

**A SPORT AND RECREATION POLICY FOR THE
SHIRE OF HERBERTON**

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a framework for a sport and recreation policy for the Shire of Herberton. This has been developed from a review of Council's 1994-95 Corporate Plan, the findings of the 1994 community meetings held in the three Shire towns, interviews with senior officers and a planning workshop with Councillors and senior officers.

1.2 THE BASIS OF THE POLICY: COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN

The forward to Council's 1994-95 Corporate Plan states that

"The primary role of local government is to assume responsibility for the good rule and government of its area. In performing this role, the functions of our Council are many and varied. Broadly speaking, they may be grouped into five major categories". These categories are:

- *Service Functions* covering both property and people and including for example, refuse collection, sewerage, libraries, recreation, parks, street lighting
- *Regulatory Functions* covering the control and administration of laws governing issues such as buildings, subdivisions, parking, parks
- *Representation Functions* covering the duty of Councillors to represent and act in the interests of the community
- *Community Planning and Co-ordination Functions* dealing with the planning and co-ordination of services and facilities including those provided by government agencies, voluntary, and community groups. The Corporate Plan statement notes that through its responsibilities in this area, Council also *"provides direct and indirect support and assistance for sporting, cultural and recreational activities"*.
- *Participation Functions*. This covers the provision of channels for community participation in *"policies and decisions affecting the community"*.

The forward to the Corporate Plan concludes by noting amongst other things, that in the light of its roles, the elected members, management and staff of the Shire *"need to work together to a plan that addresses the present and future needs of the residents of our Shire"*.

It is evident from the foregoing that *each* of the broad roles adopted by Council in its Corporate Plan has a bearing on the provision of sport and recreation facilities, programs and services. Thus, it *services* needs through the provision of facilities; it *regulates* activities through rules governing the condition, standards, costs and types of use which can be made of facilities; it *represents* the community and acts in its widest interest; it *plans and co-ordinates* initiatives taken by an array of bodies, and it makes provision for *community participation* in development decisions and policies.

Two other items from the introduction to the Corporate Plan are of major significance. First, the Mission Statement indicates that Council's role is *"to provide strong, positive and effective services and direction to achieve maximum community benefits"*. Second, the "basic values listed as *"fundamental to the mission statement are quality service, continuous improvement, people concern and teamwork"*. These give a very clear basis for the emphasis of the current recreation plan: that Council is a facilitator, quality assurance body and co-ordinator of action rather than a provider.

1.3 COMMUNITY VIEWS ON COUNCIL'S SPORT AND RECREATION RESPONSIBILITIES

The thrust of Council's Corporate Plan in so far as it relates to sport and recreation was strongly endorsed by the 1994 meetings held to review priorities for action and the roles and responsibilities of Council in this area. While full details of the meeting outcomes on the issue are provided in the Appendices, the key sport and recreation responsibilities attributed to Council were:

- Overseeing new initiatives
- Mediating between competing interests
- Ensuring equity, applying one rule for all
- Encouraging self-help, assist with ensuring club viability, encourage enthusiasm and seek to achieve community multi-use
- Helping set up facilities and programs
- Identifying needs and possible providers
- Pursuing equity of opportunity
- Meeting need
- Supporting community initiative
- Ensuring benefits are gained
- Encouraging multi-use, undertaking cost benefit analyses, diversity.
- Providing liaison and information.
- Providing informal recreation opportunities
- Encouraging other agencies to act
- Providing/encouraging profitable activities
- Co-ordinating initiative
- Providing cash (sponsorship) subsidies
- Assisting with the maintenance of facilities.

Clearly, the principles and mission of the Corporate Plan and the community's endorsement of them again support the emphasis on Council being a co-ordinator, facilitator and advisor rather than a simple provider. This will put great demands on all areas of Council's work and not the least on its dealings with sport and recreation issues as these are so close to the daily life of the community.

Yet the review of Council's budget indicates that its capacity to fulfill the responsibilities adopted through the Corporate Plan will be quite limited. This, together with the scope of Council's mission statement and the values which underpin it will demand that what is done by Council is done *efficiently and effectively*.

Specifically, it would appear that Council's capacity to provide sport and recreation *facilities* will be extremely restricted. By comparison, and as a consequence, there is likely to be a far greater ability and need for it to provide or support sport and recreation *programs and services*. In this context, "services" includes items such as planning advice and guidance; information; fundraising assistance; promotion; support; professional advice; community transport, and liaison with and the encouragement of initiatives by voluntary, private and commercial bodies.

1.4 A SYNTHESIS OF COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY SPORT AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

1.4.1 Council Involvement in Sport and Recreation Provision

A synthesis and expansion of the previous sections indicates that Council should be involved in the development of sporting and recreation opportunities in a number of ways because:

- It has legal responsibilities to do so
- It recognises leisure and recreation as important elements of the quality of life

- It has responsibilities delegated to it by the state government
- It is a democratic organisation and elected members are making commitments to recreation provision
- It has responsibilities for land management
- It has responsibilities for achieving equity of opportunity
- It is the official custodian of community resources for both today's and future generations
- It has the responsibility to control sporting and recreational land use in the interest of the wider community
- It has a contributory responsibility to protect the environment
- It can encourage sport and recreation as a contribution to economic development.

1.4.2 The Focus of Council Action

It has already been recognised that in fulfilling the sport and recreation responsibilities discussed, Council will be constrained by budget considerations. As a consequence it is more appropriate for it to strengthen its present role of assisting others in the provision of sport and recreation opportunities rather than taking on wider facility provision responsibilities.

It is therefore recommended that Council focus its energies on achieving action in the nine areas listed below. Action in each of these areas need not be *taken* by Council or by Council alone: rather, Council's role will be to facilitate action by others and to play a direct role only where positive action and outcomes cannot be achieved by others. The nine areas of action are:

A. Co-ordination:

1. Co-ordinating the actions of others
2. Encouraging provision integration and joint initiatives
3. Helping to ensure continuing improvement in sport and recreation opportunities
4. Taking action to ensure effective liaison:
 - + with the community
 - + with other providers
 - + with other councils
5. Encouraging orderly use and multi use of facilities

B. Achieving Orderly and Quality Developments:

1. Advising on and preparing rules and guidelines for land/water use, facility design and management
2. Taking action to ensure quality of provision, maintenance, programming and servicing
3. Encouraging other agencies to make provision of sport and recreation facilities, programs and services
4. Exploring the opportunities for joint development initiatives with community, private, commercial agencies and other Councils
5. Initiating town planning action to ensure that adequate space is reserved to meet future community sport and recreation needs and that all development initiatives conform with principles of good design
6. Undertaking the review of needs and opportunities on a regular basis
7. Establishing a method of integrating environmental and conservation issues with town planning decisions so as to achieve high quality recreational amenity while having minimal environmental impacts.

C. Promotion:

1. Promoting existing and proposed provision
2. Advising, guiding and facilitating provision self-help

E. Equity:

1. Ensuring equity of opportunity
2. Assisting through training with the development of leadership skills in the community
3. Providing use subsidies for needy groups and individuals in the community
4. Identifying and responding to need in the community

F. Information:

1. Providing information to the community on facilities, programs, services, and grants
2. Identifying and responding to need in the community

G. Viability:

1. Encourage profitable activities
2. Providing use subsidies for needy groups and individuals in the community
3. Providing assistance with facility maintenance

H. Community Involvement:

1. Ensuring the participation of the community in all sport and recreation planning and masterplan projects
2. Identifying and responding to need in the community.

I. Provision:

1. Providing new sport and recreation facilities, programs, and services having explored other provision strategies

Whenever possible, initiatives in these areas should not conflict with action taken by other providers. However, it could be expected that as appropriate, Council would have an important role to play in encouraging, facilitating and promoting provision by other agencies.

Further, as has been indicated earlier, it is not expected that Council will take prime responsibility for direct action on each of these areas although it will take responsibility for *ensuring* that action is taken on them by others. It would seem, for instance, that areas C, F, G and I should be managed/provided as far as possible by *other* organisations in the community.

A NEW CORPORATE PLAN FOR PROGRAMME 6: CULTURAL, RECREATIONAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

2.1 GENERAL ISSUES

The following chart details the recommended details to replace the current Programme 6 of Council's Corporate Plan.

As indicated on the chart, it is recommended that the Program title be changed from the existing "Cultural, Recreational and Community Facilities" to the more simple "Culture and Recreation". This reflects the fact that the corporate plan for recreation and culture deals with *facilities, programs and services* rather than just facilities. Further, by definition, the words *culture* and *recreation* encompass *community*. The word "community" has also been dropped because all Council facilities are community facilities while the recommendations of the new Program will be concerned with provision by private, commercial and other agencies *as well as* community provision.

Finally on terminology, it is recommended that the phrase used to describe this report -"Sport and recreation"- be replaced in all future Council documents by the words "Culture and Recreation" as this again more accurately reflects the scope of Council's responsibilities.

2.2 THE CORPORATE PLAN FORMAT

The Program 6 format is derived on that of the existing Corporate Plan. The key differences are:

- A reworking of the Sub-programs
- A revised set of Key Action Strategies
- A statement of performance indicators
- A statement of the recommended timeframe for action
- An indicative cost (where possible).

An appended statement indicates other related Programs which must be addressed in relation to recreation and culture initiatives and vice versa.

2.3 TIMEFRAMES

Timeframes for action are recommended. These are kept in a generally broad scale for it is not possible to accurately assess when it will be possible for all the recommendations to be actioned. The timeframes used are:

Short term: this can be taken to represent from "immediately" to 2 years

Medium term, covering from 2-5 years and

Long term, representing 5-10 years.

Timing adjustments which bring proposals forward or push them back in time are certain to occur as a result of changing financial capacities, changing needs and the involvement of commercial and other providers.

4 COSTS

The broad cost parameters for the proposals vary substantially, some being quite cheap and others being very expensive. (Variations within each item indicate suggested minimum and maximum expenditures). The scale of the cost of several items suggests that it may be very difficult for them to be afforded or, as was indicated in the review of the population of the Shire, for them to attract a sufficient market to cover operational costs.

It is stressed that in identifying indicative costs the statement is not attributing responsibility for these to Council. Rather, the statement is simply intended to indicate what the expected range of costs would be so that Council and other agencies can understand the opportunities which exist and what the costs will be to achieve them.

2.5 LINKS WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

It is recommended that in all future action on Programs outside the existing *Cultural, Recreational & Community Facilities* area, careful consideration is given to the sport and recreational implications and links of that action. (The related areas are recorded on pages 35-37 of this report).

2.6 PROCESS OF REVIEW

If Council's overall Corporate Plan and the Recreation and Culture component of it are to be effective, a review program will be essential. A program of review which is undertaken as required is, we believe, far more useful and productive than a review undertaken because a predetermined period of time has elapsed. It is therefore recommended that Council undertakes a brief assessment of its success in implementing the recreation and culture component of the Corporate Plan on an annual basis and that, if it is agreed that action the core elements of the Plan has been initiated, that a full review is undertaken within the next twelve month period. If it is agreed that substantive action has yet to be taken on the majority of issues, then no review should be undertaken. A full review should only be initiated automatically if, over a five year period, it is agreed that action has not been taken on the major issues. A five year review should establish a new statement of each of the elements of the plan listed in 2.2 above (ie: sub-programs; key action strategies; performance indicators; recommended timeframes for action and indicative costs).

SHIRE OF HERBERTON CORPORATE PLAN:

PROGRAMME 6: CULTURE AND RECREATION

Note: The timeframe for action on each of the recommendations has been divided into Short, medium and long term. Short term indicates from immediately to within two years; medium term indicates from 2-5 years and long term indicates from 5-10 years. It can be expected that changes in these recommended timelines will be made in the light of resource availability, community initiatives and changing needs within the community.

SUB PROGRAM	KEY ACTION STRATEGIES	TIMEFRAME FOR ACTION (1)	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	INDICATIVE COST \$
6.1 CULTURE AND RECREATION PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT	(i) Review and restructure the management of culture and recreation issues within Council's administration and reallocate/ delegate responsibilities as appropriate	Short term	Wider delegation of responsibilities and less demands on senior officers	Nil
	(ii) Review the opportunity to appoint a part-time recreation advisor/facilitator to assist in undertaking the responsibilities identified on pp. 45-47 of this Plan	Short term	Report on Council's capacity to make an appointment/action on appointment	Within existing responsibilities
	(iii) Establish a Recreation and Culture Advisory Group to assist with identifying priorities for action, reviewing community needs, and advising Council on assistance grants and other recreation and cultural matters (see p. 19, 2.4.2 b.)	Short term and continuing	Establishing and effective functioning of Advisory Group	Allow \$500 for operating expenses. Proposed budget for allocation to clubs and groups to be reviewed by Council prior to any decision
	(iv) Identify and allocate officer responsibilities as far as is practical for the areas identified in section 1.4.2 of Part Two of this Plan (pp. 46-47)	Short term	Effective allocation of responsibilities and improved service delivery	Nil
	(v) Allocate a budget and develop a program to assist with the provision and co-ordination of management training and advisory services for local recreation groups and associations	Short term	Allocation of budget Initiation of training programs	Allow \$1,500 pa for initial program
	(vi) Develop a process and program for holding regular meetings with the community and recreation and culture groups as a means of monitoring needs and development concerns	Short term and continuing	Conduct of two consultative meetings in each town annually	Allow \$1,000 pa.