Responsibility	
	Club total	Sport total	Shire rate	Vic avg.
EQUESTRIAN				
Euroa Pony Club	32	49	0.43	Not available
Ruffy Adult Riding Club and Gymkhana	5			
Violet Town Horse Trail Riders Club	12			
FOOTBALL				
Avenel Football Netball Club	107	713	6.22	3.50
Euroa Football Netball Club	66			
Euroa Junior Football Netball Club	60			
Euroa Auskick	60			
Longwood Football Netball Club	100			
Nagambie Football Netball Club	200			
Violet Town Football Netball Club	120			

- Local participation exceeds the State average
■ Local participation is lower than the State average

Sports Club/ Association	Number of players		Participation rate Responsibility	
	Club total	Sport total	Shire rate	Vic avg.
HOCKEY				
Euroa Hockey Club	37	37	0.32	0.25
INDOOR SPORTS				
Euroa Basketball Association	60	60	0.52	3.15
Euroa & District Badminton Association	56	56	0.49	0.16
NETBALL				
Avenel Football Netball Club	100	504	4.40	1.68
Euroa Football Netball Club	50			
Euroa Junior Football Netball Club	109			
Longwood Football Netball Club	80			
Nagambie Football Netball Club	105			
Violet Town Football Netball Club	60			

Sports Club/ Association	Number of players		Participation rate Responsibility	
	Club total	Sport total	Shire rate	Vic avg.
ROWING				
Nagambie Rowing Club	32	32	0.28	0.04
SOCCER				
Euroa Soccer Club	105	215	1.88	1.31
Nagambie Soccer Club	110			
TENNIS				
Avenel Tennis Club	72	397	3.47	3.08
Euroa Lawn Tennis Club	220			
Nagambie Tennis Club	45			
Strathbogrie Tennis Club	47			
Violet Town Tennis Club	12			
TOTAL	2623	2623		

Strathbogie's sports facility needs assessment

A sports facility needs analysis was completed for the 12 sports within the strategy's scope. It assessed facility provision to 2036 and identified projected gaps, areas of sufficient capacity and potential oversupply. The methodology is detailed in the Sports Strategy 2026-2036 Background Report.

Athletics

The existing grass track at Nagambie Recreation Reserve can accommodate projected growth in Little Athletics to 2036. If further development occurs in Nagambie, additional athletics facilities should be considered to reduce pressure on the reserve as participation and the range of sports increase.

Bowls

Six greens are expected to be sufficient to meet future demand for bowls. Euroa and Nagambie each have two greens, while Violet Town and Avenel each have one. The priority for bowls clubs is to improve social spaces and supporting infrastructure, including shade, seating and lighting.

Cricket

The nine existing cricket ovals, including two school ovals, will exceed projected demand.

It will be important to retain the school ovals in Euroa and Nagambie for the use of the hard centre wickets to support junior cricket development. If an additional hard wicket is required to support junior participation, this could be developed at Longwood Recreation Reserve.

Retaining the ovals at Strathbogie and Ruffy recreation reserves would also support junior development in the sport for social cricket and other community events would be beneficial.

Croquet

Euroa Croquet Club is the municipality's only croquet club and currently has two courts. Benchmarking indicates that three additional courts may be required to meet future demand.

If demand emerges, the unused bowling green at Violet Town or the former green at Avenel Bowling Club could be adapted for croquet. This would enable either club to broaden its activities and operate as a combined bowls and croquet club.

Equestrian

Longwood and Ruffy have sufficient capacity to meet future demand from riding clubs. Private equestrian instructors and facilities across the municipality will also continue to provide community programs and services.

Football

The five ovals used by the municipality's five football-netball clubs are expected to meet football needs to 2036. Ongoing maintenance and targeted upgrades will be required to ensure these ovals continue to support participation.

Hockey

A dedicated synthetic hockey pitch is not considered feasible because of the high construction and management costs. A joint-use hockey and soccer pitch is also not viable because hockey requires a short-fibre surface, while soccer requires a longer pile. To sustain local hockey participation, Council should support Euroa Hockey Club with suitable training facilities, including quality grass surfaces, floodlighting and pavilion

amenities. Competition matches should continue to be held at the Shepparton Sports City hockey centre.

Basketball

Strathbogie has two indoor courts available for community use which are not Council owned. Neither court is Council-owned. Benchmarking indicates that the two courts at Euroa Sports Centre should be sufficient to meet demand to 2036.

The courts have capacity to support additional growth in basketball, which is expected given the municipality's comparatively low participation rate.

There are currently no organised indoor netball, volleyball or table tennis competitions. Retaining community access to indoor courts is therefore important. The most economical approach is to formalise a partnership with Euroa Secondary College to secure ongoing community access.

Netball

The municipality's 10 outdoor netball courts serve five football-netball clubs, with two courts at each club. Although participation is expected to grow, the existing courts should provide sufficient capacity to 2036. However, some existing courts require upgrades to support participation.

Rowing

Nagambie Rowing Club has capacity to meet future demand, while Lake Nagambie and the Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre provide substantial training capacity. Further development of the site could support state- and national-level training and competition, significantly expanding the range of sporting events hosted at the facility.

Soccer

Two soccer pitches are projected to be required to meet demand to 2036.

The municipality currently has no dedicated soccer pitches, despite strong participation and projected growth. Competition is centralised in towns outside the municipality,

so dedicated local pitches are not essential for fixtures. However, providing compliant training pitches is highly desirable because it would support the existing player base, improve skills development and provide a more suitable training environment.

Providing one or two pitches would also enable the Nagambie and Euroa soccer clubs to host practice matches and tournaments with other clubs, helping to build local interest and support the sport's development.

Tennis

The existing 31 hardcourt and synthetic surface tennis courts will exceed demand for courts in the future. All five tennis clubs have capacity to accommodate future demand for tennis. The focus is to upgrade existing courts, especially in Nagambie and Avenel where there is indication of growth. Courts could be re-purposed for pickleball, thereby providing the opportunity for club membership to grow because of the diversification of use of the courts.

Sporting profile by townships: Euroa & district

3

Euroa, Strathbogie & Ruffy

83

Existing facility provisions

13

Sporting clubs

1119

Participants

Population growth in Euroa and district has been steady and is expected to continue over the life of this Strategy. The population increased from 4037 residents in 2016 to 4392 residents in 2021, representing growth of 8.8%.

While this was below the overall growth rate of 11.5% recorded across Strathbogie Shire during the same period, future growth is forecast to be stronger in Euroa and district.

The population is projected to increase by approximately 707 residents to 5099 by 2036, representing growth of 16.1%, compared with projected Shire-wide growth of 14.6%.

Euroa and district has an older age profile than Strathbogie Shire overall, reflecting broader demographic trends associated with an ageing rural population.

Despite this, the number of residents aged five to 39 years, the primary participation cohort for many organised sports, is projected to increase by approximately 215 people by 2036.

This growth is expected to support ongoing demand for sport and recreation opportunities and reinforces the importance of maintaining and improving local sporting infrastructure to meet future community needs.

Euroa has the highest participation rates in a range of sports with strong participation numbers in bowls, tennis, football, netball, croquet, cricket and soccer

The growth of sports such as pickleball, basketball and soccer reflects broader shifts in participation preferences towards activities that are flexible, inclusive and accessible across all ages.

- Supporting these sports provides an opportunity to:
- increase overall physical activity participation levels across the community
 - diversify the sporting opportunities available to residents
 - increase participation opportunities for women, girls and underrepresented groups
 - cater for the needs of an ageing population through low-impact and lifelong participation activities
 - improve utilisation of existing sporting infrastructure, particularly underused tennis courts and indoor facilities
 - strengthen community connectedness and social wellbeing
 - build more sustainable sporting clubs by attracting new members and volunteers.
- Supporting the continued development of these growth sports and supporting traditional sports will assist Euroa and Strathbogie Shire to create a more inclusive,

adaptable and resilient sports sector that responds to changing community needs and demographic trends through to 2036.

Existing facilities

- Euroa Memorial Oval
- Friendlies Oval
- Euroa Lawn Tennis Club
- Euroa Bowls Club
- Euroa Croquet Club
- Euroa Secondary College
- Strathbogie Recreation Reserve
- Ruffy Recreation Reserve

Sporting clubs

- Euroa Football Netball Club
- Euroa Auskick
- Euroa Cricket Club
- Euroa Hockey Club
- Euroa Soccer Club
- Euroa Lawn Tennis Club
- Euroa Bowls Club
- Euroa Croquet Club
- Euroa Basketball Association
- Euroa & District Badminton Club
- Ruffy Adult Riding Club
- Strathbogie Tennis Club



Data source: Community Profile, i.d consulting 2025

Sporting profile by townships: Nagambie & Kirwans Bridge

2

Nagambie, Kirwans Bridge

5

Existing facility provisions

7

Sporting clubs

699

Participants

The population of Nagambie and Kirwans Bridge increased from 2029 residents in 2016 to 2386 residents in 2021, representing growth of 17.6%. This exceeded the Shire-wide growth rate of 11.5% over the same period.

Nagambie and Kirwans Bridge is projected to continue growing, with the population forecast to increase by approximately 825 residents to 3211 by 2036. This represents growth of 34.6%, compared with projected growth of 14.6% across Strathbogie Shire.

Nagambie and Kirwans Bridge has a younger age profile than Strathbogie Shire as a whole. The number of residents aged five to 39 years, the primary age cohort for organised

sport participation, is projected to increase by approximately 262 people by 2036. This growth is expected to support ongoing demand for sporting opportunities and the continued use of existing sports facilities, and highlights the importance of maintaining and improving local sporting infrastructure to meet future community needs.

Projected population growth, demographic change and increasing demand for diverse recreation opportunities indicate that rowing, soccer and Little Athletics will play an increasingly important role in meeting future community needs. In addition, there is a strong participation base of traditional sports including football, netball and cricket.

Collectively, these sports provide opportunities to:

- accommodate population growth and increasing demand for sport and recreation opportunities
- diversify participation options beyond traditional football, netball and cricket

- increase participation among women and girls
- strengthen junior sport pathways and youth retention
- support healthy and active lifestyles across all age groups
- maximise the use of existing community and sporting infrastructure
- leverage Nagambie’s unique rowing assets and sporting tourism opportunities
- build stronger connections between schools, clubs and the broader community.

By 2036, the growth sports have the potential to significantly broaden the sporting landscape of the Nagambie and Kirwans Bridge district, creating a more diverse, inclusive and sustainable recreation network that responds to the needs of a growing and changing population. The traditional sports that have strong participation may need to investigate alternative options for a secondary ground given the number of clubs located at the one facility.

Existing facilities

- Nagambie Recreation Reserve
- Nagambie Lakes Regatta Centre
- Nagambie Bowls Club
- Nagambie Tennis Club
- Nagambie Primary School

Sporting Clubs

- Nagambie Football Netball Club
- Nagambie Bowls Club
- Nagambie Rowing Club
- Nagambie Cricket Club
- Nagambie Soccer Club
- Nagambie Tennis Club
- Nagambie Little Athletics Club

Data source: Community Profile, i.d consulting 2025"



Sporting profile by townships: Violet Town & district

1 Violet Town & district

4 Existing facility provisions

4 Sporting clubs

229 Participants

The population of Violet Town and District increased from 1539 residents in 2016 to 1736 residents in 2021, representing growth of 12.8%. This was slightly higher than the Shire-wide growth rate of 11.5% over the same period.

Violet Town and district is projected to continue growing, with the population forecast to increase by approximately 107 residents to 1843 by 2036. This represents growth of 6.2%, compared with projected growth of 14.6% across Strathbogie Shire.

Violet Town and district has an older age profile than Strathbogie Shire as a whole. Despite this, the number of residents aged five to 39 years, the primary age cohort for

organised sport participation, is projected to increase by approximately 27 people by 2036.

This growth is expected to support ongoing demand for sporting opportunities and the continued use of existing sports facilities, and highlights the importance of maintaining and improving local sporting infrastructure to meet future community needs.

Given the district's modest population growth and ageing demographic profile, the focus should be on optimising existing assets, supporting lifelong participation and creating a sustainable sports network that continues to serve the needs of the Violet Town community through to 2036.

By 2036, the key strategic priorities recommended for Violet Town and district would be to:

- support active ageing through accessible and low-impact recreation opportunities
- maintain and strengthen participation in existing sporting clubs
- retain and attract younger participants through quality programs and facilities
- increase opportunities for women, girls and underrepresented groups
- maximise the use and sustainability of existing sporting infrastructure
- diversify recreation opportunities to meet changing community preferences
- strengthen community wellbeing, social inclusion and volunteer capacity
- ensure facilities remain adaptable and responsive to future demographic change.

Existing facilities

- Violet Town Recreation Reserve
- Violet Town Tennis Club
- Violet Town Bowls Club
- Shadforth Reserve Various Trails

Sporting clubs

- Violet Town Football Netball Club
- Violet Town Tennis Club
- Violet Town Bowls Club
- Violet Town Horse Trail Riders Club



Data source: Community Profile, i.d consulting 2025

Sporting profile by townships: Avenel & district

1 Avenel & district

11 Existing facility provisions

4 Sporting clubs

364 Participants

The population of Avenel and District increased from 1449 residents in 2016 to 1603 residents in 2021, representing growth of 10.6%. This was slightly below the Shire-wide growth rate of 11.5% over the same period.

Avenel and district is projected to continue growing, with the population forecast to increase by approximately 150 residents to 1753 by 2036. This represents growth of 9.4%, compared with projected growth of 14.6% across Strathbogie Shire.

Avenel and district has a younger age profile than Strathbogie Shire as a whole. The number of residents aged five to 39 years, the primary age cohort for organised sport

participation, is projected to increase by approximately 50 people by 2036.

This growth is expected to support ongoing demand for sporting opportunities and the continued use of existing sports facilities, and highlights the importance of maintaining and improving local sporting infrastructure to meet future community needs.

With a strong sporting culture, growing youth population and well-established sporting infrastructure, Avenel is well positioned to continue as one of the Shire's strongest participation communities, supporting both traditional and emerging sports while meeting the needs of a growing and changing population through to 2036.

By 2036, Avenel and District should seek to:

- accommodate population growth and increased demand for sport and recreation opportunities
- capitalise on its younger demographic profile to strengthen junior and youth participation
- maintain participation rates that currently exceed Victorian averages
- support the growth and sustainability of local sporting clubs and volunteers
- expand opportunities for women, girls and emerging participant groups
- foster growth sports such as pickleball and other flexible recreation activities
- maximise utilisation and quality of existing sporting facilities
- strengthen pathways that encourage lifelong participation in sport and physical activity
- enhance community wellbeing, social connection and active living outcomes.

Existing facilities

- Avenel Recreation Reserve
- Avenel Bowls Club
- Avenel Tennis Club

Sporting clubs

- Avenel Football Netball Club
- Avenel Cricket Club
- Avenel Tennis Club
- Avenel Bowls Club



Data source: Community Profile, i.d consulting 2025

Sporting profile by townships: Rural North West

1 Longwood & district
8 Existing facility provisions
5 Sporting clubs
170 Participants

The population of Rural North West increased from 1196 residents in 2016 to 1341 residents in 2021, representing growth of 12.1%. This was slightly higher than the Shire-wide growth rate of 11.5% over the same period.

Rural North West is projected to continue growing, with the population forecast to increase by approximately 104 residents to 1445 by 2036. This represents growth of 7.8%, compared with projected growth of 14.6% across Strathbogie Shire.

Rural North West has a relatively younger age profile than Strathbogie Shire as a whole, with a higher proportion of residents aged 40 to 59 years and a lower proportion aged 60 years and over. The number of residents aged five to

39 years, the primary age cohort for organised sport participation, is projected to increase by approximately by 31 people by 2036.

This growth is expected to support ongoing demand for sporting opportunities and the continued use of existing sports facilities, and highlights the importance of maintaining and improving local sporting infrastructure to meet future community needs.

With strong community participation, a stable demographic profile and an established sporting hub at Longwood Recreation Reserve, the Rural North West district is well positioned to sustain and strengthen its sport and recreation network through to 2036, while continuing to play an important role in supporting community wellbeing and connectedness.

By 2036, the Rural North West district should seek to:

- maintain the strong participation culture that exists within football and netball
- support the long-term sustainability of local sporting clubs and volunteers
- accommodate moderate population growth and increased participation demand
- strengthen junior participation pathways and community engagement
- increase opportunities for women, girls and diverse participant groups
- maximise the utilisation and functionality of Longwood Recreation Reserve
- expand informal and social recreation opportunities alongside traditional sport
- support active and healthy lifestyles across all age groups
- strengthen social connection and community resilience through sport and recreation.

Existing facilities

- Longwood Recreation Reserve

Sporting clubs

- Longwood Football Netball Club
- Euroa Pony Club
- Longwood Indoor Bowls
- Longwood Coursing Club
- Longwood Tennis Club (social)

Data source: Community Profile, i.d consulting 2025



Sports strategy recommendations

Partnerships

Strong partnerships will be central to building a connected and sustainable local sporting community. Council will work collaboratively with clubs and community stakeholders to share knowledge and resources, strengthen local capability, improve access to facilities and programs, and coordinate planning and investment. These partnerships will help ensure local priorities are understood and that opportunities for participation and club development are supported by Council.

Recommendations

1. Establish a Municipal Sports Reference Group to bring together local stakeholders and representatives to share information and coordinate action across community sport. The Reference Group will support emerging sports clubs needs related to sport, develop shared priorities, support participation and volunteer initiatives and promote collaboration and shared use of resources.
2. Establish joint-use agreements with relevant local schools where shared access provides a clear community benefit, enabling clubs and community groups to use suitable education facilities outside school hours for training, competition and participation programs. Agreements will define access, scheduling, maintenance, operating costs, insurance and asset responsibilities.
3. Strengthen the partnership between Council and Valley Sport to support local sports clubs through education, training and capacity-building opportunities.
4. Build active partnerships with relevant State Sporting Associations to align local facility planning, participation development and club support with sport-specific standards and priorities. Council and associations will share data and technical advice, identify development opportunities and coordinate support for local clubs.

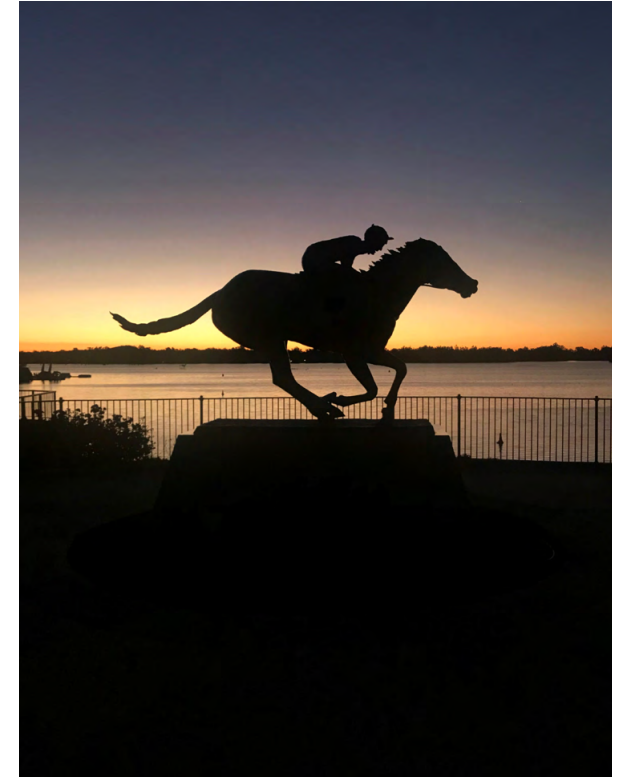


Club development and support

Strong, sustainable sports clubs are essential to increasing participation and maintaining vibrant rural communities. Council will take a more active role in helping clubs respond to local needs, strengthen their volunteer base and provide flexible, inclusive opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. By supporting targeted planning, testing new participation models and making better use of existing facilities, these recommendations aim to build club capability, broaden community involvement and improve the long-term viability of local sport.

Recommendations

1. Offer support and facilitate the development of targeted club development and participation plans with clubs and sport partners. Plans should use local demographic and participation data to identify realistic opportunities such as junior pathways, women and girls, older adults, people with disability, social and modified formats, seasonal programs and shared teams across neighbouring towns.
2. Provide support and advice to sports clubs to ensure that clubs can address and meet legislative requirements in relation to child safety and gender equity, including assistance in developing policies and procedures in partnership with Valley Sports Assembly.
3. Establish a municipal volunteer development program to help clubs recruit, induct, train, recognise and retain volunteers. Support will include practical resources, shared training, succession planning, role descriptions, mentoring and initiatives that reduce the workload placed on a small number of long-term volunteers.
4. Work with schools, clubs, community organisations and State Sporting Associations to activate local facilities and create inclusive pathways into regular participation across all life stages. Initiatives may include school-to-club transitions and junior development, flexible and social activities for mid-



life adults, and accessible low-impact, modified and age-friendly programs for older residents, with a focus on low-cost, flexible and social participation opportunities. This could include coordinated promotions, come-and-try events, shared equipment and suitable scheduling to help participants explore a range of sports to support ongoing involvement and participation.

Strategic

Council will transition from a largely reactive role to an active partner and co-investor in community sport. Over the life of this strategy, Council will provide transparent planning, sustainable asset management, targeted capital investment and strengthen the relationship between Council and clubs to provide further support. Investment will be evidence-based, financially responsible and focused on safe, accessible and well-utilised facilities that enable participation and strengthen rural communities.

Recommendations

1. Develop a Sports Facilities Capital Works Prioritisation Framework to guide Council's future investment in sporting infrastructure. The framework will apply clear, transparent and agreed criteria to assess demonstrated community need, strategic alignment, asset condition, accessibility, participation outcomes, project readiness, whole-of-life costs and value for money. Priorities will be informed by endorsed master plans, asset

condition audits and Council's Asset Management Framework and Policy, while also recognising the social, health and community benefits generated by the clubs, organisations and communities that use each facility.

Capital improvement programs could include:

- amenities (changerooms and toilets) upgrades
 - supporting infrastructure (shade, seating)
 - sports grounds and surfaces (fields and courts)
 - sports lighting
 - accessibility and equitable access upgrades (universal design and gender neutral spaces).
2. Finalise draft master plans and review and update prepared master plans for Council consideration and endorsement.

Master plans in draft:

- Nagambie Recreation Reserve
- Euroa Memorial Reserve

- Violet Town Recreation Reserve
- Nagambie Regatta and Peninsula
- Avenel Recreation Reserve.

Revisit and update the following master plans:

- Longwood Recreation Reserve
 - Euroa Friendlies Reserve
 - Seven Creeks Master Plan.
3. Incorporate all proposed upgrade or refurbishment projects from endorsed master plans into the sports facilities capital works prioritisation framework once developed.
 4. Establish an ongoing allocation within Council's annual budget to fund priority sports facility upgrades and improvements.
 5. Establish a Sports Facilities Responsibilities Framework to clarify capital development, improvement and replacement responsibilities between Council and community.
 6. Develop a tenure policy for sports facility management agreements that clearly

defines the roles and responsibilities of Council, sports clubs and committees of management in managing and maintaining sports facilities across the municipality.

7. Develop a Minimum Sports Facility Standards Guide for upgrades and improvements to sports facilities, taking into consideration universal design standards, gender neutrality and value for money.
8. Review the needs of DEECA facilities managed by DEECA Committees of Management and identify options for Council to support their long-term sustainability.



strathbogie.vic.gov.au

CONTACT US

strathbogie.vic.gov.au



1800 065 993
info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au
PO Box 177, Euroa VIC 3666