

## Mildura Rural City Council Public Open Space Strategy



### Strategy Plan

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Prepared by

**SGL Consulting Group**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **BACKGROUND**

Mildura Rural City Council's (MRCC) population primarily reside in Mildura and the surrounding townships of Red Cliffs, Irymple, Merbein and Mildura South. The rest of the population is dispersed throughout the municipal district in small townships and farming properties.

Council regards the provision of public open space as a part of an integrated planning and service delivery approach within its community governance responsibilities. It has therefore commissioned SGL Consulting Group to prepare an Open Space Strategy to:

*identify a strategic direction for Council, in partnership with the local and broader community, for an integrated corporate approach to Public Open Space provision for the next 5 years and beyond.*

The Strategy is presented in three documents; an Issues Paper, Research Report and the Strategy Plan which builds upon information contained in both the Issues Paper and the Research Report and presents a Strategy and recommendations for public open space in the MRCC.

### **AIM AND PRINCIPLES OF THE STRATEGY**

To create a diverse and integrated network of public open space for recreation and conservation of natural and cultural environments, and to meet the needs of MRCC residents and visitors.

1. Open space will be managed in an environmentally sustainable manner.
2. The Murray River will be managed, maintained and improved as it is an important water supply, tourism, recreational, landscape, cultural and environmental asset.
3. Open space networks will, where possible, link parks and activity areas along waterways and natural drainage corridors, connect places of natural and cultural interest, and maintain public access to public land immediately adjoining waterways.
4. Open space will be accessible to everybody regardless of their age, gender or physical ability.
5. Community access to public open space, regardless of ownership, will be negotiated wherever possible.
6. Community consultation will be conducted prior to development, acquisition or rationalisation of open space.
7. Land developers will make a contribution to Council to provide public open space in new subdivisions.

8. A hierarchy of open space will be established to meet the specific needs of MRCC, based on the State Planning Policy Framework standard.
9. Public open space in new residential areas will, wherever possible, be:
  - ◆ In parcels of 4000 square metres or greater in area, or
  - ◆ A linear connection between streets, or to existing or proposed public open space, or
  - ◆ Combined with existing or proposed public open space on adjacent land, or
  - ◆ A small local park serving a neighbourhood within 300 metres safe walking distance.

## **MAJOR STRATEGIES**

1. The Riverfront area from the proposed Marina to Rio Vista Park will remain the focus for, and main open space in Mildura.
2. A series of linear trails and linkages will continue to be established throughout Mildura, using Three Chain Reserves, Irymple Green Belt and transport corridors, supplemented by other shorter linear open space links.
3. Demand for playing fields is greater than the existing capacity, consequently existing sporting reserves (Mildura Recreation Reserve, Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex and Mansell Reserve) will be planned to ensure they are used efficiently and effectively. Additional playing fields required to meet demand will be established in Mildura South.
4. In providing adequate local parks, the strategy will be to identify a small number of local parks which have a relatively high level of provision, strategically located around the city, and making use of larger open space areas. These local parks will be supplemented with a larger number of local parks with a relatively lower level of facilities and amenities plus some local parks with no facilities or amenities. When developing local parks, safety will continue to be given a high priority.
5. Specific parks, facilities and amenities will be provided to ensure people of all ages and abilities have access to appropriate open space. Priority target groups will include young people, older adults and people with disabilities.
6. Greater attention will be given to providing information about availability of, and access to, open space and interpreting the natural environment.
7. Riverfront reserves which are subject to high levels of indiscriminate use, such as Ranfurly Way will be developed and maintained to ensure its natural features are not destroyed, and its use is controlled.
8. Areas of native vegetation will be protected and opportunities to enhance biodiversity will be pursued.

An Implementation Plan has been prepared, detailing actions, priority, timeframe and budget required to implement these strategies over five years.

# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC), located in north west Victoria covers an area of 22,245 km and has a population of over 49,00 people. With an average growth rate of 1.3% it is well above the State's regional average growth rate of 0.48%. Most of the population reside in Mildura and the surrounding townships of Red Cliffs, Irymple, Merbein and Mildura South. The next largest town is Ouyen with a population of approximately 1,500. The rest of the population is dispersed throughout the municipal district in small townships and farming properties.

Council regards the provision of public open space as a part of an integrated planning and service delivery approach within its community governance responsibilities. It has therefore commissioned SGL Consulting Group to prepare an Open Space Strategy.

## **1.2 OBJECTIVES**

The overall purpose is to identify a strategic direction for Council, in partnership with the local and broader community, for an integrated corporate approach to Public Open Space provision for the next 5 years and beyond.

The Open Space Strategy will aim to:

- ◆ Develop an approach which integrates Open Space planning with other Council planning initiatives including development plans, development contribution plan, recreation plans, bicycle plan and other relevant plans undertaken by Council.
- ◆ Ensure that there is a comprehensive inventory of Open Space within the Council.
- ◆ Increase communication between key stakeholders.
- ◆ Propose principles and practices for the acquisition, disposal, development, management and evaluation of Open Space.
- ◆ Ensure that developer contributions are managed and utilised effectively.
- ◆ Develop a 5 year plan with strategies and priorities for resource allocation (including linear trails and open space in major towns), acquisition and disposal to provide for equitable distribution, and procedures for making allowances for open space in new developments.
- ◆ Consider dual purposes for drainage and recreation areas. This includes investigating water sensitive urban design measures for public open space. This should also include networking public open space with new developments within Mildura Rural City Council.

### **1.3 CONTEXT OF THIS REPORT**

Preparation of the Open Space Strategy is being undertaken in six stages:

- Stage 1: Current Analysis
- Stage 2: Inventory and Classification
- Stage 3: Consultation
- Stage 4: Gap Analysis and Recommendations
- Stage 5 Response to the Draft Report
- Stage 6: Report Acceptance

The Issues Paper incorporates information collected during Stage 1 of the assignment

The Research Report incorporates information collected during Stages 2 and 3 of the assignment

The Strategy Plan builds upon information contained in both the Issues Paper and the Research Report and presents a Strategy and recommendations for public open space in the MRCC.

### **1.4 DEFINITION OF OPEN SPACE**

The Public Open Space Strategy Task Team, established by MRCC to supervise the preparation of this Strategy, determined the scope of the Strategy by defining Public Open Space as:

Any land that is reasonably accessible to all members of the public. It should not include facilities such as swimming pools and any land which is exclusively leased by clubs or groups such as bowling or tennis clubs. However, this will need to be considered in context to the surrounds.



## **2 SUMMARY OF ISSUES PAPER**

### **2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUES**

- ◆ The age profile of MRCC, over last ten years and for next ten years, indicates an aging community. Open space targeted to the needs of older adults has become, and will continue to be, increasingly important. In general this will involve more emphasis on passive recreational use of open space.
- ◆ MRCC experienced growth in its population of 9% between 1991 and 2001, and it is projected to increase up to 12% between 2001 to 2011. Hence demand for open space will have increased by more than 20% over the 20 year period.
- ◆ A small decrease in number of pre school and primary school age children, ie children who use playgrounds is projected. Hence demand for additional playgrounds is not likely to occur, but the number of playgrounds should not be decreased.
- ◆ Population growth has occurred in parts of MRCC. The most pronounced increases have occurred in Mildura South, Irymple and Nichols Point/Koolong, indicating increased demand for local open space in these localities.
- ◆ Increases in the population in rural townships are likely to be accommodated with existing open space. Justification does not exist for additional local open space.
- ◆ No significant variation in the age profile of localities within the irrigated areas has been identified, suggesting similar principles for determining the level of provision of local open space should be used.

### **2.2 PLANNING ISSUES**

- ◆ Mildura Planning Scheme provides a basis on which an Open Space Strategy must be prepared. It incorporates objectives, policies and strategies directly related to open space provision. Salient features of the Scheme include:
  - ▶ Environmental significance of the River Murray and remnant vegetation.
  - ▶ Potential linkages between open spaces in urban areas, using waterways, drainage reserves and other linear connectors.
  - ▶ Suggested standards of open space provision and principles for development of open space.
- ◆ Adequate residential land is available within the Mildura urban area to cope with demand over the next twenty years. Most demand is expected to be for traditional low density housing. Local open space will be required to service these growth areas.
- ◆ MRCC residents consider existing open spaces to be good, give a relatively high priority to upgrading open space and use open spaces relatively frequently. Open space appears to be an important element of the life style of MRCC residents. Of

particular importance are the River Murray and adjacent parks, reserves and linear linkages, and sporting areas.

- ◆ The Mildura Strategic Bicycle Plan has identified a network of on and off road bike paths throughout the urban area of Mildura. Potential exists for these off road trails to cater for multi use (walking, bike, horse, skate etc), and should be incorporated into an open space network.
- ◆ Development Plans have been prepared for six designated future residential areas, including possible open space areas. It is important that open space is developed to maximise its utility by creating linkages and larger parcels of land. New development proposals such as the Mildura Marina and Etiwanda wetlands should be designed to ensure appropriate open space is included within the development.

## **2.3 TRENDS ISSUES**

- ◆ Trends in Australian society and in the way in which open space is developed, managed and maintained will affect the provision of open space in MRCC. Council cannot change trends, but it must acknowledge their existence and understand that stakeholders and lobby groups will use trends to demand and justify changes to the way in which open space is provided.
- ◆ Open space is an important element in ensuring a high quality of life for residents. It serves many different and often competing functions. Given it is a finite resource, it must be managed in a sustainable way.
- ◆ Changes in society and the way in which people recreate, have meant that open space will have to be managed in a different way to past practices. Greater emphasis will have to be given to providing flexible open space, and ensuring safe access at all times.
- ◆ An aging community will require more open space targeted to the needs of middle and older aged people. Consequently, more areas for passive recreation will be required, or at least access to existing areas improved.

### **3 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH REPORT**

#### **3.1 HOUSEHOLD SURVEY**

A telephone survey of a sample of 314 randomly selected residents, aged 15 years and over, in the Mildura Rural City Council area was conducted in mid May 2003. Major findings from the survey are highlighted below:

- ◆ 98% and 92% of respondents had visited at least one type of open space area in the previous 12 months and last month, respectively. The most popular are also the most frequently used open space areas, and indicate the high importance that respondents give to parks or reserves along the River Murray, sports grounds and recreation reserves and local parks with a playground, compared with other categories of open space.
- ◆ Each category of open space appeals to different demographic groups. Consequently, to cater for all age groups, both genders and all parts of MRCC, all categories of open space must continue to be provided. To improve the value of each category of open space it should be developed and maintained to meet the needs of the main demographic groups using it.
- ◆ In the minds of respondents', safety is clearly the most important feature of local parks with a playground, followed by appropriate play equipment, basic amenities (toilets, shade picnic/BBQ facilities and seating) and the general appearance of local parks (clean and tidy, landscaping and watered grass).
- ◆ Respondents when considering the most important features of parks or reserves along the River Murray, prefer a relatively undeveloped, natural park or reserve, maintained in a clean and tidy condition, with basic visitor amenities.
- ◆ The most important features of linear parks and trails were a formed path for walking and cycling, and the environment through which the trail passes.
- ◆ Overall highest funding priority was given to maintaining sports grounds and improving access for people with disabilities. The next level of priority was given to maintaining existing local parks, parks and trails along the River Murray and linear parks and trails; developing local parks in new residential areas; and upgrading parks and reserves along the River Murray.
- ◆ Respondents in the satellite towns considered developing new local parks in new residential areas and reducing water consumption in parks and reserves as more important than respondents living in Mildura City and the rural areas.
- ◆ Respondents living in the rural areas generally gave a much lower importance rating for most works, except for maintaining existing sports grounds and recreation reserves, and upgrading playgrounds throughout the Council area, which were given a higher importance rating.

- ◆ Respondents were asked whether they agree or disagree with seven statements regarding the development and maintenance of open space in MRCC. It was found that:
  - ▶ Overall there was a very strong level of agreement with the statement “Most playgrounds in Mildura Rural City Council parks meet the needs of young children”.
  - ▶ Overall there was a strong level of agreement with the statement “Local parks should have less irrigated grass areas and more landscaped areas to reduce water use and costs”.
  - ▶ Overall there was agreement with the statement “It is preferable to have lots of playgrounds with limited play equipment than fewer well developed playgrounds”.
  - ▶ Overall there was a very strong level of agreement with the statement “More parks should be designed to cater for the needs of teenagers”.
  - ▶ Overall there was a very strong level of agreement with the statement “Playgrounds and playing fields on school grounds should be more readily available for community use”.
  - ▶ Overall there was a very strong level of agreement with the statement “The quality of sports fields in Mildura Rural City Council are as good as, if not better than, surrounding Council areas”.
  - ▶ Overall there was a very strong level of agreement with the statement “Stronger controls are needed to prevent further deterioration of reserves along the River Murray”.
- ◆ 7% of respondents considered that no improvements were needed to parks and reserves and that Council was currently doing a good job. Positive suggestions for improving parks and reserves were:
  - ▶ Plant more trees
  - ▶ Provide more visitor amenities, seating, toilets, shade etc
  - ▶ Improve access for people with disabilities
  - ▶ Improve the level of maintenance, particularly the cleanliness and tidiness
  - ▶ Be more water conscious
  - ▶ Improve the quality of playground equipment and ensure playgrounds are safe and secure

### **3.2 COMMUNITY FORUMS**

A series of three community forums were conducted. Each forum was targeted to a geographic region or a specific aspect of open space development or management.

- ◆ Forty three sporting organisations were sent invitations to participate in a forum, and 15 people representing 10 organisations attended, plus Council officers. Key points raised in the discussions were:
  - ▶ Concern about the level of rent charged by Council for use of Council reserves.
  - ▶ Problems with the maintenance of Council sports grounds.
  - ▶ Heavy use of Mildura Recreation Reserve in winter.
  - ▶ Substantial growth in recent years of a number of sports, resulting in increased demand for additional playing fields
  - ▶ Inadequate provision of walking tracks or parks in recent residential subdivisions in Mildura.
  
- ◆ Nine State Government Departments and water authorities were sent invitations to participate in a forum, and 6 people representing 5 organisations, plus Council officers attended. Key points raised in the discussions were:
  - ▶ Crown Land Management has a policy that commercial development on Crown Land, along the foreshore, should be prohibited.
  - ▶ Many Three Chain Reserves are licensed to adjoining property owners, and retain the right of public access, although camping can be prohibited.
  - ▶ Three Frontage Action Plans have been prepared to enhance access to and along the river.
  
- ◆ Eleven community organisations based in and around Ouyen were sent invitations to participate in the forum, however nobody attended the forum.

### **3.3 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS**

Personal and telephone interviews were conducted with representatives of State Government Departments, Water Authorities and Council. Key issues raised in the interviews were:

- ◆ Council does not have a formal policy or strategy for the development and maintenance of local parks and playgrounds, rather a series of effective practices have evolved over time.
  
- ◆ Older Council parks tend to have larger areas of watered grass. Play equipment installed in local parks is selected after consultation with residents surrounding the park. Most equipment is designed to cater for junior primary age children.
  
- ◆ Mildura city has a number of unique factors including a large number of main roads, drainage channels throughout the urban area and high temperatures in summer.
  
- ◆ Mildura Recreation Reserve is over used, particularly during the football season. Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex may not have been originally constructed to appropriate standards. All the land at Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex is either used or earmarked for use by a particular group. Hockey are investigating the feasibility of constructing a synthetic hockey pitch at the Complex and netball propose to relocate to Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex.

- ◆ Approximately 3,500 Aboriginal people live in the Mildura area, many Aboriginal children have transport difficulties and do not have the money to pay normal fees to participate in organised recreation and sport activities.
- ◆ People with disabilities are unable to use many parks in MRCC. In addition to physical access, other factors which affect use of parks by people with disabilities are inaccessibility of some toilets, personal transport restrictions and lack of signs providing information on access.
- ◆ In general terms the open space needs of young people are not being met.
- ◆ Mildura does not have an fenced, outdoor venue suitable for concerts and outdoor entertainment.

### **3.4 INVENTORY OF OPEN SPACE**

A classification and hierarchy of open space, which identifies how each parcel of open space fits into the total open space network, has been proposed:

- ◆ Regional open space includes multi functional open space areas catering for a variety of active and passive recreation activities, and tend to serve a region larger than the MRCC area.
- ◆ Sporting reserves cater for a variety of sporting activities including indoor and outdoor field and court sports and will be provided at two levels:
  - a. Municipal/Regional
  - b. Local
- ◆ Local parks are passive recreation areas catering for a local catchment and should be readily accessible within 15 minutes walking distance of all residential areas without crossing a major road. Local parks can be classified according to their principal function and the level of amenity provided:
  - a. Major Local Park
  - b. Minor Local Park
  - c. Linear Parks and Trails
  - d. Foreshore Parks
  - e. Ornamental Reserves
  - f. Nature Reserves
  - g. Picnic Areas
  - h. Drainage Basin
  - i. Unclassified

For open space planning purposes, MRCC has been divided into a number of precincts:

- ◆ Mildura city has 9 precincts:
  - CBD Precinct
  - Mildura West Precinct
  - Hospital Precinct

Ranfurly Precinct  
Mildura South  
Grange Precinct  
Central Plaza Precinct  
Alfred Deakin Precinct  
Mildura East Precinct

◆ Satellite towns

Irymple  
Merbein  
Red Cliffs

◆ Rural Townships

Ouyen  
Walpeup  
Linga  
Torrita

Underbool  
Werrimull  
Cowangie  
Nangiloc

Murrayville  
Lake Cullulleraine  
Mittyack

Within MRCC a large number of open spaces have been identified. It is recognised that the inventory is not comprehensive, but includes all Council owned or managed open space and most open space under the ownership or control of the State Government.

Five national parks  
Eight conservation reserves  
Twelve (plus) riverfront parks  
Three municipal/regional sporting reserves  
Fifteen local sporting reserves  
Eleven major local parks  
Twenty three minor local parks  
Eight linear parks and trails  
Five foreshore parks  
Three ornamental reserves  
Four nature reserves  
Three picnic areas  
Eight drainage basins  
Eight unclassified open space areas

## 4 ASSESSMENT OF OPEN SPACE

### 4.1 INTEGRATED OPEN SPACE PLANNING

Planning for public open space requires a holistic and strategic approach from Council, State Government agencies and community organisations. In recent years Council and other stakeholders have commissioned a number of reports, strategies and documents which impact on the provision, development and management of public open space. This Public Open Space Strategy must complement and integrate with other relevant strategies.

In preparing this Public Open Space Strategy, the following planning initiatives have been reviewed or integrated:

<b>Planning Initiative</b>	<b>Relationship to Open Space Planning</b>
Mildura Planning Scheme	It is a statutory document and as such it provides the basis on which an Open Space Strategy must be prepared. It incorporates objectives, policies and strategies directly related to open space provision.
Mildura Strategic Bicycle Plan	It is a report commissioned by the MRCC which identifies a network of on and off road bike paths throughout the urban area of Mildura. Potential exists for these off road trails to cater for multi use (walking, bike, horse, skate etc), and have been incorporated into a proposed open space network.
Development Plans	These plans have been prepared for six designated future residential areas, and include possible open space areas. Open space must be developed to maximise its utility by creating linkages and larger parcels of land. Recommendations have been made in the Public Open Space Strategy to improve the provision and use of open space in these six proposed residential areas.
Recreation Planning Study	It identifies a direction for Council, in partnership with the local and broader community for an integrated corporate approach to recreational opportunities and service provision for a 3 to 5 year period. It provides base information on the recreational preferences of Mildura residents, and proposes a structure for the development of recreation facilities, many of which are located on public open space. The Public Open Space Strategy has based many of its strategies and actions on the findings and direction of the Recreation Planning Study.



<b>Planning Initiative</b>	<b>Relationship to Open Space Planning</b>
Supply and Demand Analysis for residential Land in Mildura	It analyses current land supply, current demand for residential land and growth rates. Consequently, it has been used to identify the level of future population growth. Recommendations on public open space in new or proposed residential areas have taken account of these projections.
Development Contributions Plan	This plan is currently being prepared and at the time of finalising the Public Open Space Strategy is nearing completion. It is expected to clearly define the level of contribution from developers of land within Mildura. Contributions are expected to include a combination of land, infrastructure works and monetary contribution. The Public Open Space Strategy has recommended guidelines for determining open space contributions in new residential areas.
Sunraysia Drainage Strategy and Management Plan for the Improvement of Urban Stormwater Quality	These two reports have been adopted by Council. The Public Open Space Strategy complements these two reports by recognising that stormwater is a precious resource and that through the use of water sensitive urban design, the reliance on drains will be reduced.
Riverfront Master Plan	This report is currently being prepared and at the time of finalising the Public Open Space Strategy is nearing completion. The Public Open Space has recognised that the Master Plan will provide detailed recommendations, and has therefore recommended a broad strategic direction for the Riverfront.

## **4.2 PLANNING PRINCIPLES**

### **4.2.1 Aim**

To create a diverse and integrated network of public open space for recreation and conservation of natural and cultural environments, and to meet the needs of MRCC residents and visitors.

### **4.2.2 Principles**

- Open space will be managed in an environmentally sustainable manner, to:
  - ◆ minimise conflict between users and uses,
  - ◆ ensure the preservation and conservation of open space which has conservation and/or heritage value,
  - ◆ reduce water consumption and use of non renewable resources, and
  - ◆ reduce the risk of salinity.

2. The Murray River will be managed, maintained and improved as it is an important water supply, tourism, recreational, landscape, cultural and environmental asset. Responsibility for the health of the river is shared by a number of State and Local Government agencies, which have a mutual obligation to work together to achieve common goals.
3. Open space networks will, where possible, link parks and activity areas along waterways and natural drainage corridors, connect places of natural and cultural interest, and maintain public access to public land immediately adjoining waterways. Open spaces will be linked through the provision of single or multi purpose trails and rights of way.
4. Open space will be accessible to everybody regardless of their age, gender or physical ability. Greater emphasis will be given to developing open space to meet the needs of middle and older adults. Overall demand for playgrounds will not increase, although provision will have to be made for play areas in new subdivisions in the satellite townships around Mildura. Additional local open space in rural areas will not be required.
5. Community access to public open space, regardless of ownership, will be negotiated wherever possible.
6. Community consultation will be conducted prior to development, acquisition or rationalisation of open space.
7. Land developers will make a contribution to Council to provide public open space in new subdivisions.
8. A hierarchy of open space will be established to meet the specific needs of MRCC, based on the State Planning Policy Framework standard of:
  - ◆ District parks of 3 hectare minimum, combining passive and active use, within 2 kilometres of all dwellings.
  - ◆ Large local parks of 1 hectare minimum, for active and passive use, within 500 metres safe walking distance from all dwellings.
  - ◆ Small local parks within 150 metres to 300 metres safe walking distance of all dwellings.
9. Public open space in new residential areas will, wherever possible, be:
  - ◆ In parcels of 4000 square metres or greater in area, or
  - ◆ A linear connection between streets, or to existing or proposed public open space, or
  - ◆ Combined with existing or proposed public open space on adjacent land, or
  - ◆ A small local park serving a neighbourhood within 300 metres safe walking distance.

### **4.3 STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION**

One of the aims of Public Open Space Strategy was to “increase communication between key stakeholders”. However, during the course of the preparation of the Strategy, it was found that good communication existed between most, if not all stakeholders. The challenge is to ensure that communication channels remain open in the future.

#### **4.3.1 Intra Council Communication**

Preparation of the Public Open Space Strategy was assisted by a task force of Council officers representing a number of departments within the administration. Communication between various departments has been enhanced through this task force, and should continue during implementation of the Strategy. A formal inter departmental committee may not be required, however to maintain this level of communication and to ensure an integrated approach to planning:

- ◆ Regular discussions between relevant officers must continue, particularly between officers responsible for planning, development, recreation and open space development and maintenance.
- ◆ Council administrative processes must continue to allow and encourage exchange of information between departments, at both an informal and formal level.

#### **4.3.2 Council and External Stakeholder Communication**

Stakeholders in a Public Open Space Strategy includes land owners, land managers, funding agencies and statutory authorities. Within MRCC the range of stakeholders includes State Government agencies responsible for parks, forest reserves, College Lease land and funding, regional water and irrigation authorities, and local community recreation and sport groups.

Communication between stakeholders has not been identified as a problem during the research undertaken as part of the preparation of the Public Open Space Strategy. Consequently, additional formal communication channels are not required. Existing communication channels and techniques should therefore continue to be open and used, such as:

- ◆ Maintaining personal communication with officers in other stakeholder organisations.
- ◆ Consulting relevant stakeholders in the development of new or modification to existing policies, strategies and actions.
- ◆ Establishing ad hoc working parties comprising representatives of appropriate stakeholders to address specific issues.
- ◆ Widely advertise proposed changes to existing policies, strategies and actions.

- ◆ Establishing a protocol for consulting with other stakeholders on public open space issues, as part of Council's public consultation protocol.

#### **4.4 STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

Open space is an important feature for all residents living in MRCC, however most unresolved issues relate to open space in Mildura city, particularly in the new growth areas. Residents in the satellite towns of Merbein, Irymple and Red Cliffs, the rural townships of Ouyen, Murrayville, Walpeup and Underbool and smaller rural settlements have relatively good access to a range of open space.

In preparing a Strategy Plan for public open space, the following major strategies are proposed:

1. The Riverfront area from the proposed Marina to Rio Vista Park will remain the focus for, and main open space in Mildura. It will continue to be developed and managed as the main passive recreation area for residents and visitors. Links will be established from other areas of Mildura to the Riverfront precinct, and along the river using the Three Chain Reserve.
2. A series of linear trails and linkages will continue to be established throughout Mildura, using Three Chain Reserves, Irymple Green Belt and transport corridors, supplemented by other shorter linear open space links. Where possible and practical off road bicycle routes will be integrated into the open space network.
3. Demand for playing fields is greater than the existing capacity, consequently existing sporting reserves (Mildura Recreation Reserve, Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex and Mansell Reserve) will be planned to ensure they are used efficiently and effectively. Additional playing fields required to meet demand will be established in Mildura South.
4. In providing adequate local parks, the strategy will be to identify a small number of local parks which have a relatively high level of provision, strategically located around the city, and making use of larger open space areas. These local parks will be supplemented with a larger number of local parks with a relatively lower level of facilities and amenities plus some local parks with no facilities or amenities. When developing local parks, safety will continue to be given a high priority.
5. Specific parks, facilities and amenities will be provided to ensure people of all ages and abilities have access to appropriate open space. Priority target groups will include young people, older adults and people with disabilities.
6. Greater attention will be given to providing information about availability of, and access to, open space and interpreting the natural environment. An important aspect of providing information is the "educate" the community about environmentally sustainable developments. The Etiwanda Wetlands provides a good example of achieving an urban design function and improving water quality, and should be promoted as such.

7. Riverfront reserves which are subject to high levels of indiscriminate use, such as Ranfurly Way will be developed and maintained to ensure its natural features are not destroyed, and its use is controlled.
8. Areas of native vegetation will be protected and opportunities to enhance biodiversity will be pursued.

#### **4.5 GAP ANALYSIS**

An analysis of the existing supply of, and demand for open space has identified gaps in provision, opportunities to enhance the provision and open space which may be surplus to requirements.

##### **4.5.1 Regional Open Space**

Overall MRCC has an abundance of regional open space, most being managed by the State Government as National or Conservation Parks or Forests. Three regional open space areas under the care and control of Council are the Mildura Riverfront, Apex Park and Ranfurly Bend Reserve.

Mildura Riverfront is currently the subject of a project to prepare a Master Plan for the area between the proposed marina and Lock 11. This study will address the area in detail, consequently it is not appropriate to make detailed comment about the area.

Apex Park is an established aquatic based recreation reserve, which caters for a range of aquatic activities and tourist accommodation. As a heavily used reserve, it is possible that environmental degradation could occur if appropriate environmental management controls are not implemented. These controls can be implemented as part of a broader master planning exercise.

Ranfurly Bend reserve is a riverfront reserve which has had little formal development. Based on a visual inspection it appears to be relatively well used. One of the problems confronting this reserve and other similar riverfront reserve is the level of indiscriminate vehicle access through the reserve, creating a series of dirt tracks. If the level of use increases and vehicle access is not controlled, it is likely that severe degradation will occur and much of its natural appeal will disappear. As with Apex Park, environmental management controls can be implemented as part of a broader master planning exercise.

##### **4.5.2 Sporting Reserves**

Mildura has experienced significant population growth over the last few decades, consequently demand for playing fields has increased. The last major new development was the establishment of the Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex, which caters for a number of playing field sports. Potential developments at the Sporting Complex are the construction of a synthetic hockey pitch and the consequent freeing up of two grass hockey pitches for other

playing field uses and the relocation of netball from Mansell Reserve, thereby freeing up the latter for other uses. The master plan for the Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex needs to be brought up to date, to identify what land is available for the development of additional playing fields to cater for the increased demand from soccer, football and cricket.

Mildura Recreation Reserve is a very heavily used sporting reserve, being home to three football clubs, football umpires, the harness racing club and cricket. Resolving some of the conflicts between users is a management and maintenance, rather than a physical design, issue. Therefore, a starting point in resolving some of the problems is to prepare a management and maintenance strategy, and to update the master plan.

All three sporting reserves in Mildura are located between Twelfth Street and the river, whereas population growth has occurred, and is projected to occur south of Fourteenth Street. Future demand for sporting reserves should be accommodated in Mildura South. Ideally, any new sporting reserve will be located adjacent to either the proposed new school on San Mateo Avenue or the existing Mildura South Primary School.

#### **4.5.3 Linear Trails**

The nucleus of a trail network exists within Mildura, extending to Merbein and Irymple. The MRCC Bicycle Plan has also identified additional off road trails which can be developed as bicycle paths. These bicycle paths can also be used for other recreation activities such as walking and horse riding.

Existing linear trails include:

- Three Chain reserves along the River Murray
- Irymple Green Belt
- Lake Hawthorn to Ranfurly Way trail
- Hollywood Drive linear trail
- Boulevard Linear reserve

Potential exists to expand the network of linear parks and trails to create an interlocking network:

1. Extend the existing paths and tracks along the River Murray from Ornamental Lakes Gardens to the east to Cowra Avenue, and to the west to Merbein.
2. Extend the Irymple Green Belt through the proposed new subdivisions (Stage 3 Development Plan) to link with the Boulevard Linear reserve and to also link through the East of Grange Development Plan area (adjacent to the proposed school) to the Hollywood Linear reserve and through the Mildura South Development Plan area (adjacent to Mildura South Primary School) to the Mildura – Yelta rail line.
3. Extend the Mildura – Yelta rail linear path to link with the Three Chain reserves at Rio Vista Park and with the Lake Hawthorn to Ranfurly Way linear path.

4. Create a path around the Bob Corbould Wetland and eventually link through the Mildura Landfill (when in suitable condition) to the Mildura Golf Course and Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex and to the Three Chain reserve on Ranfurly Way.
5. Create a multi purpose trail around Lake Hawthorn, including activity nodes for passive recreation pursuits such as bird watching and fishing.

#### 4.5.4 Local Parks

Precinct	Assessment
CBD Precinct	This precinct has little residential housing and the only public open space areas is the highly developed riverfront reserve. Development of new local parks may not be possible due to cost and lack of suitable spaces. Most residences have reasonably good access to local parks in adjacent precincts.
Mildura West Precinct	Well serviced with open space given its proximity to the riverfront reserves, Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex, plus Mansell Reserve, Washington Park and two smaller local parks sited within the precinct. No additional local parks are required.
Hospital Precinct	All parts of the precinct have relatively good access to a range of open space areas. No additional local parks are required.
Ranfurly Precinct	Two major local parks are located in the precinct, both provide relatively good access to surrounding residential areas. In addition two schools with playing fields are situated in the precinct. No additional local parks are required.
Mildura South	Limited open space exists within the precinct. Residential areas between Walnut Avenue and Deakin Avenue and north west of Ontario Avenue have poor access to any form of open space. Opportunity to improve access to open space when Mildura South Development Plan area is developed.
Grange Precinct	Limited open space exists within the precinct, with the existing open space not easily accessible to most residences.
Central Plaza Precinct	Two local parks within the precinct are relatively small and are not readily accessible to many residences. The Boulevard Linear reserve presents an opportunity to link the precinct with other parts of Mildura.
Alfred Deakin Precinct	This precinct is dominated by Mildura Recreation Reserve. Given the road layout, most residences do not have easy access to local parks in the precinct. Existing local parks serve a very small catchment. Whilst it may be possible to make better use of schools, the Alfred Deakin Centre and Mildura Recreation Reserve as local parks, most residences south of Thirteenth Street will still have relatively poor access to open space.
Mildura East Precinct	Buxton Sobee Park services the immediate surrounding residential area. Other parts of the precinct are devoid of open space, although the area has limited residences.

<b>Precinct</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Irymple	Irymple Green Belt ensures most parts of Irymple have access to open space areas. North of the Calder Highway, Lions Park is the major local park, whereas south of the Highway, Henshilwood Park is the major reserve and local park. Additional local parks will be required to service the proposed residential developments in Irymple South and Irymple South.
Merbein	Merbein is dominated by two parks at the east and west end of the town; Kenny Park and Chaffey Park. Between these two parks, most open space is small and has limited development.
Red Cliffs	Red Cliffs has a large number of parks and reserves throughout the town. The two main parks are Quandong Park and Barclay Square. Together with Pine Street Reserve they adequately service the area east of the Highway. West of the Highway is serviced by two local parks with limited development.
Ouyen	Ouyen has a range of open space areas, including two major sporting reserves and two local parks within the residential areas. No additional local parks are required.
Underbool	Underbool has an appropriate and good range of open space areas. No additional local parks are required.
Murrayville	Murrayville has an appropriate and good range of open space areas. No additional local parks are required.
Walpeup	Walpeup has an appropriate and good range of open space areas. No additional local parks are required.
Werrimull	Werrimull has an appropriate and good range of open space areas. No additional local parks are required.
Lake Cullulleraine	Lake Cullulleraine has an appropriate and good range of open space areas. No additional local parks are required.
Nangiloc/Colignan	Nangiloc has an appropriate and good range of open space areas. No additional local parks are required.



## **5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

#### **5.1.1 Regional Open Space**

Development and management of regional open space will be dependent upon the location and natural features of the individual area. Consequently, it is expected that a detailed management plan will be prepared outlining how each park or reserve should be developed. Such plans are the responsibility of the managing authority, which are primarily State Government agencies such as National Parks, with local government and community input.

Principles to guide the development of open space areas of regional significance are:

- ◆ Development in natural areas should be minimal and carefully designed to allow activity only in designated areas in order to minimise damage to environmentally significant features.
- ◆ Semi-natural areas can be designed to accommodate more intensive human activity than natural areas.
- ◆ Significant habitat, and historical or cultural features of Aboriginal or post European settlement should be protected.
- ◆ Features of natural, historical or cultural significance should be interpreted to increase community appreciation and understanding of its significance.
- ◆ Amenities in high visitor use parks may include picnic and BBQ facilities, extensive and varied play amenities and other user amenities such as shelters, toilets and drinking fountains. A variety of landscape forms may also be developed including mature trees, shade areas as well as wide open spaces for ball games.
- ◆ Car parking areas are required near nodes of intensive use and designed to minimise excessive intrusion in nearby residential areas and into the park itself.
- ◆ Linear paths and trails may include pedestrian pathways and in most cases be designed for multi use and provide access for people with disabilities. Trails should be specifically designed to cater for proposed uses such as horse riding, mountain bikes or walking.
- ◆ Informal seating is desirable at spaced locations along linear trails, particularly where trails will be used by older adults.
- ◆ Development should maximise visitor safety and security and enhance natural supervision of the area.

### 5.1.2 Sporting Reserves

Principles to guide the development of sporting reserves are:

- ◆ Sporting reserves which include areas suitable for informal or casual leisure activities, such as playing fields, should have local play areas developed within the sporting reserve or close by, where people can relax and children can play.
- ◆ Informal activity areas (ie. non sporting arenas) surrounding playing fields should be landscaped and planted with trees and shrubs.
- ◆ Sufficient car parking should be provided for players and spectators so as to cause minimum disruption to nearby residents. Extensive car parking may be required for major spectator facilities.
- ◆ Clubrooms or pavilions should generally be suitable for multi use, and shared use and be designed to ensure healthy, safe environments for users. Larger sporting reserves should include public amenities such as toilets, preferably located close to passive recreation areas.
- ◆ Playing arenas such as playing fields and sports courts should be designed to cater for a number of sporting activities, for example playing fields should not have permanent fencing around each playing area, to enable changed configurations to cater for changing demands over time.

### 5.1.3 Local Parks

Principles to guide the development of local parks are:

- ◆ The type and style of development should be closely attuned to the needs of the surrounding population.
- ◆ Local parks should be designed to cater for a wide range of age groups, although this may not be possible in very small parks.
- ◆ In larger local parks, areas should be set aside for more vigorous activities such as ball games, skateboard riding and BMX riding.
- ◆ Play spaces should be designed to offer a secure, safe and stimulating environment which encourages the healthy, social, cognitive and physical development of children.
- ◆ All play equipment must comply with the Australian play ground standards regarding fall heights, access, geometric arrangement, entrapment and other design aspects.
- ◆ Active recreation and sport areas should be separated from quiet areas, and conflict between activities should be avoided.

- ◆ Adequate quiet spaces for relaxation with shade, trees, seats and landscaping should be provided.
- ◆ Adequate adult or care giver amenities should be provided including shade, seating, drink fountain close to the formal play grounds, to ensure ease of supervision.
- ◆ Larger local parks may be developed with BBQ and picnic areas. Parks which attract large numbers of visitors, who stay for lengthy periods may require public toilets. Generally toilets are expensive and should be considered a lower priority than development of activity areas.
- ◆ Local parks must be safe areas, and may require safety fencing and traffic management devices in surrounding streets.

#### **5.1.4 General Development Principles**

In addition to the specific development principles for each category of open space outlined above, three other aspects of open space development should be considered for all categories: equipment and amenities, safety and linear trails.

##### ***Equipment and Amenities***

Many open space areas are judged by the community on the quality of equipment installed and the level of amenity provided. In this instance quality refers to both the standard and relevance of facilities.

Equipment and amenities need to provide for, and attract, users in order for a developed park to be relevant. Higher quality facilities tend to act as 'honey pots' of activity encouraging people to travel to these sites, while poor quality facilities will be ignored even if well located. High quality also requires higher standards of maintenance.

Quality facilities do not necessarily have to be expensive to develop, but they have to be responsive to the needs of the community they are intended to serve. This may mean development of "alternative" play spaces which focus on developing imagination and free play as opposed to manufactured equipment, hence a unique but relevant environment is created. Quality also refers to access and provision for people with special needs such as people with disabilities, children, young people and older people. Consequently, Council must continually reassess current amenities and remove what is not required; for example play areas may not be required in some areas.

Another element of quality is diversity. In other words a range of play opportunities for a variety of age groups can be provided. Consequently, play areas should be designed to include:

- ◆ Features which provide challenge and risk (in a safe environment).
- ◆ A mix of natural elements (creeks, trees, gardens, shrubbery) and formal play equipment.

- ◆ Items which can be used for imaginative and role playing activities such as cubbies, low platforms, large logs and rocks.
- ◆ Informal ball play areas.

Where play areas for teenagers are developed these can include facilities such as 3 on 3 basketball court, skating area (path, bowls and/or ramp), rebound wall, and adequate shade/shelter.

### *Safety*

Managing for safety in open space areas is a difficult issue as there is a perception that where facilities are “safe” they are also unimaginative or boring. This perception particularly applies to children’s play areas which have come under close scrutiny in terms of design for low risk.

- ◆ **Play Spaces**

Children’s play areas can and must adhere to safety standards and best practice in design. However this should not mean imaginative facilities cannot be installed. Development of play areas which take advantage of natural environments including tree and bush plantings, herb gardens, mounds and tracks for skates or bikes can remain safe yet provide opportunities for less constricted play. Similarly hard ball games may be prohibited, but soft ball games allowed. The safety issue in regard to these types of facilities is to design play spaces so children remain visible from designated caregiver vantage points, which can include amenities such as seating and BBQ’s.

Children’s play areas require sufficient soft fall areas, must be located away from busy roads and/or fenced, and regularly checked, especially sandpits and softfall material. Current safety standards for playgrounds dictate firstly, a regular maintenance program to check softfall/sandpit areas and secondly, parks and gardens workers will increasingly be required to have skills in identification of faulty/dangerous equipment.

The overall development of children’s play areas should occur in consultation with children and caregivers in order to establish a relevant, stimulating and community supported facility.

- ◆ **Sight Lines**

Play areas for young children must be designed to minimize the risk from “undesirable” people. Crime prevention strategies through environmental design should be followed. For example, sight lines from surrounding roads and caregiver amenities should be maintained over activity areas.

- ◆ **UV Radiation**

The harmful effects of the sun are now well documented and have a high community awareness. It is common practice to provide natural or artificial shade over play areas, however many of Mildura’s reserves and smaller parks lack shade. Play areas for

young children should be positioned strategically and/or have shade cloth erected. Larger parks where family outings occur should have built shade areas for seating.

◆ **Lighting**

Where open space is an access route to another area or service, low level lighting will increase the safety of the area. Lighting of active areas such as basketball and tennis courts can improve safety and use, but increases conflict with neighbours and therefore needs to be handled on a case by case basis. Improved lighting of riverfront areas is also important for safety and creation of a pleasant and/or vibrant atmosphere.

***Water Conservation***

Council has over the past eight years initiated a wide range of initiatives to reduce ongoing exposure to increased water usage and maintenance costs. Strategies which are being implemented, such as the following should continue:

- ◆ Local parks to incorporate a minimum of 40% low water use garden area landscaped with indigenous, drought tolerant species and 60% turf.
- ◆ Incorporate sub surface drip irrigation where possible in new developments and refurbishments.
- ◆ Complete mulching works where provision has been made along existing boundary fence lines to reduce irrigated turf areas.
- ◆ Ensure drought tolerant species are not over watered on an on-going basis with drip irrigation systems or over spray from existing overhead irrigation systems.
- ◆ Review the operation of irrigation systems to ensure watering is confined to the turf area and is not over spraying non-target areas.

***Linear Trails***

Tracks, paths, trails and other linkages are used for both commuter (such as home to school or work and going to the shops) and recreational purposes.

There is an ongoing debate as to whether trails should be developed as single purpose, dual use or multi use, however there appears to be no single solution. In some instances single purpose trails are the most appropriate, particularly in narrow or confined areas or where constructed to meet the needs of a specific type of user. In other instances dual or multi use trails can be successfully developed if adequate consideration is given to safety and the physical condition and maintenance of the trail is taken into account.

It is generally agreed that walking and horse riding are compatible activities on reasonably wide trails as both travel at similar speeds. Cyclists and skaters on the other hand, often conflict with walking or horse riding, particularly when cyclists are travelling relatively fast and have a short line of sight (over hills or around corners). Based on experience in Australia and overseas, it is not clear cut as to whether multi use trails are a practical solution. The Rails to Trails Conservancy (USA), has produced a manual on multi use trails, which is ambiguous. It suggests multi use trails will work, if high quality surfaces are used. However, where low cost or no treatments exist, conditions can deteriorate when horses use trails in wet weather, to the detriment of other users. It seems apparent that multi use

corridors with distinct trails for different types of uses are the best solution where adequate land and financial resources are available.

Effectively a trails network will comprise a mix of single use, dual use, and multi use routes depending upon the local situation. When establishing linkages or trails, factors to consider include:

- ◆ Trails must be maintained to a reasonable standard.
- ◆ Maps should be prepared and include a description of the length of the trail, time taken to traverse the trail, points of interest, degree of difficulty and other relevant information such as toilets and amenities.
- ◆ On popular trails it is important that users can follow the route without the use of a map, therefore adequate signage must be provided.
- ◆ The general public must be made aware of the difference between public and private land. Signs and maps clearly identifying public and private land will help stop public intrusion onto private property.
- ◆ Marked trails must be maintained, and signs replaced when they “disappear”, as a “duty of care” to users exists.

Principles for establishing a network of recreation linkages or trails include:

- ◆ Trails should be loops, rather than “out and back” trails. Where longer “out and back” trails exist, such as along the Murray River shorter loops can be established along the main trail.
- ◆ Walking, equestrian and skate trails should primarily involve off road linkages, and where necessary be joined by short, safe on road/footpath sections.
- ◆ Trails through or near areas of conservation value must be designed to ensure environmental sustainability.
- ◆ Trails should link points of interest, and be designed to allow the user to pass through a diverse range of settings including pleasant and attractive landscapes.
- ◆ Within urban areas, trails should make use of, and link existing open space areas such as sporting reserves, creeks and transport easements.
- ◆ Trails should be designed and constructed, wherever possible to cater for people with disabilities.
- ◆ Trails will include appropriate amenities such as bike stands, drink fountains, toilets and picnic areas.

### *Access for All*

Open space must be accessible to everybody. When designing access into and around a park or reserve, and deciding what equipment will be installed, the needs of all people must be considered. Of particular importance is to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities, and other groups with specific needs are addressed. It is appropriate to involve representatives of groups which may be currently excluded, in design teams, and to seek their assistance in assessing access to existing open space.

### *Dual Use of Drainage Reserves*

Mildura has a large number of drainage reserve which have the potential to be used for recreation areas. Innovative solutions may be required to ensure that drainage reserves can be used for other purposes. In the new residential areas, drainage reserves can be used as linear trails through a residential area, and to create linkages. Drainage reserves must be regarded as one element of public open space, which has multiple functions.

## **5.2 PLAYGROUNDS**

Playgrounds have been developed in many different classifications of open space. A hierarchy of playgrounds to complement the hierarchy of open space areas is appropriate. It is recognised that playgrounds already exist through MRCC, and that substantial changes to individual playgrounds may not occur due to financial constraints.

### **5.2.1 Guidelines**

Each playground is unique, due to size, topography, location, catchment population, existing conditions and community expectation. Therefore it is not possible to establish strict rules or standards for the development and maintenance of every playground. Instead, it is more appropriate to adopt guidelines which will can be used to assist in the design of future playgrounds.

#### *Regional Playgrounds*

Visitor and caregiver amenities	Car parking to cater for weekend demand (as a guide Kingston City Council (V) has provision for 80 car parking spaces)
	Toilets
	Shelter/shade for caregivers and over play equipment
	Picnic tables and seats (multiple sets to cater for demand)
	BBQ's (multiple to cater for demand)
	Seating in shade overlooking play equipment
	Drinking water
	Security lighting

Formal play areas	<p>Play equipment for toddlers</p> <p>Play equipment for junior primary school age children</p> <p>Play equipment for senior primary school age children</p> <p>Play equipment for teenage young people</p>
Informal play areas	<p>Kick about areas with goal posts (at least the size of half a soccer pitch ie.2500 m<sup>2</sup> to allow multiple informal ball games or end to end kicking)</p> <p>Sports practice facilities (at least two different sports)</p> <p>Skate and cycling areas</p> <p>Natural landscape features such as creeks and mounds to be retained and enhanced</p>
Miscellaneous	<p>Access for people with disabilities</p> <p>Landscaping (all areas accessible to visitors to be irrigated)</p>

### ***Major Playground***

Visitor and caregiver amenities	<p>Car parking to cater for normal demand (as a guide Kingston City Council (V) has provision for 5 car parking spaces)</p> <p>Shelter/shade for caregivers and over play equipment</p> <p>Picnic tables and seats (to cater for demand, at least one set)</p> <p>BBQ's (to cater for demand, at least one)</p> <p>Seating in shade overlooking play equipment</p> <p>Drinking water</p> <p>Security lighting</p>
Formal play areas	<p>Play equipment for toddlers</p> <p>Play equipment for junior primary school age children</p> <p>Play equipment for senior primary school age children</p>
Informal play areas	<p>Kick about area (at least 1500 m<sup>2</sup> to allow one informal ball game or end to end kicking)</p> <p>Sports practice facilities for at least one sport</p> <p>Cycling areas</p> <p>Natural landscape features such as creeks and mounds to be retained and enhanced</p>
Miscellaneous	<p>Access for people with disabilities</p> <p>Landscaping (all areas accessible to visitors to be irrigated)</p>

### ***Community Playground***

Visitor and caregiver amenities	<p>Shelter/shade for caregivers and over play equipment</p> <p>Seating in shade overlooking play equipment</p>
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Formal play areas	Play equipment for at least one age group
Informal play areas	Kick about area (at least 1000 m <sup>2</sup> to allow ball games for young children) Natural landscape features such as creeks and mounds to be retained and enhanced
Miscellaneous	Access for people with disabilities Landscaping (only kick about area and area near play equipment to be irrigated)

### **5.2.2 Location**

All open space has been classified according to the recommended classification system (refer Section 4.0 in the Research Report for a detailed discussion and 3.4 in this report for a summary). In recommending the location of regional, major and community playgrounds the two main criteria were accessibility to surrounding areas and size of the park.

It is recommended that playgrounds to comply with the development guidelines be upgraded or established at: (see Appendix A for location of precincts and open space in Mildura)

#### ***Regional Playground***

Mildura Riverfront Reserve

#### ***Major Playground***

Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex  
SC Mills Park  
Mildura Recreation Reserve  
Henshilwood Park  
Kenny Park  
Quandong Park

#### ***Community Playground***

Washington Park  
Mansell Reserve  
Sharland Park  
Green Pines Park  
Walnut Park  
Meadow Grove Park  
The Grange Reserve  
Semmens Park  
Linton Park  
Hornsey Park  
Sobbee Buxton Park  
Lions Park, Irymple

Chaffey Park Merbein  
 Barclay Square, Red Cliffs  
 Woodbine Park, Red Cliffs  
 Pine Street Reserve, Red Cliffs  
 Cardross Reserve, Cardross  
 Nangiloc Reserve, Nangiloc  
 Ferguson Park, Ouyen  
 Blackburn Park, Ouyen  
 Outen Park, Underbool  
 Pioneer Park, Murrayville  
 Wayside Stop, Walpeup  
 Johansen Memorial Reserve, Lake Cullulleraine

Playground equipment currently exists in other local parks. Whilst this equipment should be maintained in a safe condition, additional or replacement play equipment should only be installed when sufficient demand for play equipment in the surrounding residential area has been identified.

### **5.3 OPEN SPACE IN NEW RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS**

Council is currently preparing a Development Contributions Plan and at the time of finalising the Public Open Space Strategy is nearing completion. It is expected to clearly define the level of contribution from developers of land within Mildura. Contributions are expected to include a combination of land, infrastructure works and monetary contribution. This plan will provide a framework for Council to ensure that developer contributions are managed and utilised effectively. It is therefore inappropriate for the Public Open Space Strategy to address this issue, given the detailed investigation currently being undertaken.

Given the proposed growth of the residential areas of Mildura South and Irymple, guidelines are required to locate open space in new residential areas. Guidelines and principles relating to the hierarchy and design discussed above, are to be followed. Additional guidelines for determining open space contributions can include:

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Size:     | <p>Major local parks at least 6,000 m<sup>2</sup> (to accommodate all the features proposed in the recommended guidelines, and to create a sense of openness)</p> <p>Minor local parks at least 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> (to accommodate all the features proposed in the recommended guidelines, and to create a sense of openness)</p> <p>Linear reserve, trails and paths should preferably be at least 20 metres wide, except at pinch points when the preferred minimum width is 2 metres</p> |
| Siting:   | Road frontage on at least one road, with vehicle access points  |
| Drainage: | Must have good drainage and preferably be flood free. Land to be above the 1 in 20 year design flood level.   |

Slope:	Not to exceed 1:20
Location:	<p>Where possible, locate close to community facilities such as schools and shops and link with open space spines and multi purpose trails and paths</p> <p>Where possible, link open space areas with linear paths and trails</p> <p>Where possible, locate away from potentially hazardous areas, such as industrial areas and high tension power lines</p>
Accessibility:	Central to surrounding residential area, with access maximised through use of walkways/laneways
Land:	Free of defects such as hazardous landfill, easements which restrict use, soil erosion, remnant structure, existing vegetation which is dangerous or diseased
Services:	Water, sewerage and electricity available to the site

## 5.4 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

The following table details an implementation program for the Public Open Space Strategy. The speed of implementation will depend upon the level of financial commitment from MRCC. It is acknowledged that Council's budget will vary from year to year, and its funding of public open space projects will depend upon competing priorities. Consequently, each action is accorded a priority and an indicative time frame. As many actions will be implemented over more than one financial year, the time frame may involve more than one year.

Strategy	Action	Priority	Timeframe	Cost
<b><i>Regional Open Space</i></b>				
Prepare Master Plans for each regional open space, including management and maintenance programs and environmental controls	1. Implement works identified in master plans	Ongoing	Year 1- 5	\$20,000 pa
	2. Complete preparation of Master Plan for Mildura Riverfront reserves	High	Year 1	\$0
	3. Prepare Master Plan for Apex Park	Medium	Year 2 – 4	\$10,000
	4. Prepare Master Plan for Ranfurly Bend riverfront reserve	Low	Year 5+	\$10,000
<b><i>Sporting Reserves</i></b>				
Ensure Mildura Recreation Reserve and Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex are used to their optimum capacity	1. Determine feasibility of relocating netball from Mansell Reserve to Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex	High	Year 1	\$10,000
	2. Determine feasibility of constructing a synthetic hockey field at Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex	High	Year 1- 2	\$5,000
	3. Update Mildura Recreation Reserve Master Plan and management strategy	Medium	Year 2 – 4	\$15,000
	4. Update Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex Master Plan when the netball and hockey issues have been resolved	Medium	Year 2 – 4	\$10,000
	5. Subject to relocation of netball, designate Mansell Reserve as a local park	Low	Year 4+	\$0
Establish a new sporting reserve in Mildura South, when demand is evident	1. Amend the Mildura South Development Plan to include adequate land for a sporting reserve in Mildura South adjacent to either the proposed new school on San Mateo Avenue or the existing Mildura South Primary School	High	Year 1	\$0

Strategy	Action	Priority	Timeframe	Cost
	2. Review demand for an additional sporting reserve when the Mildura Recreation Reserve and Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex Master Plans have been prepared.	Medium	Year 3 – 5	\$5,000
	3. Subject to demand, acquire land in the Mildura South area for a sporting reserve	Low	Year 5+	\$100,000
Maintain existing sporting reserves in the satellite towns and rural townships subject to local demand	1. No action required	N/A	N/A	\$0
<b>Linear Trails</b>				
Establish an interlocking network of multi purpose trails connecting Mildura, Mildura South, Irymple and Merbein	1. Extend the existing paths and tracks along the River Murray from Ornamental Lakes Park to the east to Cowra Avenue, and to the west to Merbein.	Ongoing	Year 1– 5	\$10,000 pa
	2. Extend the Mildura – Yelta rail linear path to link with the Three Chain reserves at Rio Vista Park and with the Lake Hawthorn to Ranfurly Way linear path.	Medium	Year 2 – 4	\$30,000
	3. Create a path around the Bob Corbould Wetland.	Medium	Year 3 – 5	\$30,000
	4. Extend the Irymple Green Belt through the proposed new subdivisions (Stage 3 Development Plan) to link through the East of Grange Development Plan area (adjacent to the proposed school) to the Hollywood Linear reserve and through the Mildura South Development Plan area (adjacent to Mildura South Primary School) to the Mildura – Yelta rail line.	Low	Year 5+	\$30,000
	5. Create a linear path around Lake Hawthorn	Low	Year 5+	\$100,000+
	6. Extend the Irymple Green Belt through the proposed new subdivisions (Stage 3 Development Plan) to link with the Boulevard Linear reserve.	Low	Year 5+	\$30,000

Strategy	Action	Priority	Timeframe	Cost
	7. Establish a linear path from the Bob Corbould Wetland through the Mildura Landfill (when rehabilitated), Mildura Golf Course (subject to negotiating appropriate access rights), Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex and to the Three Chain reserve on Ranfurly Way.	Low	Year 5+	\$30,000
<b>Local Parks</b>				
Establish a regional playground on the Mildura riverfront reserve	1. Refer the Open Space Strategy to the master planning process	High	Year 1	\$0
Provide a major playground with reasonable access of all residences	1. Review all major playgrounds and undertake works to ensure they meet adopted guidelines.	Ongoing	Year 1 – 5	\$20,000 pa
	2. Designate the following reserves as the site of a major playground:  Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex SC Mills Park Mildura Recreation Reserve Henshilwood Park Kenny Park Quandong Park	High	Year 1	\$0
	3. Establish major local parks with a major playground in the proposed residential areas of:  Mildura South, either adjacent to Mildura South Primary School, or in the area between Walnut Avenue and Ontario Avenue and sited on the proposed linear trail	Medium	Year 2 – 5+ (timing depends on rate of population growth)	\$90,000

Strategy	Action	Priority	Timeframe	Cost
	East of Grange Development Plan area, within the proposed sporting reserve and/or sited on the proposed linear trail			
	Stage 3 Development Plan area, sited on the Irymple Green Belt and located towards the north eastern side of the area			
Provide a community playground within reasonable walking distance of all residences	1. Maintain all existing minor local parks and ensure playgrounds in the following local parks meet adopted community playground development guidelines:  Washington Park Mansell Reserve Sharland Park Green Pines Park Walnut Park Meadow Grove Park The Grange Reserve Semmens Park Linton Park Hornsey Park Sobbee Buxton Park Lions Park, Irymple Chaffey Park Merbein Barclay Square, Red Cliffs Woodbine Park, Red Cliffs Pine Street Reserve, Red Cliffs Cardross Reserve, Cardross Nangiloc Reserve, Nangiloc Ferguson Park, Ouyen	Ongoing	Year 1 – 5	\$30,000 pa

Strategy	Action	Priority	Timeframe	Cost
	Blackburn Park, Ouyen Outen Park, Underbool Pioneer Park, Murrayville Wayside Stop, Walpeup Johansen Memorial Reserve, Lake Cullulleraine			
	2. Maintain existing play equipment in all parks and reserves in a safe condition, and install additional or replacement play equipment when sufficient demand for play equipment in the surrounding residential area has been identified.	Ongoing	Year 1 – 5	\$15,000 pa
	3. Establish local parks with a community playground in the proposed residential areas of:	Low	Year 5+ (timing depends on rate of population growth)	\$45,000
	Stage 3 development Plan area, between Benetook Avenue and Cowra Avenue, and sited adjacent to the Irymple Green Belt			
	Mildura South Development Plan area, between Riverside Avenue and Ontario Avenue, and located towards the south west part of the precinct			
	Irymple North Development Plan area, adjacent to the Irymple Green Belt			



## APPENDIX A: MILDURA PRECINCTS AND OPEN SPACE

