Mildura Public Toilet Strategy
2019 - 2029

Mildura Rural City Council

ETHOS URBAN

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Executive Summary

The Mildura Public Toilet Strategy establishes a vision for public toilets that is consistent with Council's aspiration to be 'the most liveable, people-friendly community in Australia'.

The Strategy seeks to improve the quality and standard of public toilets across the municipality to enhance the health and wellbeing of all residents, as well as providing for the needs of visitors to the Rural City of Mildura.

The Strategy is structured around four overarching themes: network distribution, design, accessibility and management.

Key components of this strategy are:

- Vision & Objectives for public toilets within the municipality.
- Design and Siting Principles.

Separate documents that support this strategy include:

- A Public Toilet Toolkit
- Implementation Plan (including Action Plan and a Capital Works Program).

The Implementation Plan will be completed following finalisation of the Strategy and will include a proposed list of upgrades of existing facilities and new facilities to be undertaken over the next 10 years. For un-anticipated proposals that fall outside of the Capital Works Plan, a suite of guidelines and considerations have been included to assist Council in decision making.

The Strategy and supporting documents have been informed and developed in collaboration with the community, key stakeholders and Council.

Terms Used in this Report

Table 1 – Terms Used in this Report

Terms Used	Definition
Australian Standard (AS 1428)	AS 1428 specifies that new buildings must be capable of providing access to people with disabilities. Particular attention is focused on continuous accessible paths of travel for wheelchair users, access for people with ambulatory disabilities and access for people with sensory disabilities.
Building Code of Australia (BCA)	A uniform set of technical provisions to be incorporated into the design and construction of buildings and other structures within Australia.
Changing Places Toilet	Public toilet facilities that cater for people with severe or profound disabilities. These facilities incorporate full sized change tables, tracking hoist systems, large circulation spaces and a centrally placed toilet with room for carers.
Co-Located	A public toilet that is externally accessible and attached to, or within, an existing building structure such as a sport pavilion or a library.
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)	An approach to the prevention of crime focusing on the relationship between physical environments and those who use them.
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)	The *Disability Discrimination Act* 1992 makes discrimination against an individual because of their disability unlawful. This applies to a number of areas of public life including employment, education and access to public places.
Ecologically Sustainable Design (ESD)	An integrated and holistic approach to design that aims to reduce negative environmental impacts and improve the health of building occupants. Principles of ESD include the promotion of renewable energy, reducing water use, inclusion of environmentally friendly building materials and optimising operational practices.
Split Gender	Terminology used to describe a facility that is available for all.
Public Toilet	A facility containing one or more rooms/cubicles that is available for use by the public. The facility may be mechanised or automated. It may be a stand-alone, co-located within a Council or privately owned facility. For the purpose of this strategy, a public toilet is one which is located on Council owned and/or managed land.
Stand Alone	A free-standing toilet building, usually a toilet block, that has separate male and female entrances.
Unisex	A gender neutral room/cubicle that is availble for use by all.

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1.0

OVERVIEW

1.0 Overview

1.1 Introduction

The Mildura Public Toilet Strategy establishes a strategic framework to guide the delivery and upgrade of public toilets across the municipality and outlines a vision that is consistent with Council's aspiration to be 'the most liveable, people-friendly community in Australia'.

Public toilets are vital community assets that contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents, workers and visitors to the municipality. Often unacknowledged, public toilets support the vitality and accessibility of public places and spaces.

The Strategy highlights some of the key issues and challenges associated with public toilets in Mildura and also identifies opportunities for improvement.

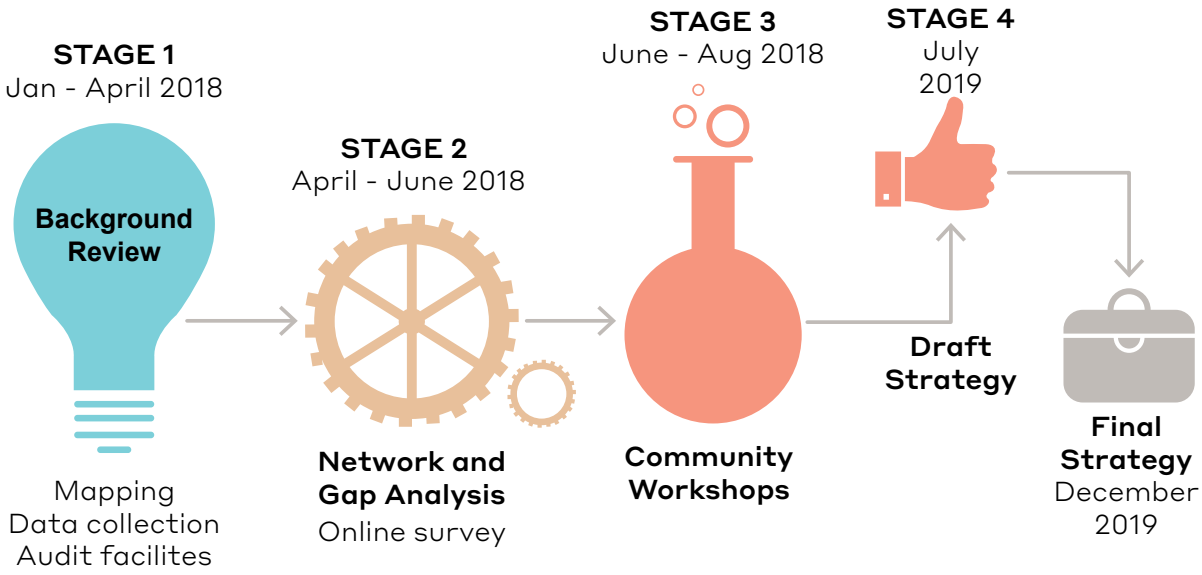
Core elements of the Strategy are:

- Summary of policy context;
- Key findings from consultation and engagement;
- Summary of issues and opportunities by theme;
- Recommendations for upgrades and improvements to the public toilet network;

Supporting documents to the Strategy are:

- Toolkit comprising assessment frameworks to assist Council in determining future upgrades;
- Key strategic and operational actions to improve the existing and future toilet network; and
- A 10 Year Capital Works Plan (to be reviewed after 5 years).

The Strategy has been informed by a range of community and stakeholder engagement activities including targeted workshops, listening posts and a community survey. A summary of the consultation process is outlined in Section 1.5 of this report (Page 6).



1.2 Vision

The vision for public toilets in the municipality is:

Council will provide high quality public toilets that are clean, safe and cater to the needs of all residents, workers and visitors to the Rural City of Mildura.

The Vision will be achieved through the following objectives:

- Provide a framework of consistent decision making for the provision, rehabilitation and maintenance of public toilet facilities.
- Provide a comprehensive, efficient and well-distributed network of accessible public toilets at key locations through out Mildura, which will cater to the needs of users, including but not limited to:
  - Visitors to the region (either passing through or extended stays);
  - Motorists (private or business travellers and sightseers);
  - Shoppers;
  - Users of recreation and sporting fields (organised sport);
  - Users of parks, reserves and river areas for recreation (including play equipment, skate ramps etc.);
  - Users of barbecue and picnic facilities;
  - Cyclists;
  - Parents and carers of children and babies; and
  - People with a disability and/or limited mobility.
- Apply universal design guidelines to all future upgrades and ensure public toilet availability and location are clearly promoted and communicated to all users:
  - Provide guidance on where the different types of public toilet designs (within a predetermined hierarchy) are to be provided;
  - Design public toilets to be attractive, safe and accessible to users of all ages and abilities;
- Prioritise the safety of all public toilet users in Mildura by minimising occurrences of anti-social behaviour;
- Maintain toilets to an appropriate standard of cleanliness to enhance the safety, health and wellbeing of all users.
- Provide direction of where Council should focus advocacy and encouragement of other organisations to provide public toilet facilities;
- Ensure public toilets are cost effective and can be managed efficiently.

1.3 Public Toilets in Context

What is a Public Toilet?

Public toilets are essential community assets which contribute to the enjoyment and amenity of public spaces by residents and visitors to the municipality.

The provision and governance of public toilets can be complex. While there is no statutory or legislative requirement for councils to provide public toilet facilities, the Rural City of Mildura is committed to fulfilling its social and corporate responsibility in promoting the health and wellbeing of the community and the vitality of public spaces.

Council is the primary provider of public toilets in Mildura which are free to use and located in key community spaces.

Some toilets are sited within public buildings such as libraries or sporting pavilions. These toilets are often only available during specified times such as business hours or weekends. In addition to this users may be required to pass through a control point to access a toilet.

Many privately owned businesses also operate and provide toilets for use by the public in a variety of locations. Although these facilities are often perceived to be available for general public use, they are usually provided to service the needs of staff and paying customers.

There are also other government agencies which provide and manage toilets on other public and Crown land such as Parks Victoria and VicRoads.

There are opportunities to explore future partnerships with the private sector to increase the network of toilets in Mildura which are explored in this Strategy. Capital works and other recommendations outlined in this Strategy relate directly to Council's existing assets.

There are 80 Council owned and managed public toilets distributed throughout Mildura. Of these facilities, 37 are located within recreation and sporting fields (organised sport), 17 are located in parks and reserves and 26 are located within activity areas.

Why Plan for Public Toilets?

Historically, planning for public toilets has not been prioritised, often resulting in ad-hoc outcomes. As community needs and preferences evolve and as the municipality continues to grow and change, it is important that Council has a clear framework to guide decision making to ensure public toilets are well located and equitably distributed.

It is also important that upgrades and installations of new facilities respond to community needs. Issues around the accessibility, design and safety of public toilets can result in the marginalisation of some user groups and exclude others from using public toilets. This can result in negative perceptions about existing facilities.

There are opportunities to improve the process of planning for new facilities, the standard of existing toilets and improve the efficiency of the network through-out Mildura.

The Mildura Public Toilet Strategy provides a rational and strategic planning framework to guide future upgrades and installation of new facilities over the next ten years.

1.4 Strategic Context

Council Plan

The Community and Council Plan 2017-2021 (2018 Update) outlines Council's goals and priorities over a four (4) years period, which includes the following relevant goals listed under Key Result Areas (KRA):

- **2.4: Infrastructure Assets and Facilities:**
  - 'Well-planned and maintained buildings and facilities' through the development and implementation of a Public Toilet Strategy.
- **1.2: Community Development:**
  - 'Improved accessibility to facilities, services and activities'.
- **1.6: Recreation & Sports:**
  - 'Increased access to a diverse range of quality sporting and recreation facilities and programs'.
- **4.4: Financial Sustainability:**
  - 'Meet the community's needs in a financially responsible way'.

There is a range of municipal wide and local plans and strategies which have informed the development of this Strategy.

The analysis of each of these documents has identified elements which will influence public toilet provision. These have been distilled to the create the Vision, Objectives and Principles of Provision which will be used to inform decisions about public toilets in Rural City Mildura.

Open Space

The strategic direction for Council's open space is provided by the Public Open Space Strategy (August 2003) and a series of Sporting Reserve Master Plans prepared around 2004. These documents contain some limited information about the provision of future public toilet infrastructure, but are largely outdated.

Council is now preparing an updated Open Space Strategy which establishes a hierarchy of open spaces within the municipality. Open space is broadly categorised as providing opportunities for either passive or active recreation for different scale catchment areas they service.

For example, Mildura's Riverfront reserve near the city centre provides for passive recreation at a regional level, while areas like the Underbool Recreation Reserve provide opportunities for active recreation at a local level.

This Public Toilet Strategy gives guidance to the level of public toilet infrastructure that should be provided in areas of open space with different functions and service catchments.

Social Inclusion

Council's Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Strategy does not contain any specific guidance on the type or location of public toilet infrastructure in the municipality. It does, however, have the following vision:

> *Mildura Rural City Council's vision is for a liveable community. Our community will be one that is a safe and supportive place to live, encouraging diversity, health and wellbeing and lifestyle opportunities for everyone.*

This is further enforced by the LGBTI Inclusion Plan 2016 which seeks to promote a non-discriminatory and inclusive environment for the diverse array of persons in the LGBTI community.

Public toilet infrastructure should therefore be non-discriminatory and provide for a range of persons with different social and/or cultural preferences and requirements.

Commercial Centres

The Mildura Retail Strategy 2010 sets out the hierarchy of retail centres within the municipality. Higher order centres are those which service a larger population catchment and are likely to attract a larger volume of persons, and therefore will have the highest potential demand for public toilet facilities (refer to Table 2).

Table 2 – Summary of Retail Hierarchy

Hierarchy	Centre(s)
Regional Centre	Mildura CBD
Sub-Regional Centre	Centre Mildura Precinct
Neighbourhood Centres	Mildura South Growth Area Deakin Avenue (intersection with Thirteenth Street)
Town Centres	Red Cliffs, Merbein, Irymple
Homemaker Retailing	Fifteenth Street Homemaker Precinct
Local Shops	Various locations throughout urban areas of the municipality

1.5 Community Engagement

A range of consultation methods were used throughout the project to engage with different users and stakeholders, capturing a broad range of views and perspectives about the municipality's public toilets.

Throughout the project a project page on Council's website has provided updates and information about the project, allowing people to register their interest and provide feedback.

The initial round of consultation and engagement was undertaken by means of a survey between February and March 2018, the purpose of which was to identify key issues associated with existing facilities, opportunities for improvement and to understand community priorities.

More than 600 persons participated in the survey and provided detailed feedback about Mildura's public toilets.

This feedback was then used to inform the preparation of an Issues and Opportunities Report, which provided the basis for a second round of consultation which consisted of four (4) community workshops held in Ouyen and Mildura in July 2018.

The diagram below summarises the types of consultation activities undertaken and the approximate levels of engagement.

Feedback received from the community is discussed through out this Strategy to clearly demonstrate how the comments received have shaped recommendations relating to a proposed vision for public toilets, the role Council should play, public toilets that may need attention, locations that should be considered for new facilities and the priority actions for Mildura's public toilet network.

This draft Strategy is publicly exhibited as part of a third round of consultation, allowing stakeholders and general members of the public the opportunity to make submissions on the proposed recommendations. Feedback received will inform revisions to the final Strategy, before it is adopted by Council.

Stakeholder Workshops

- 5 Council Attendees
- 5 Resident Attendees
- 5 Business Attendees

Listening Posts

- 5 Engagements with the Community
- 5 Hard Copy Survey Responses
- 5 Locations (Mildura & Ouyen)

Community Survey

611 Online Survey Responses

Other Media

- 5 Individual written submissions

2.0

PUBLIC TOILETS TODAY

2.0 Public Toilets Today

2.1 Toilets in Mildura

There are eighty (80) Council owned and/or managed public toilets distributed throughout Mildura. The majority of toilets (32, accounting for 40%) are located in Mildura. Other centres which contain a notable quantity include Merbein (7), Cullulleraine (6), Red Cliffs (6) and Ouyen (5). Murrayville and Irymple contain four (4) public toilet facilities each, while Werrimull contains three (3). Remaining townships with public toilet provision have only 1-2 facilities.

Of these facilities, 37 (46%) are located within active recreation and sporting fields (organised sport), 19 (24%) are located in parks and reserves used for passive recreation, and the remaining 24 (30%) are located within activity areas such as the City Centre and other retail centres.

The typology, construction style and condition of a public toilet are usually a reflection of its age and year of construction.

Historically, popular typologies included separate male and female structures, or separate male and female areas within the same structure. If disabled facilities are provided, they are not likely to be DDA compliant, as they were constructed before these standards were introduced.

These standalone facilities are usually functional and 'blocky' and made from robust materials such as brick. Fittings, fixtures and internal and external finishes have usually been refurbished from original condition, or otherwise in very poor condition. These older-style facilities generally align with those the community perceive to be unsafe or undesirable.

Newer public toilet facilities incorporate DDA compliant disabled (and usually unisex) facilities that provide for a broader range of user groups. They incorporate more design elements that stray from the traditional, brick block and provide vandal-proof fixtures and fittings. These facilities are generally perceived by the community to be safer and cleaner.

2.2 Public Toilet Audit

In 2017, Council undertook a condition audit of 80 of its public toilet facilities to assess the building structure, fittings, cleanliness and general condition. Each facility was audited based on its:

- **Accessibility**;
- **Design**;
- **Safety**;
- **Hygiene**; and
- **Maintenance**.

Scores were given out of 5, with 5 denoting the highest condition and 1 the lowest. A score of 0 was applied where certain elements were not applicable (e.g. external building condition was not applicable to co-located facilities).

The tables below summarise the results of the audit in relation to Condition and Features.

The lowest scoring public toilets, when considering both the condition of existing components, and the presence or absence of desirable features were:

- Merbein Soccer Club Female Block;
- Quandong Park Oval 3 Female Block;
- Mildura Recreation Reserve Oval 2 Storage & Toilets;
- Nangiloc Football Club Toilets;
- Merbein Soccer Club Male Block;
- Walpeup Lake Public Toilet; and
- Red Cliffs Croquet Club Toilet.

Best Condition

- Mildura Rowing Club Public Toilets;
- Ornamental Lakes Toilet Block 2;
- Bike & Traveller Hub;
- Cowangie Hall Unisex Disabled Toilet;
- Ninth Street Public Toilet;
- Mildura Arts Centre Theatre Toilet;
- Henshilwood Reserve Toilets - New.

Poorest Condition

- Mildura Recreation Reserve Oval 2;
- Nangiloc Football Club Toilets;
- Aero Ovals Eleventh Street Toilets;
- Lake Cullulleraine Function Centre Female Block;
- Kenny Park Female Block;
- Red Cliffs Croquet Club Toilet.

Most Features

- Mildura Rowing Club Public Toilets;
- The Alfred Deakin Centre - Benetook Room Public Toilets;
- Ninth Street Public Toilet;
- Mildura Arts Centre Theatre Toilets;
- Merbein Commercial Street Toilets;
- Ornamental Lakes Toilet Block 2;
- Bike & Traveller Hub.

Least Features

- Merbein Soccer Club Female Block;
- Quandong Park Oval 3 Female Toilets;
- Merbein Soccer Club Male Block;
- Walpeup Lake Public Toilet;
- Koorlong Hall Male Toilets;
- Mildura Recreation Reserve Oval 2 Storage & Toilets;
- Nangiloc Football Club Toilets.

2.3 Community Feedback

As outlined above, the survey conducted in the first round of consultation asked the community to provide feedback about the condition of the existing public toilet network.

In regard to the overall themes, locations with public toilets that people avoided due to their poor condition or lack of features were:

- Kmart Public Toilet;
- Ninth Street Public Toilet;
- Woolworths Public Toilet;
- Barclay Square Toilets, Red Cliffs;
- Jaycee Park Toilets; and
- Rio Vista Park / Lock 11 Public Toilets.

Toilets that were considered particularly unsafe were:

- Kmart Public Toilet;
- Rio Vista Park / Lock 11 Public Toilets;
- Woolworths Public Toilet; and
- Quandong Park Public Toilets.

Locations in Mildura that do not currently have a public toilet facility and were identified as needing one were:

- Langtree Avenue / Mall, Mildura;
- Water Play / Splash Park, Ornamental Lakes Park, Mildura;
- Fifteenth Street, Irymple;
- Outen Park, Underbool; and
- Merbein South.

Council has reviewed and considered this feedback, as well as the audit and other data, to identify priorities for upgrading. Chapter 5 outlines the proposed actions and priorities to be undertaken for each public toilet.

3.0

FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

3.0 Findings & Recommendations

3.1 Overview

Key Themes

This Chapter discusses the issues and challenges associated with public toilet provision throughout Mildura. It also identifies opportunities to improve and enhance the facilities.

The Chapter is structured in four broad themes:

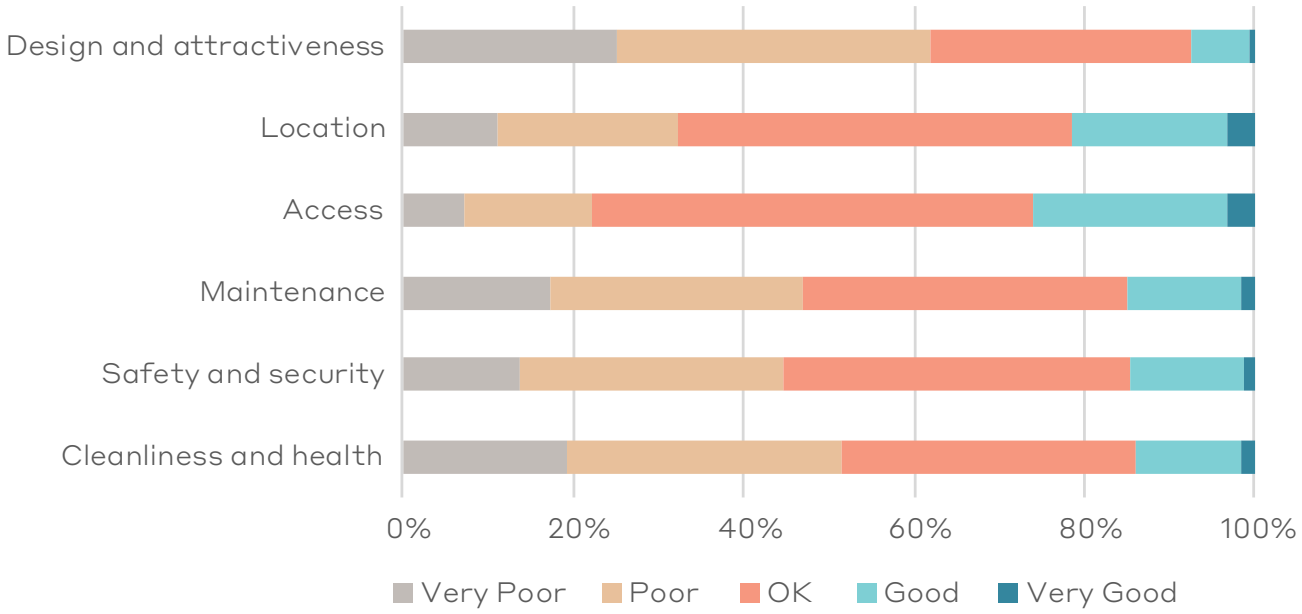
- Location (Distribution);
- Design;
- Accessibility; and
- Management, which includes:
  - Safety and Security;
  - Maintenance; and
  - Cleanliness and Health.

The discussion for each theme includes consideration of community feedback relevant to the topic; outcomes from the audit, and; principles for provision based on Council strategies and industry best practice.

Recommendations are provided at the end of each topic.

The findings and graphics presented in the following themes represent community feedback from the issues and opportunities consultation stage.

Rating of Existing Public Toilets in Mildura



3.2 Distribution

Objective:

Provide a comprehensive, efficient and well-distributed network of accessible public toilets at key locations throughout the municipality.

Issues & Challenges

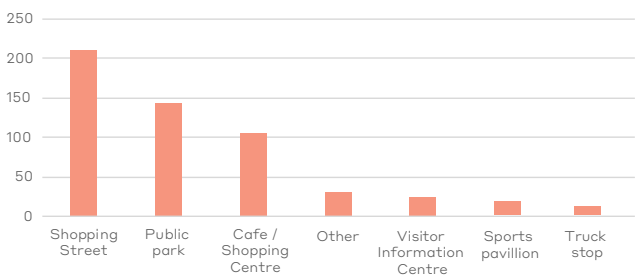
- Gaps within the City Centre public toilet network.
- Not all regional open spaces or regional level playgrounds have direct access to public toilets.
- Should all rural townships be serviced by a public toilet?
- Co-located facilities do not offer the same level of service provision or accessibility due to restricted opening hours, design or security. This reduces network availability.
- Balancing and prioritising community expectation and need with capital works expenditure and asset management.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Improve the distribution of the public toilet network in key locations.
- Install new toilets and upgrade existing toilets at key open spaces and play spaces in accordance to the relevant hierarchy.
- Review the provision of public toilets outside the Mildura CBD.
- Work with private land developers and government agencies (such as ParksVic and DELWP) to improve the public toilet network and ensure a consistent level of service.
- Integrate the recommendations of the Public Toilet Strategy through future masterplans and other key Council strategies (e.g. the new Open Space Strategy).

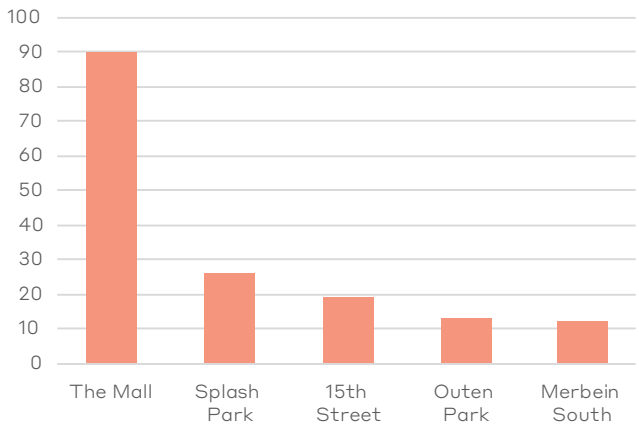
What the Community Said

Locations you would most like to use a public toilet



Gaps in the Network

Locations in our region that don't currently have a public toilet and need one



Distribution:
Findings & Recommendations

City Centre

Mildura's City Centre contains five (5) public toilet facilities located within the commercial and mixed use areas.

Facilities in the city centre are expected to be highly utilised, especially those located in or adjacent to high volume pedestrian movements. While limited usage statistics are available, it is noted that the Kmart public toilets in the City Centre were used on average more than 450 times per day and the Ninth Street Public Toilets more than 300 times per day.

Gaps

Spatially, public toilets are generally well distributed to areas north-west of Deakin Avenue and in public open spaces. However, there are identified and perceived gaps in the existing public toilet network in the following locations:

- Langtree Avenue / Mall; and
- Commercial areas south-east of Deakin Avenue.

The community survey included feedback that there was a significant lack of public toilet facilities in The Mall (also known as Langtree Mall located on Langtree Avenue).

Applying walkable catchments of 400 metres (correlating to a 5 minute walk) to the existing public toilet network shows that there are a number of facilities that service Langtree Avenue:

- Kmart Public Toilet (12);
- Deakin Avenue Public Toilet (8);
- Ninth Street Public Toilet (23); and
- Woolworths Public Toilet (29).

It is noted that none of these facilities are located on Langtree Avenue or within the pedestrian-only section of Langtree Mall.

Feedback from the community identified that the Kmart, Ninth Street and Woolworths public toilets are the top three facilities people avoid due to their condition and/or lack of features. Due to the negative association users have with these facilities, these are perceived gaps in the network. Coupled with the relatively high demand noted in the usage statistics for the Kmart and Ninth Street public toilets, it is warranted to provide additional public toilets along Langtree Mall at some point, and reduce demand on existing facilities.

The Woolworths, Deakin Avenue and Kmart public toilets warrant replacement over the lifetime of this Strategy, and this provides an opportunity for new facilities to remove the perceived gaps in the network.

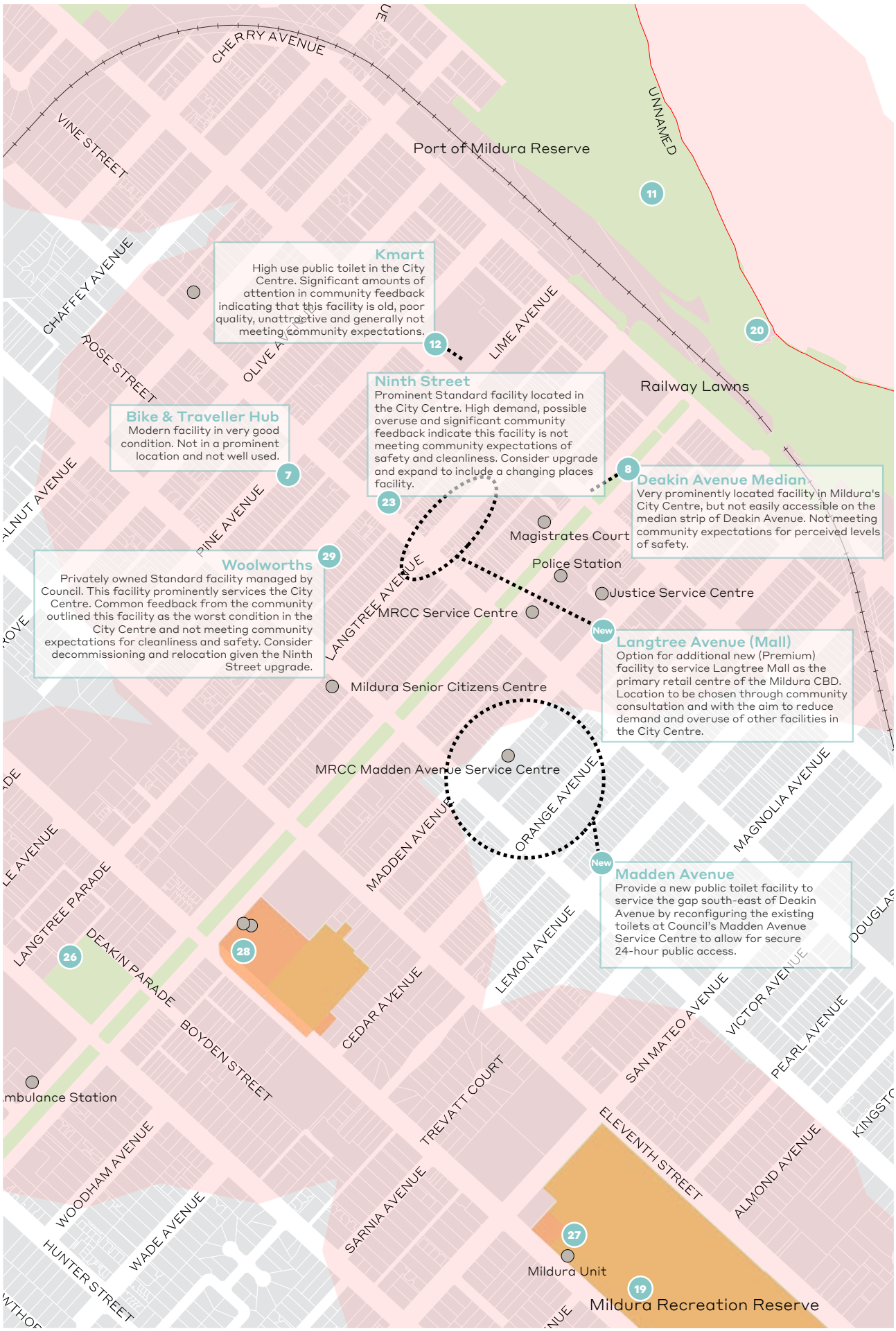
There are no public toilet facilities provided in the area of the City Centre to the south-east of Deakin Avenue, and people in this area would be required to walk or drive to the other side of Deakin Avenue to reach a facility. This gap is centred around Council's Service Centre on Madden Avenue. A cost-effective means to fill this gap could be to make the existing public toilet facilities available in this Council building to the public, even if this requires reconfiguration to enable external access.

There was no specific community feedback regarding the need for new toilets at other locations along key pedestrian routes within the City Centre. These locations should continue to be monitored over time as land use and development patterns change.

A number of other upgrades and actions should be considered at other public toilet facilities within the city centre as identified in the Capital Works Plan and Map 1 opposite.

Recommendations

- As part of the current CBD Plan Review, prepare a plan of the public toilet network for the city centre that:
  - Decommissions the Kmart facility and upgrades/ expands the Ninth Street public toilet facilities
  - Decommissions and relocates the Woolworths facility to an improved location nearby.



Map 1: Public Toilets in Mildura's City Centre

Commercial Centres

Feedback from community consultation indicated that participants have a clear preference to use public toilet facilities located in Commercial Centres.

While public toilets within shopping centres are an integral part of Mildura's public toilet network, they are often privately owned and operated, making it difficult to ensure access and accommodate new public toilets. There are four (4) public toilet facilities provided in commercial centres outside the city centre.

Outside of Mildura's City Centre, commercial and mixed use areas play a key role in servicing the local needs of the community. The following areas contain land in a commercial zone, the Mixed Use Zone (MUZ) or have otherwise been identified in the Mildura Retail Strategy 2010 as a retail centre:

- Mildura Central Shopping Centre;
- Corner of Deakin Avenue & Thirteenth Street, Mildura;
- Fifteenth Street (Homemaker Precinct), Mildura;
- Mildura South growth area;
- Fifteenth Street, Irymple;
- Nichols Point (MUZ);
- Red Cliffs; and
- Commercial Street, Merbein.

Mildura Central shopping centre and surrounds are primarily serviced by privately owned and managed toilet facilities.

The existing facilities in Henderson Park are closest to the commercial uses on the corner of Deakin Avenue and Thirteenth Street, Mildura. The co-located facilities within the Alfred Deakin Centre may also service this catchment.

Fifteenth Street, Mildura was identified during consultation as a gap in the network, despite this area being characterised as a car-based 'homemaker centre' primarily dealing in bulky goods. Public toilet provision in this location is therefore not required at this time.

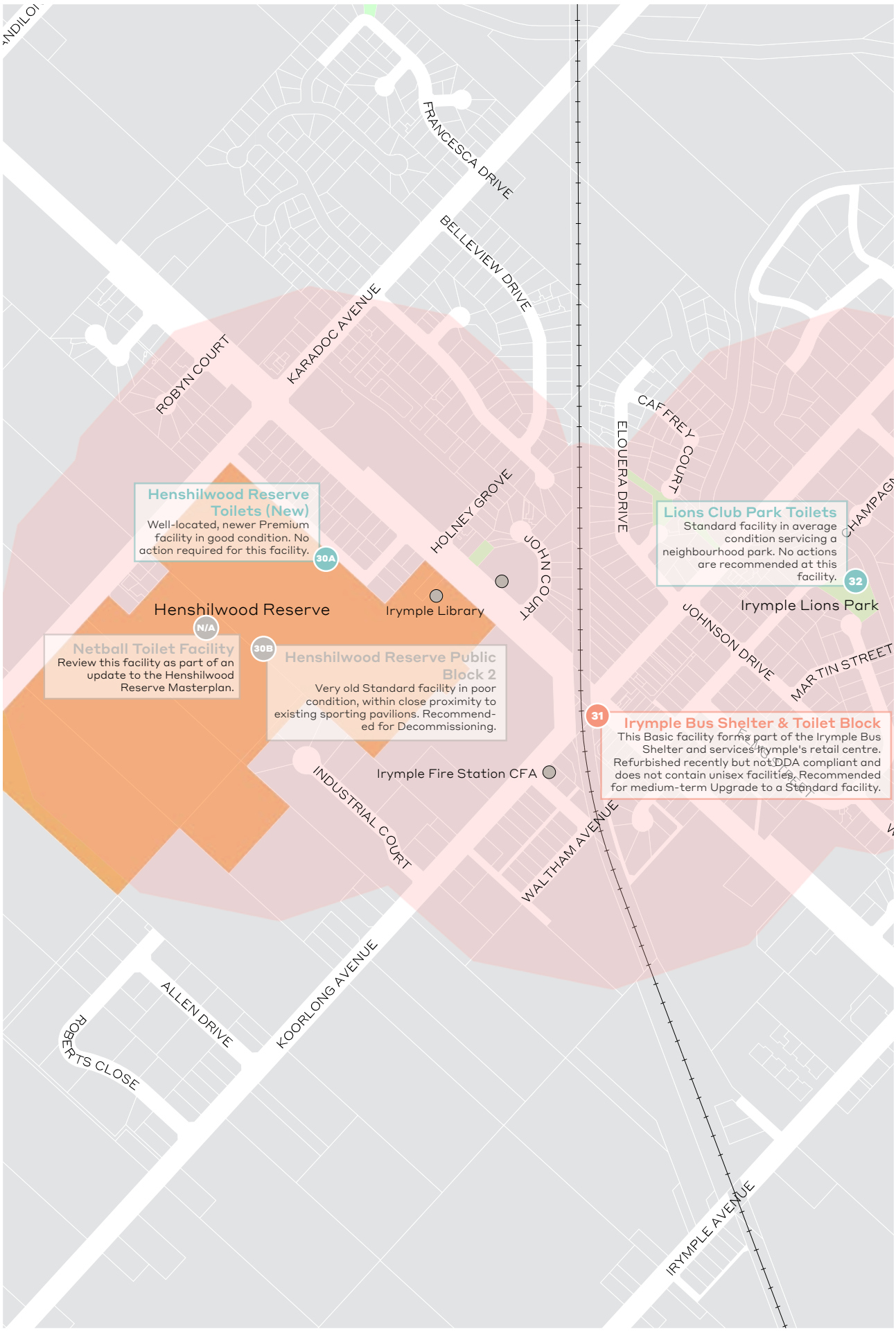
It is noted that the Mildura South growth area will require additional provision of public toilet facilities as it develops over time, which has been noted in Chapter 5.

The commercial centres in Irymple and Merbein are directly serviced by one (1) facility. The commercial centres in Red Cliffs and Nichols Point are each serviced by one (1) facility located in a park or recreation reserve near or adjacent to the commercial centre.

Some community feedback referring generally to 'Fifteenth Street' was most likely in reference to Irymple rather than Mildura. In this case, the existing facility may not be meeting community expectations and therefore represents a gap in the network. An upgrade of the existing facility is recommended in Chapter 5 and on Map 2 opposite.

Recommendation

- Upgrade the existing public toilet in Fifteenth Street, Irymple from a Basic to Standard facility. (31)



Map 2: Public Toilets in Irymple

Rural Townships

There are many rural townships located throughout the municipality that may contain 'local shops' as identified in the Mildura Retail Strategy 2010. While there is little guidance as to the hierarchy of these areas in existing strategic work, it is noted that Ouyen is the largest township in the southern part of the municipality with a population of 1,191 in 2016, and most other rural townships (even those in closer proximity to Mildura) have much smaller populations.

Despite the lack of land in a commercial zone, these townships may still contain driver-based attractions or be located along a transport route that experiences a high volume of through traffic. There may be privately owned and operated, co-located toilet facilities at these locations, such as fuel stations and cafés.

There is a total of twelve (12) Council owned and operated public toilets provided in the following rural townships:

- Cowangie;
- Ouyen (refer to Map 3);
- Underbool (refer to Map 4);
- Murrayville; and
- Werrimull.

Rural townships should have public toilet infrastructure where they experience a high volume of through traffic, or contain a retail centre or recreation area that may generate demand.

Many rural localities with very small populations not containing retail centres do not have public toilet infrastructure. In these locations, the provision of public toilets is not considered necessary, nor should it be prioritised, due to the small local catchment they would serve.

Given there are twelve (12) public toilet facilities provided in five (5) rural townships, there is a case for recommending some facilities be decommissioned due to over-provision.

Gaps

Ouyen received some positive feedback during consultation for its conveniently located and clean public toilet facilities. Council's audit determined that while most facilities in Ouyen were in good condition, the Gregory Street public toilet facility was not meeting community expectations and is recommended for decommissioning due to the proximity of nearby facilities and general overprovision in Ouyen.

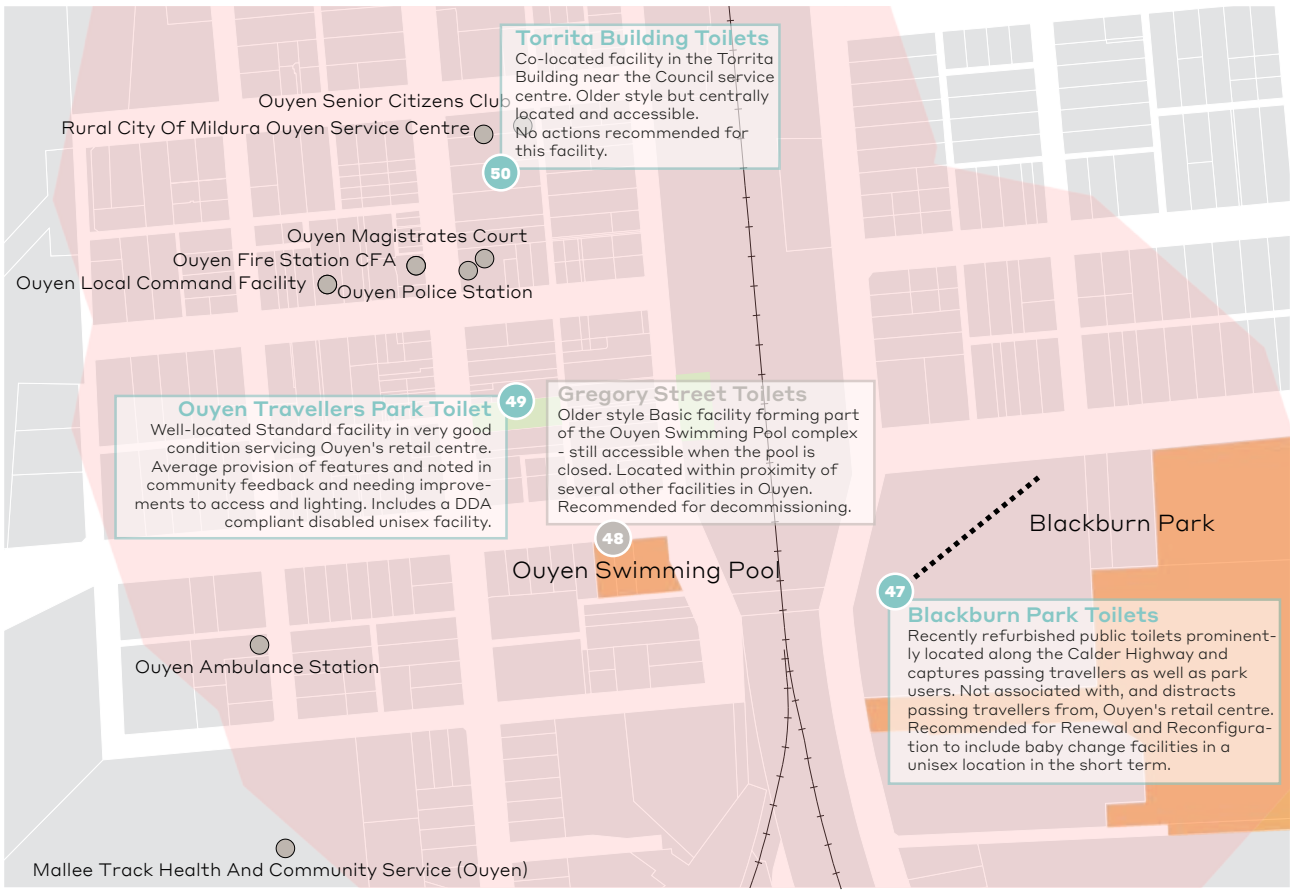
Merbein South is a very small rural centre on the Sturt Highway, which currently has a small general store catering to passing traffic and the surrounding rural area. The general store has a set of toilets which according to the owners, are performing the role of public toilets. Next to the general store is a former school ground, which has been purchased by Council for community use. In addition to other facilities that require upgrade for community purposes, is a toilet block that was built for the school children.

During public consultation strong representation was received from the Merbein South community and store owners that the existing toilets associated with the old school grounds be converted to a public facility.

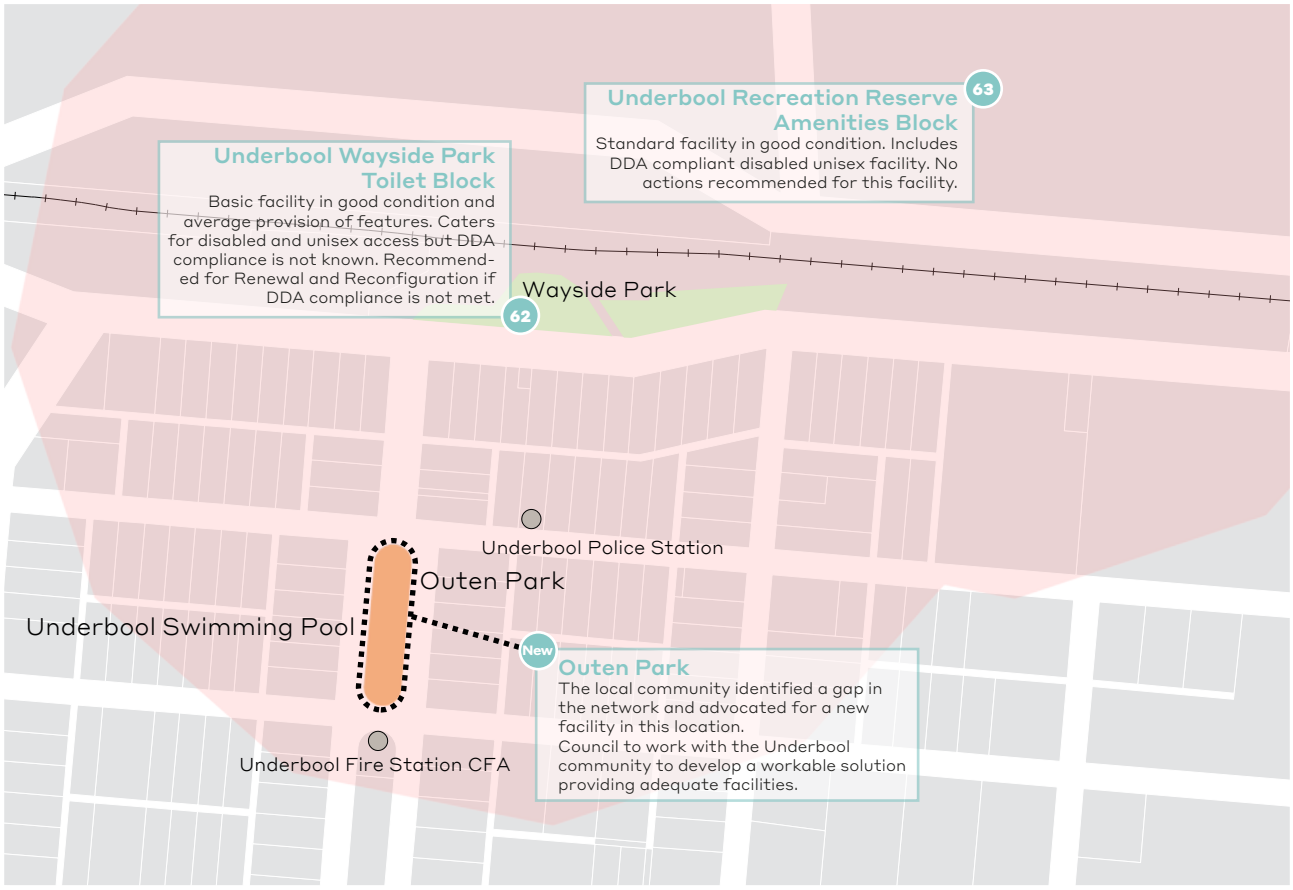
However upgrading of the toilet facilities would be required to achieve a Basic standard, and there would be safety issues to be resolved if the facilities were to be made available to the public at times the site was not otherwise in use. Upgrading of these facilities as part of the planned upgrading of the school site for community use should be investigated, and public use considered at this time.

Recommendations

- As part of the planning and upgrade of the Merbein South school site, investigate providing a basic public toilet facility.
- Decommission the Gregory Street Toilets in Ouyen due to over-provision.



Map 3: Public Toilets in Ouyen



Map 4: Public Toilets in Underbool

Active Recreation Reserves

The revised Open Space Strategy is not yet finalised but will distinguish between areas of open space that provide for active recreation such as sporting facilities and recreation reserves; and those that provide for passive recreation such as playgrounds, parks, barbecue and picnic areas.

Reserves can also be categorised by the role they serve in catering to the needs of the community. For Sporting Reserves, these are defined as being either regional, local or township. Sports specific facilities (such as a swimming pool) are also included as a separate category.

Higher order reserves generate more demand and usually cater to events that may cause a short-term spike in demand for existing facilities. The Service Hierarchy contained in the Public Toilet Toolkit (Chapter 5) identifies the level of provision by catchment area hierarchy.

Current strategic work includes a number of Recreation Reserve Masterplans, which were prepared in 2009 and provide direction for the development of these areas until 2019. Many of these masterplans discuss the existing public toilet facilities and provide some guidance for future provision within the reserve.

Gaps

This Public Toilet Strategy has considered this existing strategic work and determined where works have not yet been completed and made recommendations in Chapter 5 accordingly.

The Mildura Recreation Reserve on Twelfth Street, Mildura contains three (3) ovals and four (4) public toilet facilities. The Mildura Show is held in this reserve and temporarily places additional pressure on these public toilet facilities. The Masterplan for this area suggests significant upgrades to the existing, and provision of new, public toilets. Council's audit shows that at least one of these facilities is in very poor condition and not fit for use, while other facilities are generally in good condition but lack features. Usage is expected to be seasonal, with strong demand during sporting events and an assumed lack of use at other times (refer to Map 5).

The Old Aerodrome Sporting Complex on Eleventh Street, Mildura contains a number of sporting ovals and fields and the Park for Play playground and is serviced by five (5) public toilet facilities. The Masterplan for this area suggests significant upgrades to the existing, and provision of new, public toilet facilities. Council's audit shows that some of these facilities are in poor condition and most are quite basic and lack features, and suggested that some of the poorer quality facilities should be decommissioned. The community noted that some of the Aero Oval toilets are poorly located and can feel isolated and closed-in.

Kenny Park in Merbein contains three (3) public toilet facilities, of which one set is poorly located and in bad condition and is recommended for removal (refer to Map 7). Another set of toilets (35M&F) should also be removed. These facilities will be replaced by new public toilets as part of the new change rooms under construction.

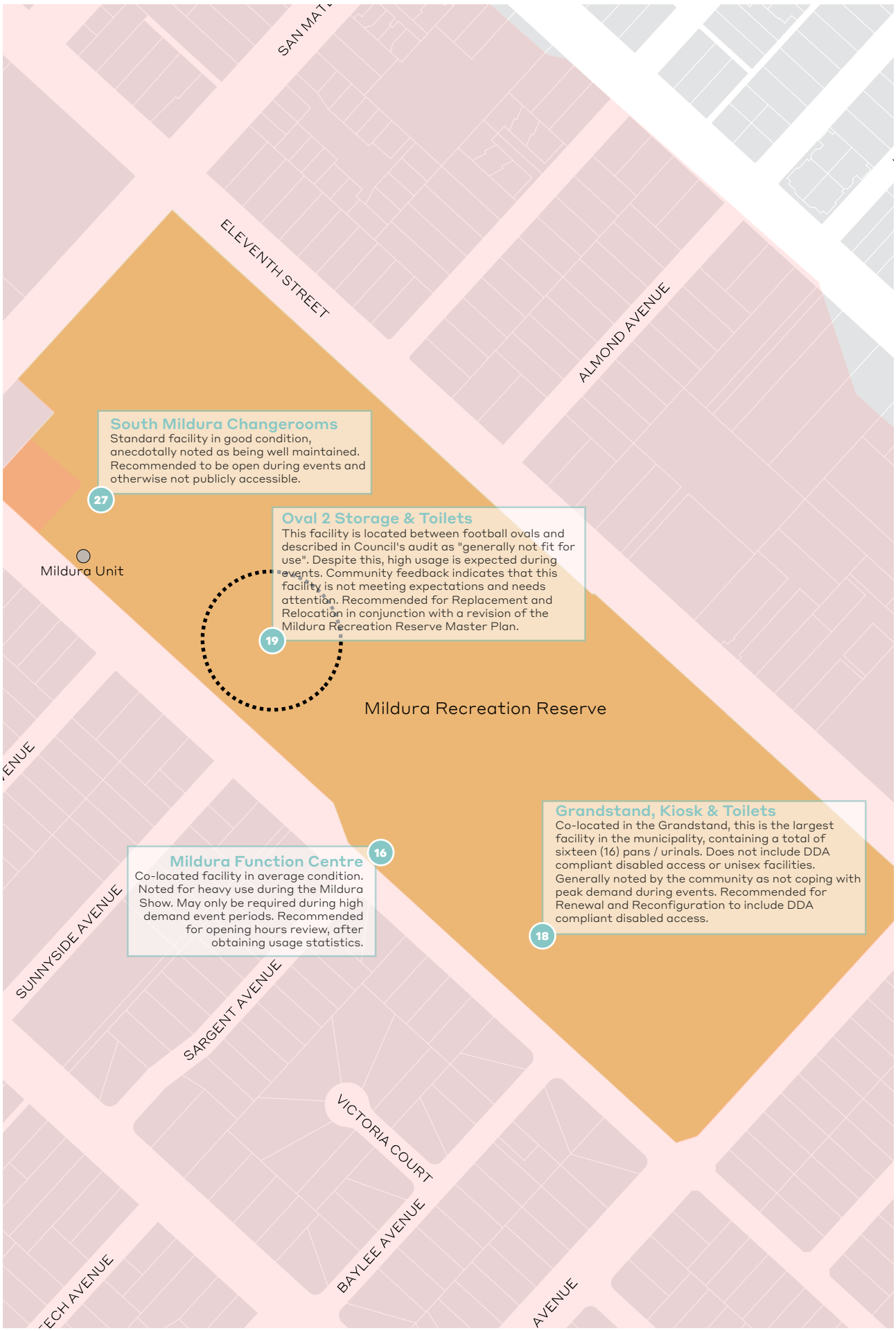
Participants in the community survey identified the facilities in Quandong Reserve, Red Cliffs and Nichols Point Reserve as ones they would actively avoid due to their poor condition. These facilities are therefore perceived gaps in the network, and their condition needs to be brought into accordance with community expectations.

Recommendations

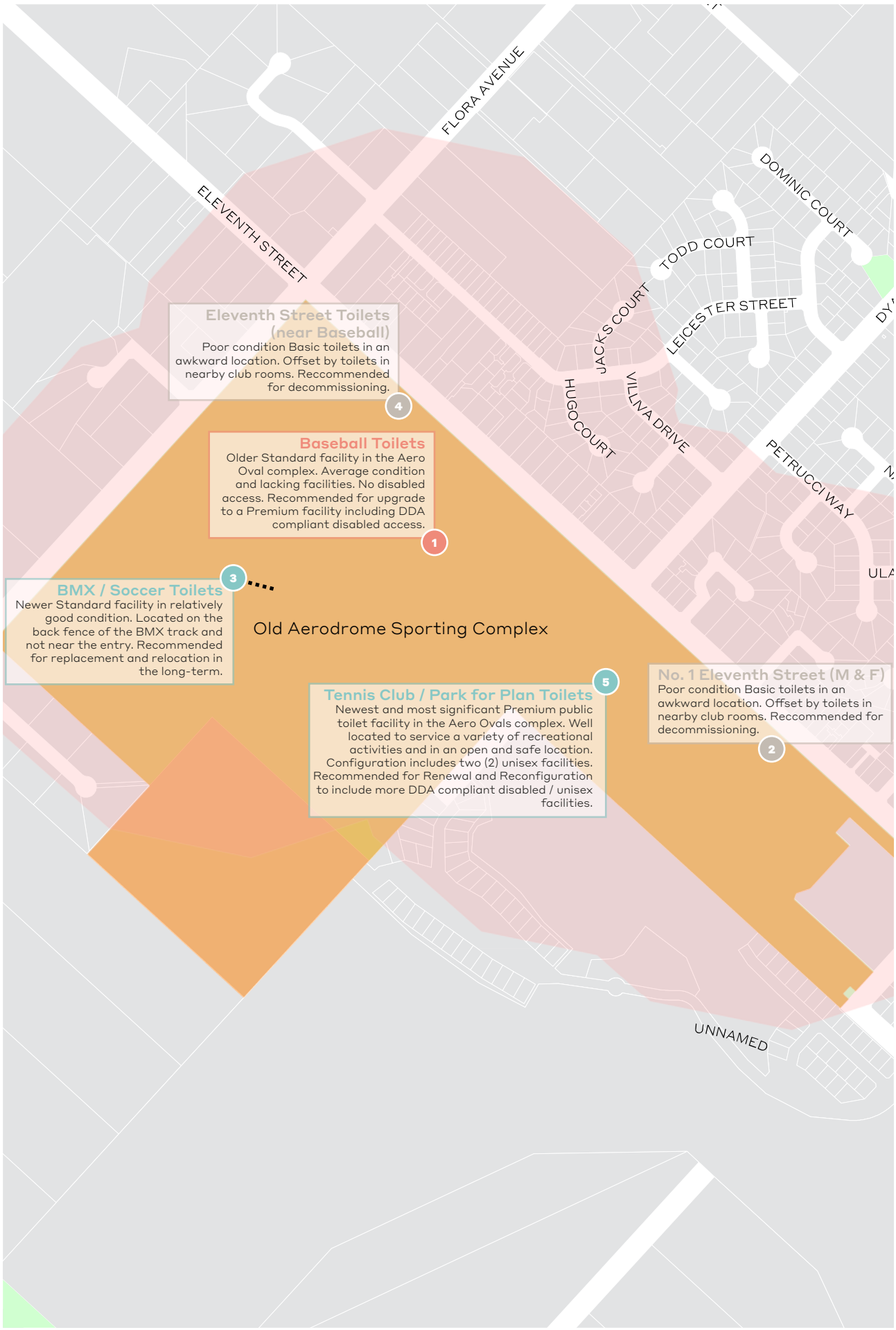
- Evaluate the provision of public toilet facilities as part of the renewal of recreation reserve master plans.

Consider the following options:

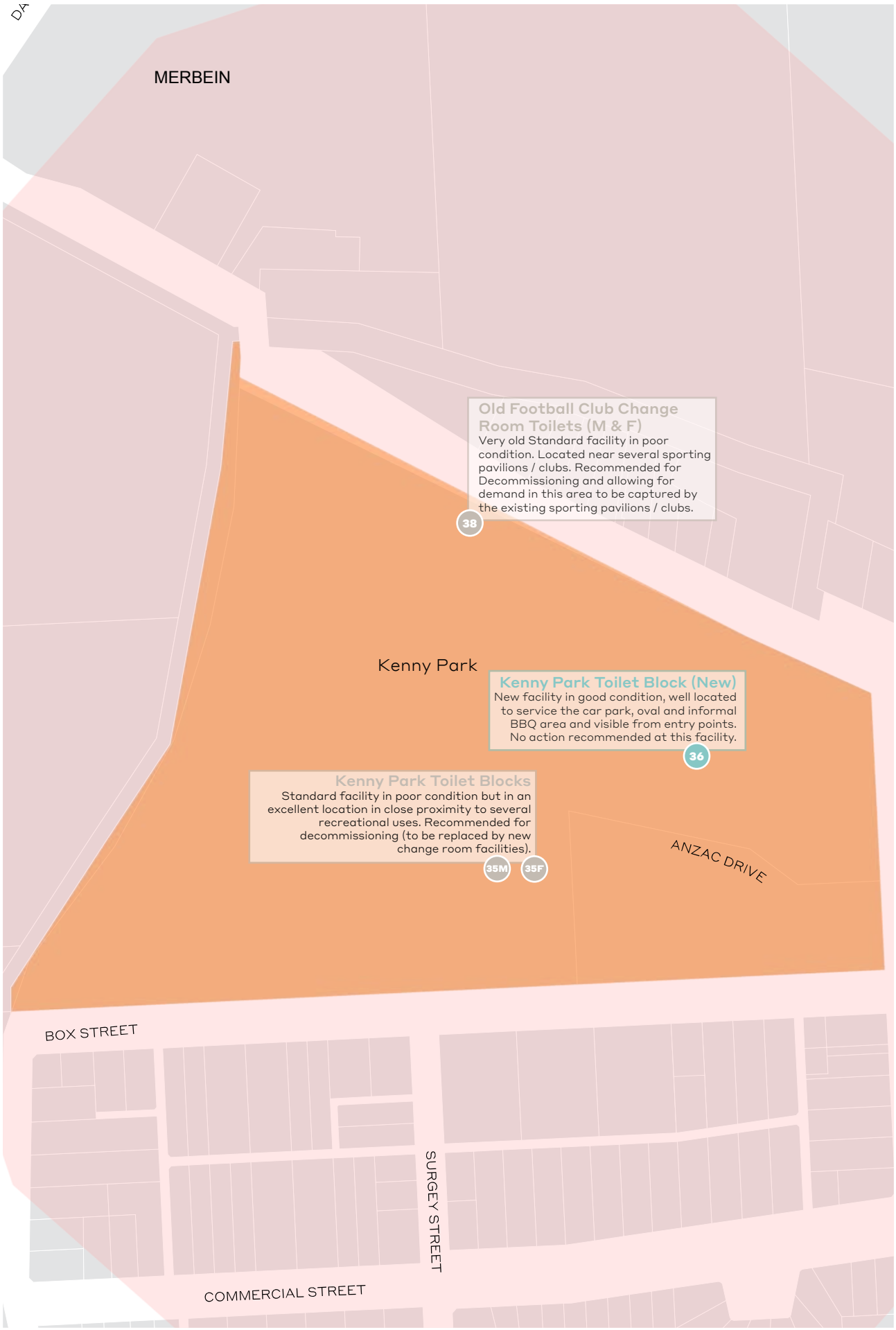
- Replace and relocate the Oval 2 Storage & Toilets facility (19) due to the current facilities being generally not fit for use.
- Decommission the Eleventh Street Toilets - near Baseball (4) and the No. 1 Eleventh Street toilets (2M & 2F) in the Aero Ovals Recreation Reserve.
- Replace and relocate the BMX / Soccer Toilets (3) to be closer to the entrance to the BMX track in the long-term.
- Decommission the Kenny Park Toilet Blocks (38, 35M&F) and replace with new change room facility.
- Decommission the (older) Henshilwood Reserve Public Toilets (30B) given their poor condition and nearby new facility.



Map 5: Public Toilets in the Mildura Recreation Reserve, Mildura



Map 6: Public Toilets in the Aero Ovals Recreation Reserve, Mildura



Map 7: Public Toilets in the Kenny Park Recreation Reserve, Merbein

Passive Recreation Reserves

Similar to Active Recreation Reserves, parks and other passive recreation reserves are defined as regional, local, neighbourhood and civic parks. Wayside stops, wetlands and natural areas / bushland parks are also included.

The Service Hierarchy table in Section 4 of this report (Public Toilet Toolkit) identifies the type of public toilet facility that should be provided in parks according to their service catchment. A regional park, for instance, will have more demand for public toilet facilities than a local or neighbourhood park.

The Mildura Riverfront is made up of several smaller, interconnected parks. The Mildura Riverfront Masterplan was published in 2005 and had a vision to tap in to the largely underutilised and great potential of the Mildura riverfront by encouraging appropriate development and activities. A number of the recommendations in this Masterplan have since been adopted by Council.

Gaps

There is a relatively even distribution of public toilets along the riverfront, all within a 400 metre walkable catchment of each other and facilities in the adjacent City Centre.

Community consultation identified the following gaps in the network:

- Water Play Park, Mildura (also known as Splash Park); and
- Outen Park, Underbool.

The Water Play Park is located near Mildura's city centre within the river front reserve. There are two (2) existing Ornamental Lakes Public Toilet facilities within walking distance of the Water Play Park, however feedback from the community suggested that they were located too far from the Splash Park when considering the primary users of the area are parents with toddlers and young children. A new public toilet facility to be integrated with Splash Park was suggested.

Given the proximity and provision of two (2) existing facilities in the vicinity, including one of the best public toilets in the municipality (Ornamental Lakes Toilet Block 1 (24A) and 2 (24B) there is no immediate need to replace or relocate these facilities in the short or medium term. A long term objective could be to consolidate these into one facility with changing areas and relocate them closer to the Water Play Park.

Outen Park, Underbool is not currently serviced by a public toilet facility. The local community has previously, and continues to advocate for a public toilet facility in this location. It is recommended that Council work with the Underbool community to develop a workable solution providing adequate facilities in accordance with section "3.2 Distribution" of the Strategy.

Participants in the survey also identified the following as facilities they would actively avoid due to their poor condition, and therefore are perceived to be gaps in the network:

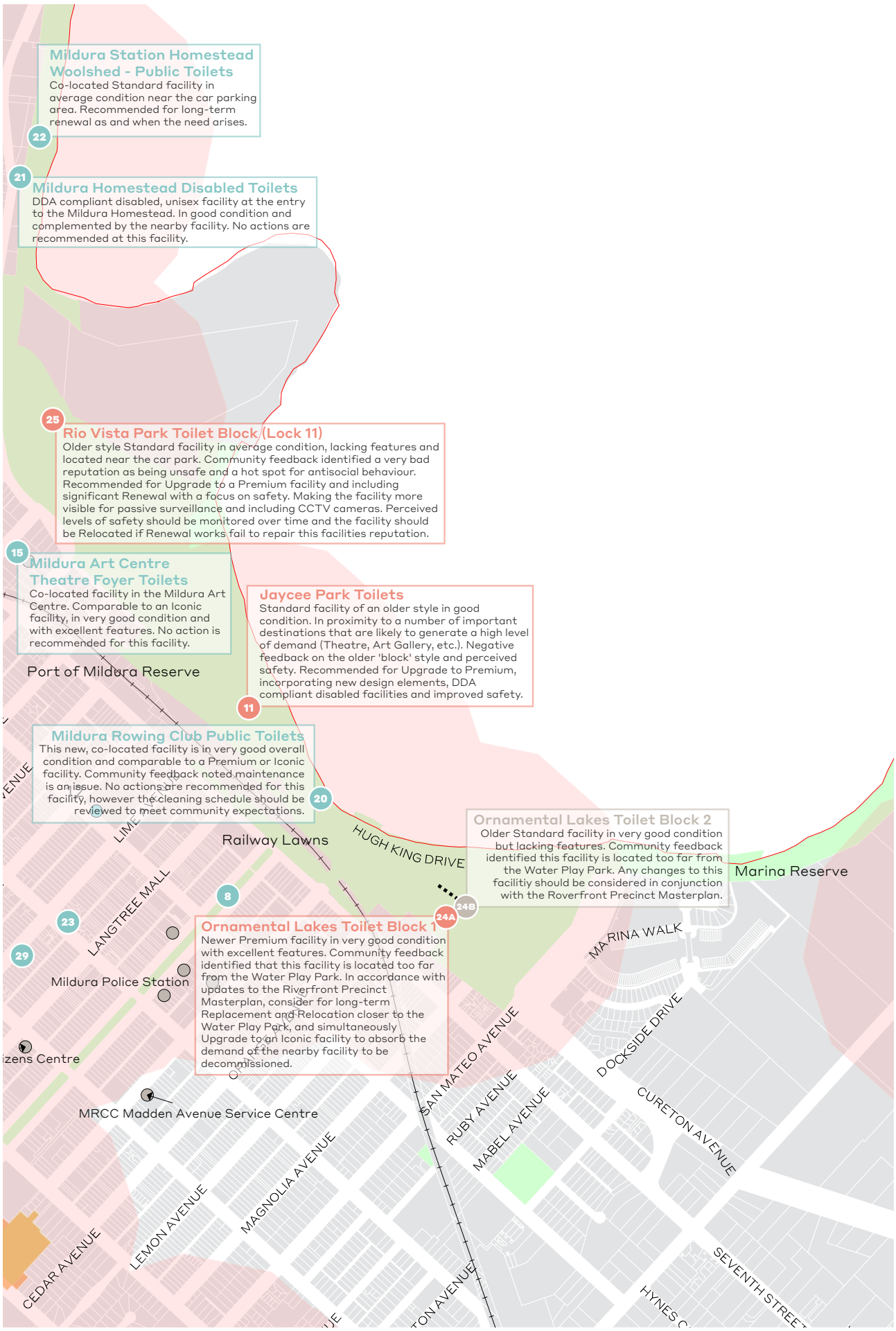
- Jaycee Park, Mildura;
- Lock 11, Mildura;
- Apex Park;
- Underbool Wayside Stop;
- Ornamental Lakes Park (Water Play / Splash Park);
- Henderson Park; and
- Blackburn Park.

The Lock 11 Public Toilet facility was generally considered to be the most unsafe facility in Mildura, in part due to its secluded location and reputation for anti-social behaviour.

Council's audit did not always demonstrate that these facilities were in measurably poor condition or lacked features, however they are not meeting community expectations and therefore perceived as gaps in the network.

Recommendations

- Consider the long-term changes to the two facilities in Ornamental Lakes open spaces in accordance with the Riverfront Precinct Masterplan. (see Map 8)
- Council work with the Underbool community to develop a workable solution providing adequate facilities in accordance with section "3.2 Distribution" of the strategy.
- Improve facilities in parks where there is an identified network gap, in accordance with the Toolkit.



Map 8: Public Toilets in the Riverfront Reserve, Mildura

Mildura South Growth Area

The Mildura South Urban Design Plan project, includes a Precinct Structure Plan for the study area marked on the map below.

The Plan identifies the future location of the Mildura South Active Recreation Reserve (or Sporting Stadium) and the Sixteenth & Ontario Activity Centre (or Mildura South Neighbourhood Activity Centre).

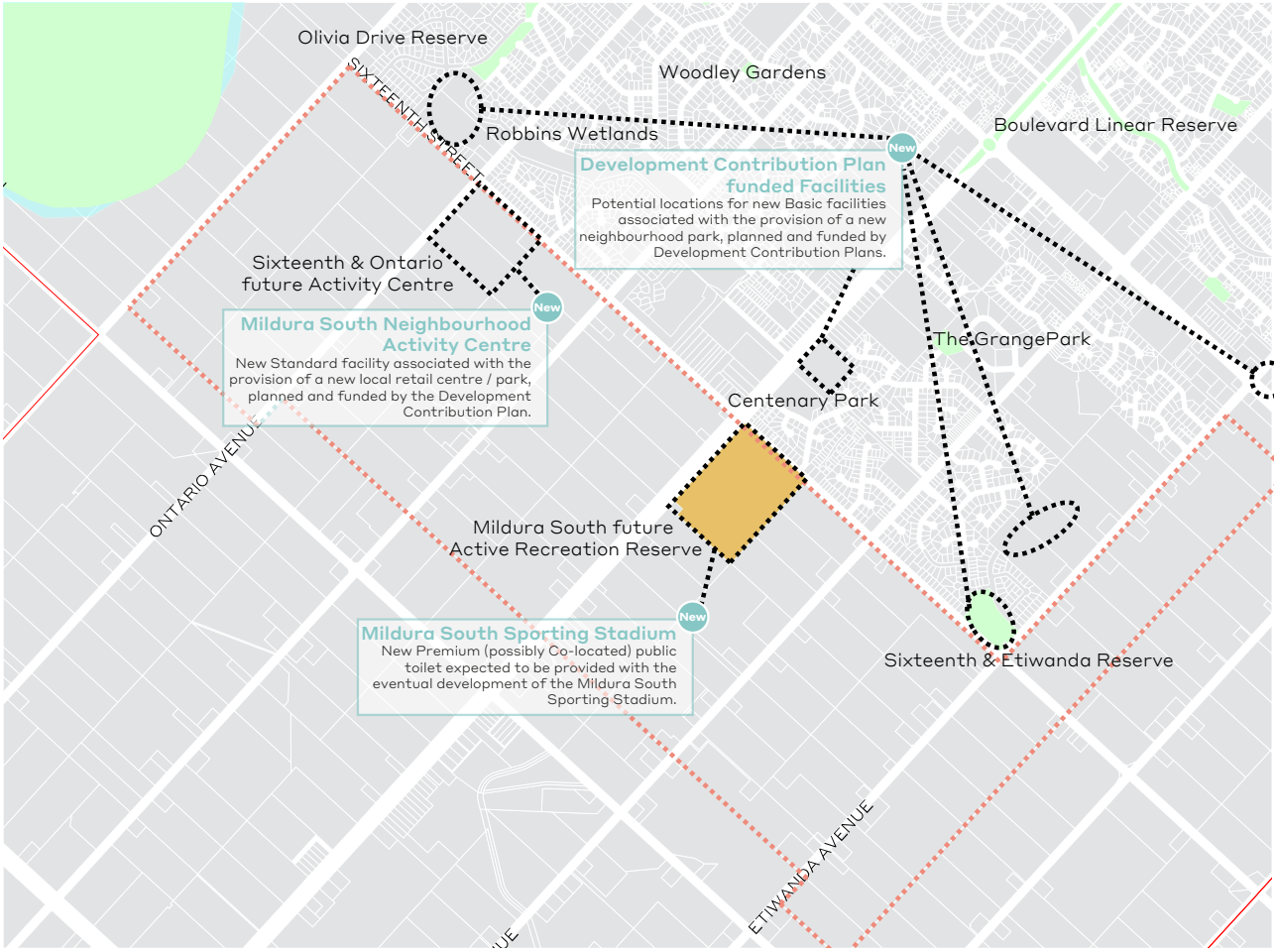
A number of neighbourhood parks and green corridors are also identified throughout residential areas.

The existing schedules to the Development Contribution Plan Overlay (DCPO) are in place to provide funding for the future provision of parks in this area. The adopted Development Contributions Plans include provision for the construction of public toilets as part of these reserves.

The type of public toilet to be provided in these locations is largely dependant on the catchment each facility will serve, as outlined in Chapter 4 and on Map 9 below.

Recommendations

- Provide a new Premium (possibly co-located) public toilet facility to the Mildura South Sporting Stadium in an appropriate location.
- Provide a new Standard public toilet facility to the Mildura South Neighbourhood Activity Centre, which may also be co-located.
- Consider the requirement for public toilets in Mildura South parks and wetlands.



Map 9: Public Toilets in the Mildura South Growth Area

Tourism

In 2017, the Mildura region as a whole received 543,000 domestic overnight visitors. Approximately 60% of visitors cited they ate out at restaurants and cafés; a third visited friends and relatives and a quarter visited pubs or clubs, went sightseeing or went shopping for pleasure.

With these activities in mind, there is a clear concentration of attractions located in the City Centre and along the Murray Riverfront. Council has made significant investment in the urban design qualities of these areas, and the range of activities on offer. Consequently, it is noted that these locations also provide for a great deal of demand from local residents.

Mildura's location near the border to New South Wales and South Australia makes it well-placed to capture travellers to out-of-state destinations. Given Mildura's remote location, and limited options for alternative transport (other than by plane), it can be assumed that a high proportion of visitors to the municipality travel by private vehicle, often with a caravan, or in a recreational vehicle. The Calder and Sturt highways provide the primary routes to access Mildura.

Providing high quality public toilets to cater to this demand, and showcase the local area, is seen to have a positive economic development contribution. People often remember, and seek out, good quality public toilets when travelling. For this reason, they should be designed with high visual exposure in mind and help visitors to associate good experiences with Mildura and encourage them to visit again, and to utilise nearby businesses. Consideration should also be given to incorporating additional features such as dump points for recreational vehicles.

Recommendations

- Consider the provision of 'iconic' public toilets at the Riverfront Reserve, Barclay Square in Redcliffs, and future Mildura South recreation reserve to ensure visitors have an enjoyable and convenient experience.
- Advocate to VicRoads to ensure adequate provision of facilities with the appropriate features (such as along main roads) to encourage visitors to enjoy their travel experience to Mildura.

Tracks & Trails

The Mildura Tracks and Trails Strategy (2012) identifies the need for Priority Off Road Trails to be serviced by public toilet facilities (page 108). This includes the need for DDA compliant disabled unisex facilities.

Decisions about whether to provide public toilets should made with reference to the Public Toilet Toolkit contained in Chapter 4 of this Strategy. End of trip facilities should also be considered where trails are likely to attract commuters.

It is noted that a number of these trails traverse land that is not Council owned or operated, and therefore provision of public toilet facilities may need to be advocated through different channels, or limited to any suitable areas of Council-owned land along the trail.

Gaps

Consultation was conducted as part of the development of the Mildura Tracks and Trails Strategy, and the community identified that there was a need to consider public toilets at King's Billabong Park.

Recommendations

- Advocate to Parks Victoria to provide public toilet facilities at trail heads of well-used primary off road trails, including those in King's Billabong Park.

3.3 Design

Objective:

Design toilets to be attractive, safe and accessible to users of all ages and abilities.

Issues & Challenges

- Many existing toilets do not support the needs of some user groups including the elderly, people with disabilities and parents with children.
- Older toilet blocks are often not DDA compliant.
- Some toilets are poorly integrated into the public realm, creating negative perceptions of safety and usability.
- Automated fixtures and fittings are not intuitive and difficult for many users (e.g. Ninth Street Public Toilets (23))
- Inconsistent provision of fixtures and fittings across all facilities in Mildura.
- Proximity and location of public toilets to other uses (e.g. shops, cafés, etc.) creates conflicts.
- Cost of maintaining older, less efficient facilities.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Upgrade toilets that are not DDA compliant to improve accessibility across the toilet network.
- Develop overarching design and siting principles to improve the integration of toilets into the public realm and reduce anti-social behaviour.
- Develop a hierarchy of preferred typologies that clearly sets out minimum standards for design, fixtures and fittings.
- Improve design and integration of toilets by promoting opportunities for community involvement through public art programs.
- Showcase local artists and reinforce a sense of place.
- Provide new facilities where there is a physical gap in the network, and improve facilities where there is a perceived gap.
- Improve the environmental performance of toilets to reduce life cycle costs of individual facilities.

What the Community Said

Toilets that are seen as being particularly safe and/or well designed include:

- Nowingi Place (pictured) (24B);
- Mildura Centro (privately managed facility);
- Sea Lake; and
- Renmark, SA.

Design:
Findings & Recommendations

The design and siting of a public toilet greatly influences its usability and accessibility. Design is also important for promoting positive perceptions of public toilets to the community.

Typologies

There are many different ways of categorising public toilet designs with regard to form and typology. Broadly speaking, there are two types of facilities used throughout Mildura: standalone toilet blocks and co-located facilities. Within each of these typologies there are various different configurations, interpretations and adaptations.

Key features of stand-alone public toilets are:

- Freestanding (not attached to or within another building structure);
- Externally accessible from public realm;
- Separate male/female entrances or single fronted unit doors; and
- Can include separate or integrated disabled access.

Key features of co-located public toilets are:

- Attached to, or located within a building structure;
- Externally accessible from the public realm;
- Either separate male/female entrances or single fronted unit doors; and
- Opening hours restricted by building and activity (such as sport fixture, training or event).

Stand-alone public toilets (toilet blocks) are the most common typology across Mildura (80%). While these are the most common, toilet block configurations can present various design constraints due to their rigid construction, often resulting in minimal compliance with Australian Standard 1428 (AS 1328). Many older blocks lack natural lighting or ventilation and are commonly perceived to be unsafe and unhygienic.
Toilets that are poorly integrated into their environment can further create perceptions of exposure and lack of privacy.

The provision of new public toilets should be contextual to the site and scale of the location. Activity generators must also be considered when designing public toilets and in locations with high peak usage. The design standard of fixtures and fittings should be commensurate to use. The Assessment Framework (see Chapter 4) outlines key decision making considerations for determining the most appropriate typology for specific locations.

Recommendations

- Refer to the Service Provision Hierarchy when determining the typology of new public toilets (see Public Toilet Toolkit Chapter 4).

Configuration

The most common configuration of public toilets in Mildura is split gender; comprising separate male and female toilet entrances either in a toilet block style or an open unit style. Unisex or split gender cubicles with single access doorways are rare, but not absent (e.g. Etiwanda Wetlands Public Toilets (9)). The consultation findings indicate that the split gender configuration is the preference of surveyed residents in Mildura.

Balancing design and configuration requirements with practical needs should be carefully considered when developing new facilities. For example, in some high use locations, it may be more appropriate to build larger facilities to cater for high volumes of users.

The configuration of public toilets should respond to the needs of the local community in which the public toilet is located. In some suburbs, the provision of unisex facilities may be appropriate, however in other areas split gender facilities may be better.

Prior to the development of a new public toilet facility, engagement with the immediate community and local residents should be undertaken to ensure that future toilet designs meet community expectations and needs.

Recommendations

- When appropriate, undertake consultation and engagement with the local community prior to the development and installation of a new public toilet

Fixtures and Fittings

Council has a number of public toilets which are hybrid typologies and provide automated functions such as locking doors, hand washing and cleaning (e.g. Ninth Street Public Toilets). There are a number of issues associated with these facilities in regard to their usability and accessibility for different user groups.

Toilets in Mildura contain a range of basic fixtures and fittings. In certain locations, fixtures and fittings should be customised to reflect the needs of specific user groups. For example in locations with high peak usage such as sport pavilions, male urinals should be considered; or in locations where there are high volumes of families with children, the provision of baby change tables should be considered. Community feedback identified key locations that should be considered for needle disposal units, such as the Old Aerodrome Recreation Reserve (1-5).

The Implementation Plan (Chapter 5) contains a suite of standard and custom fixtures and fittings and provides guidance to where they may be appropriate.

Recommendations

- Standardise the provision of fixtures and fittings in accordance with the service provision to ensure consistency across the network (see Public Toilet Toolkit Chapter 4).
- Incorporate additional features in site specific locations as appropriate to the site.
- Apply the design and siting principles as relevant to the upgrade of existing facilities and the installation of new toilets (see Public Toilet Toolkit Chapter 4).

Design & Siting Principles

The following design and siting principles should be adopted when retrofitting, upgrading or installing new toilets. The principles are based on relevant industry best practice:

1

Location

Locate toilets in central, multi-use community facilities that draw on existing walking catchments and maximise visibility to the street/public space.

2

Orientation

Orientate toilets and entrances toward well lit areas to maximise safety.

3

Integration

Integrate toilets seamlessly into the public realm and avoid obstructing toilets with dense landscaping, vegetation or impermeable barriers.

4

Local Character

New toilets should reflect the local character and where appropriate, encourage artistic design expression in locations with high usage or visitation.

5

Fixtures & Fittings

Incorporate appropriate fixtures within toilets that are responsive to the local context and balance community expectations with maintenance practicalities and environmental sustainability.

6

Accessibility

Ensure compliance with AS1428 and DDA and other best practice accessibility guidelines.

7

Signage

Clearly sign toilets by providing directional signage where required to improve legibility and access. Provide signage on toilets which shows opening hours, contact details and gender availability.

8

CPTED

Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to minimise opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour.

3.4 Accessibility

Objective:

Incorporate universal design principles into all future upgrades and ensure public toilet locations are clearly promoted and communicated to all users.

Issues & Challenges

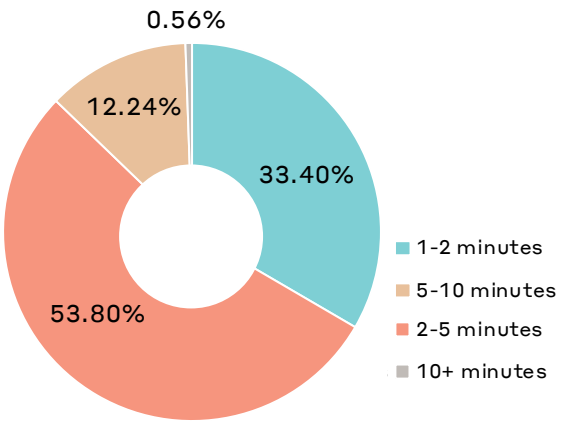
- Many public toilets are inaccessible for people with disabilities or special access requirements.
- DDA requirements can be restrictive and can result in poor design outcomes if poorly considered.
- Many facilities do not cater for the needs of specific user groups such as the elderly or parents with children.
- Some facilities are poorly sited, obscured and/or not visible from the street.
- Co-located facilities are often locked or inaccessible.
- There are currently no 'Changing Places' facilities within Mildura.
- Wayfinding and promotion of toilets is inconsistent across Mildura.

Opportunities for Improvement

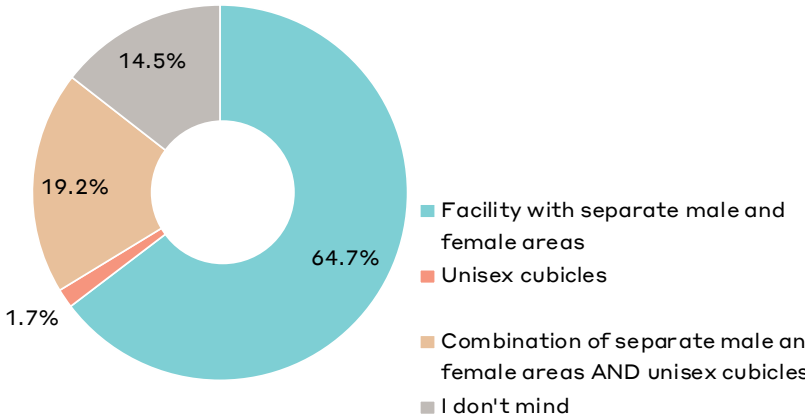
- Identify key toilets that provide limited accessibility and upgrade accordingly.
- Develop a standard suite of fixtures and fittings that consider the needs of various user groups.
- Improve toilet signage and information provision.
- Review the availability of facilities co-located with sports pavilions and consider opening well located facilities to the public on a permanent basis.
- Improve wayfinding and legibility around public toilets.
- Investigate interactive communication tools (e.g. smart-phone app) to improve the wayfinding capabilities.
- Investigate key location for changing places facilities throughout Mildura.

What the Community Said

How long do you think it is reasonable to walk to a public toilet?



What is your preferred typology?



Accessibility:
Findings & Recommendations

Public toilet accessibility is not just about meeting legislative standards, rather it seeks to ensure that all users across all ages, with varying abilities can use public toilet facilities safely and independently.

Universal Design

Council is committed to improving the physical and social environment for all community members, including people with a disability. The Community Access and Inclusion Plan (2014-2018) provides the strategic direction for some of this work. It reflects Council's commitment to ensuring that the way people move around Mildura, access information and buildings, and their overall experience within our community is inclusive and accessible.

Public toilets play an important role in delivering on this commitment and wherever possible, must be planned around the needs of people with a disability. In delivering on the Public Toilet Strategy, Council seeks to increase the number of universally designed toilet facilities through improvements to current public toilets, planning for new toilets and seeking support from the State Government's Changing Places program.

A key aspect of inclusion is accessibility and over the last 10 years, Council has upgraded many of its existing toilet facilities by providing DDA compliant fixtures such as ramps and assistance bars. These actions are consistent with Council's vision to become the most liveable community that supports the needs of its residents and visitors.

As Council continues to actively upgrade facilities over time, there remains a number of toilets that are not DDA compliant and do not cater for the needs of people with mobility difficulties. Accessibility is not just about catering for people with additional mobility requirements, it also should consider people with different social, cultural and demographic preferences. Other key user groups include children, parents with infants, the elderly and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community. In this context, it is appropriate to consider universal design principles that cater for the needs of all users, rather than just those with physical mobility requirements.

Using public toilets can be a confronting experience for different user groups and in order to reduce barriers it is important to ensure that future upgrades and installations new toilets adopt the key principles of universal design. At its core, universal design promotes fair and inclusive environments that allow people to be safe and independent and that are fair and inclusive. The seven principles of universal design are:

- Equitable in Use - the design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
- Flexibility in Use - the design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- Simple and Intuitive Use – the design is easy to understand, regardless of the users' experience, knowledge, language skills or current concentration level.
- Perceptible Information – the design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
- Tolerance for Error – the design minimises hazards and adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
- Low Physical Effort – the design can be used efficiently and comfortably with a minimum of fatigue.
- Size and Space for Approach and Use – appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation and use regardless of users' body size, posture or mobility.

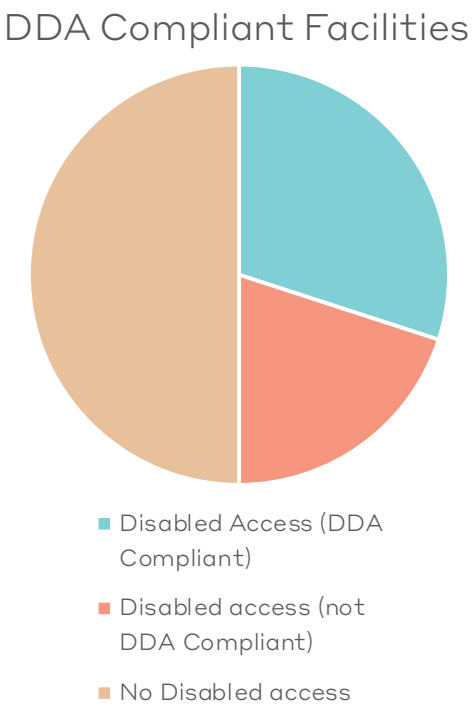
Cultural and social preferences are also important. Considerations for groups such as the LGBTI community and residents with specific cultural practices. Gender segregation and lack of unisex facilities can also cause issues for single parents with a child of the opposite sex.

There is increasing research around the promotion of age-friendly cities and designing for people with dementia. Specific requirements such as use of colour contrasts between materials, tactile surfaces and clear graphic signage are amongst the key considerations. Many of these principles and considerations cross over with other objectives sought by universal design and CPTED principles.

Families with children and infants are another key user group that often rely on the availability of public toilets. Many of Council's current public toilets lack basic facilities such as family change areas or tables to change baby nappies, particularly in key locations in public parks and play spaces.

Recommendations

- Apply the principles of universal design to all toilet upgrades and new installations.
- Prioritise the upgrading of toilets in key locations to include family friendly facilities.
- Ensure accessible public toilets are included in pavilion and building upgrades.



Changing Places

Changing Places facilities were introduced in Australia in 2014 and there are currently over 50 certified facilities across the country. Originating in the United Kingdom in 2006, Changing Places facilities are designed for people who require a hoist to use a toilet. The facilities differ from standard accessible or disabled toilets as they include additional features such as an adult change table, hoist, shower, screens and large circulation spaces.

There has been an increasing interest in the provision of Changing Places facilities across both the private and government sectors, particularly in locations that attract regular crowds, such as sports and recreation facilities.

Changing Places facilities are vital pieces of community infrastructure which allow members of the public who with specific needs to participate in the day-to-day activities across the municipality.

There are a number of barriers and perceptions around Changing Places facilities that constrain Council in providing these facilities:

- Lack of understanding or awareness of Changing Places;
- Confusion of terminology between Changing Places and changing rooms;
- Expense of facilities (upward of $150,000 each); and
- Space/footprint requirements of the facility.

A survey undertaken in 2016 by the Department of Health and Human Services suggested the following locations for a Changing Places facility within Mildura:

- Nowingi Place Art Centre (15);
- Langtree Mall (various);
- City Heart Public Toilets (various);
- Mildura Central Plaza (not Council owned);
- Jaycee Park Toilets (11);
- Mildura Resort; and
- Mildura River Front Precinct (various).

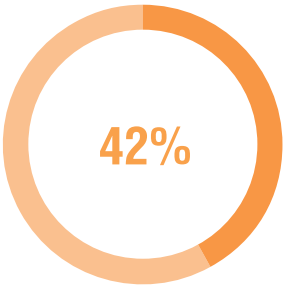
A summary of the key findings from the survey are presented below.

The Victorian State Government has previously released funding to assist Councils in building Changing Places facilities. Mildura has not historically been allocated this funding, and it is expected that there is not a high level of community awareness of this project, given the limited number of responses to the survey relating to Mildura.

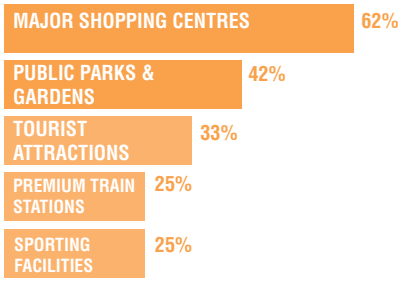
Recommendations

- Raise community awareness of, and advocate for State Government funding for, a Changing Places facility in Mildura using the Access and Inclusion Plan and Public Toilet Strategy.
- Coordinate lobbying efforts with adjoining municipalities to provide a series of Changing Places facilities along the major roads through the region, to allow people with specific needs to travel to Mildura.

Respondents Familiar with Changing Places Facilties



Top 5 Most Requested Locations for New Changing Places Facilities



Signage, Wayfinding & Communication

Signage and wayfinding are important factors in promoting an accessible and well-distributed public toilet network. Often considered a minor detail, signage assists residents, workers and visitors to Mildura in navigating Council's toilet network.

Existing signage on public toilet facilities is varied across the municipality. A limited number of newer toilets currently have large Council signs/branding on the exterior of the facility that identify the name of the toilet (refer to page 38), while older toilets are more likely to have minimal signage or lack signage completely. Industry best practice recommends that additional information should be provided on the exterior of all public toilets to convey key aspects of the facility including:

- Gender accessibility
- Opening hours
- Contact information (to report repairs, maintenance or closures)
- Consideration for vision impaired users

The upgrading of signage on public toilets should be an integrated approach and there are opportunities to develop a municipal wide strategy or prepare guidelines to improve signage and wayfinding across Mildura.

Another way of promoting the accessibility and distribution of Council's public toilet network is through online information. Council currently has a list of parks and recreation areas throughout the municipality that allows the user to 'search by features', including toilets. This search returns a list of 21 parks and recreation reserves throughout the region that contain public toilets. This could be improved to include areas outside of parks and recreation reserves, and provide more information on the type of public toilet facility or features available (e.g. wheelchair friendly, baby change table). It could also link to the National Public Toilet Map (refer to Case Study 1 below).

Although the National Public Toilet Map is a useful community resource, it is an external data source that is not always updated. Council should regularly check and update information within Mildura on Council owned assets. A number of mobile applications (apps) allow users to access this information on their smart phones as discussed in the case studies overpage.

The communication of public toilet locations and availability should be provided across a number of different platforms. Whilst digital tools allow users to easily locate toilets, some members of the community are unable to access or have difficulty connecting to digital communication platforms. The inclusion of toilet locations on key maps and publications throughout Mildura should still be considered.

Recommendations

- Develop a municipal signage/wayfinding strategy to improve the accessibility and standard of signage on Council owned assets, including public toilets.
- Update information annually about Council owned and managed toilets on the National Public Toilet Map within Mildura.
- Provide a detailed list of information on Council's website of public toilet facilities available within the municipality.

Case Study 1

Mapping & Wayfinding
National Public Toilet Map

Developed as part of the National Continence Program, the National Public Toilet Map provides information and the location of more than 16,000 toilets across Australia.

The map also shows listings of publicly available toilets in private businesses such as petrol stations and community centres. Information about the level of accessibility, opening hours, and other facilities is provided.

The map is also available as an app for smartphones and tablet devices.

Examples of Signage on Public Toilets in Mildura

Examples of signage in Mildura:

1. Blackburn Park Toilets (47)
2. Ornamental Lakes Toilet Blocks / Nowingi Place Public Toilets (24)
3 Rio Vista Park / Lock 11 Toilet Block (25)
4. Example of a caravan / RV dump point
5. Apex Park Toilet Block (6)

Case Study 2

Apps
Flush Toilet Finder

Similar to the National Toilet Map, the Flush Toilet Finder app makes it easier to find free public toilets and shows how to get to them. Once a toilet is found directions are provided via a map.

It also lists whether a toilet has a fee, requires a key to use, or if it provides disabled access.

It currently provides listings all over the world.

Case Study 3

Community Toilet Scheme:
Poole, United Kingdom

The Scheme sees a partnership between the Council, local businesses and other partners. Members of the scheme display the 'use our loo' sticker in their window to show that people are welcome to use the facilities in this premise free of charge.

This scheme is reported to provide good value for money and working in partnership with local businesses means the Council is able to offer a much better standard of facilities than in traditional public toilets.

Case Study 4

Nette Toilets: Bremen, Germany

Cities pay between $45 to $150 per month to a business to open their toilets to the public. If the business opts in to the network, they put a sticker in their window to let people know their toilet is publicly available (not just to paying customers). In 2016, there was a public toilet for every 3,210 people in Bremen, which had a population of over half a million people.

The cost of this extensive network is only approximately $165,000 per annum. It was estimated that if the city exclusively provided and managed all of these public toilets, the cost would be approximately $1.65 million per annum. The Nette Toilette app has given Bremen the best ratio of public toilets to citizens in Germany.

The scheme has 210 member cities.

Case Study 5

Sulabh Toilets: India

Sulabh International is a major operator of pay per use public toilets in India.

These toilets are staffed by an attendant, and users are charged a fee of approximately 2 rupees (around 4 cents).

These toilets are situated around many public spaces including transport hubs and markets. In some communities with poor sanitation, these facilities often cater to the populations needs.

Community Toilet Scheme

There are many other locations where toilets are available to the public through-out the municipality. Whilst these toilets may be perceived to be 'public toilets' they are privately owned and operated and do not fall within the jurisdiction of Council. These locations may include, but are not limited to:

- Big box retail outlets
- Private shopping centres
- Restaurants/cafés
- Office/commercial complexes
- Service Stations
- Other community hubs
- Tourist attractions

The availability of these toilets (often during business hours) provides a large number of facilities that can be accessed by people in commercial areas, which can reduce the demand on publicly owned and managed facilities. There are opportunities to work with the private sector to increase the distribution and provision of safe and clean toilets over time through a community scheme or program.

A Community Toilet Scheme (CTS) is a partnership between Council, local businesses and other organisations. The purpose of the CTS is to increase the network of available public toilets within an area using existing infrastructure and available facilities located within businesses or other non-Council buildings.

The program can operate in a number of different ways and be tailored to suit the needs of the individual location, however in principle, it includes an agreement between Council and local businesses to allow members of the public to use privately owned facilities. In return for the community service, Council may provide incentives including:

- Annual servicing fee for cleaning/ maintenance.
- Provision of toilet paper or soap.
- Rate reduction or other tax incentives.
- Partnering with local business allows Council to offer more facilities than could be provided through its own budget.

Another clear benefit of the program would be the increase in potential customers to the host business, driven by promotion, signage and wayfinding techniques discussed above.

Further investigation into the viability of CTS should be undertaken to determine whether the community and local business would be accepting of such a Scheme. Case studies of two CTSs in the United Kingdom and Germany are described on page 39.

If accepted within the broader municipality, this could reduce the demand for additional or multiple toilets in many locations, including many of smaller rural townships. It could also have the

Recommendation:

- Investigate the viability of a community toilet scheme through a trial in a local community.

User Paid System

In many cities across the world, local Councils charge a small fee to allow the public to use municipal public toilets. In return for this fee, users are guaranteed a high level of cleanliness and hygiene as well as constant passive surveillance. There a range of challenges associated with a user paid system, primarily the risk to isolated vulnerable members of the community. There are however many ways that a user paid system can operate and it does not necessarily need to apply to all toilets and locations.

Recommendation:

- This Strategy does not recommend that Council adopt a user paid system in the short to medium term. Should a need for such a system arise in the longer term, Council should undertake further investigations and consultation with the community.

3.5 Management

Objective:

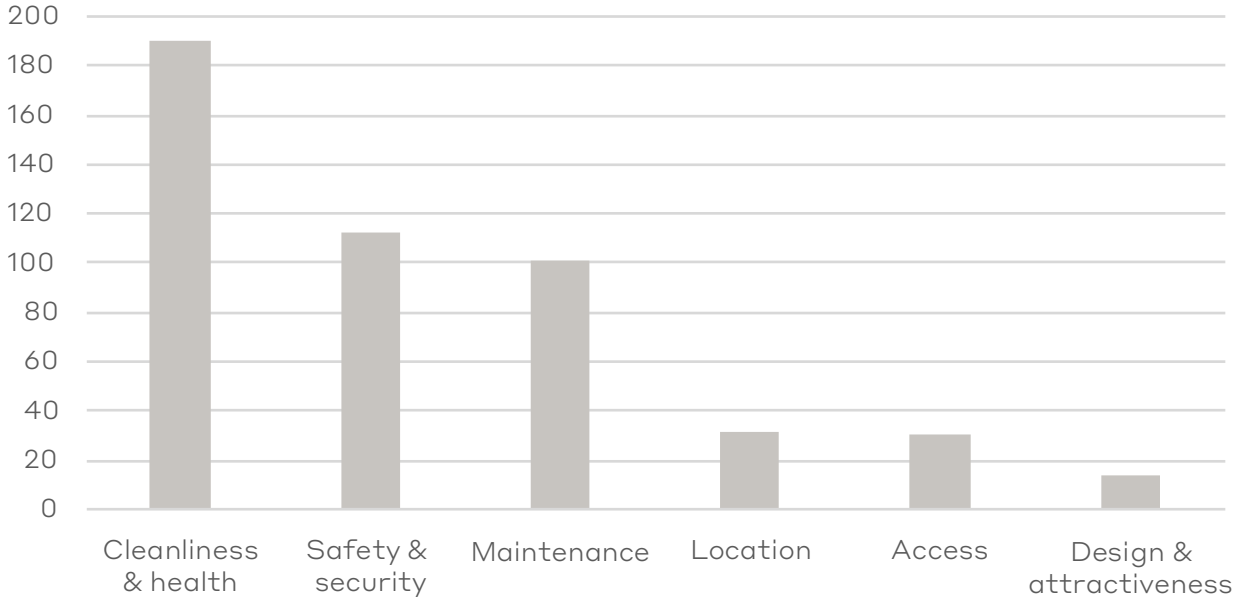
Prioritise the safety of all public toilet users in Mildura by minimising occurrences of anti-social behaviour.

Maintain toilets to a high standard of cleanliness to enhance the safety, healthy and well-being of all users.

Issues & Challenges	Opportunities for Improvement
• Poor perceptions of hygiene and cleanliness are common within the community; • Council does not manage all areas of open space in Mildura; • Seasonal demand and events put pressure on existing toilet infrastructure; • Some toilets are poorly sited and/or located and lack visual permeability; • Presence of graffiti and vandalism can be threatening and deter users; • Ongoing annual cost of reactive maintenance.	• Refurbish facilities (as required) at key locations to improve perceptions of safety; • Reduce antisocial behaviour through site responsive interventions (CPTED); • Review and increase the cleaning of high use facilities; • Develop a capital works program to secure future funding and investment for public toilet improvements; • Consider robust or safety-orientated fixtures that discourage or minimise instances of anti-social behaviour or loitering such as automated locking doors; • Regularly audit, collect data, monitor toilet usage and update databases.

What the Community Said

What needs to be improved



Management:
Findings & Recommendations

Council is a key provider and manager of public toilets across Mildura. Other stakeholders also provide and manage toilets within the municipality which can lead to inconsistencies.

Condition and cleanliness remain key priorities for all users and greatly influences perceptions of facilities.

Safety

As Council continues to upgrade its facilities and improve the level of service provision, it also seeks to reduce and minimise occurrences of anti-social behaviour such drug-related activity, sexual activity or overnight stays.

The safety and security of public toilet users should be prioritised ahead of any other decision-making considerations. From a user perspective, perceptions of safety can be as influential as actual or recorded levels of safety. If a toilet is perceived to be unsafe, unhygienic or dangerous, users will generally avoid usage of the facility. There are a number of factors that contribute to negative safety perceptions:

- Poor integration into the streetscape / public realm;
- Obstruction of the facility behind dense landscaping, overhanging canopy trees, or sited away from passive surveillance;
- Lack of natural light or otherwise poorly designed interiors;
- Age and condition of the facility;
- Presence of graffiti or vandalism;
- Loitering; and
- Odour or lack of cleanliness.

There are many ways that design can minimise anti-social behaviour and contribute to positive perceptions of safety. For example, the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) framework establishes guiding principles to reduce the incidence and perceptions around crime and safety. Developed by the Queensland Government in association with the Queensland Police in 2007, CPTED principles consider factors such as surveillance, legibility, territoriality, ownership, management and vulnerability. With regard to public toilets, the guidelines consider:

- The likelihood to expose users to risk (for example during hours of darkness);
- Organised surveillance (such as regular security patrols or cameras);
- Discourage loitering by not placing seating or public telephones in close proximity to toilet entrances; and
- Ensure entrances to public toilets are clearly visible from the street and other public areas.

There are a number of responses to anti-social behaviour that Council can employ such as:

- Installation of CCTV cameras
- Time-sensor lighting (solar panel operated)
- Quick response to reactive maintenance
- Regular cleaning and reporting
- Facilities that are old, in poor structural condition and subject to ongoing anti-social behaviour should be considered for decommissioning.

Council's operating costs for ensuring the municipality's public toilet network is safe and well maintained included expenses for security patrols, vandalism repair and pest control. This accounted for approximately $46,000 or 11% of the overall operation costs for public toilets in the year 2016-17.

Feedback from stakeholders indicates that some toilets in isolated locations have a reputation of being hotspots for anti-social behaviour, including:

- Lock 11
- Jaycee Park

Recommendations

- Upgrade/refurbish the Lock 11 and Jaycee Park public toilets to reduce anti-social behaviour and improve safety.
- Incorporate CPTED principles into all decision and assessment processes when refurbishing or replacing existing toilets, and providing new facilities.
- Assess the safety and structural condition of all toilet facilities through a Council audit process every five years.
- Record all reports and instances of anti-social behaviour and reactive maintenance and monitor over time to identify key hot spots.

Maintenance & Cleaning

Cleanliness was consistently rated by the community as the most important aspect of a public toilet facility.

Council has an active schedule of maintenance and cleaning across all of its public toilet facilities. The levels of usage of a facility is reflected in its cleaning frequency with higher usage toilets cleaned the most often. In high use locations, some toilets are cleaned up to three times per day. The majority of facilities are cleaned daily. Ongoing monitoring and toilet usage should continue to inform Council's cleaning priorities. Usage can be measured in a number of ways:

- Installation of temporary pedestrian counters at toilet entrances
- Measuring toilet paper and/or soap usage (expenditure, reports from cleaning contractors)
- Monitoring utility consumption (e.g. water, electricity)
- Targeted surveying and observations
- Anecdotal feedback and word of mouth from the community.

There is a need for Council to review its current cleaning schedule, particularly where community feedback points to unclean conditions, and increase cleaning frequency in accordance with levels of usage. This will also assist with future operational budgeting.

Reactive maintenance is an ongoing challenge with issues such as graffiti and vandalism being of concern. Maintaining a high standard of facilities and responding quickly to maintenance issues should continue to be a key priority.

Alongside routine site inspections by Council staff, there are other ways to collect information about damage or broken fixtures through a variety of user-sourced smartphone apps. There have been a number of trials across different local government areas that have seen the implementation of municipal wide apps to allow users to directly report issues about Council's assets (see Case study 6). There are further opportunities to test the usefulness and implementation of a similar program in Mildura across Council owned and managed assets.

Recommendations

- Remove surplus toilets in poor condition with low usage.
- Record and collect information about usage and cleaning performance using counters or other methods.
- Review and update current cleaning and maintenance schedules commensurate to levels of usage and peak demand.
- Update Council's audit data to include information about other Council owned and managed toilets not currently captured.
- Investigate the viability of a municipal wide app that allows individual users to report maintenance issues directly to Council through their smart phone.

Case Study 6

Report Maintenance Issues: Snap Send Solve

Snap Send Solve is an 'App' developed in Melbourne that gives residents the ability to report maintenance issues to their local Council via a phone or hand held device.

The App allows users to take a photo of the issue, then send it directly to the appropriate authority/ department. It currently has more than 60,000 users across Australia.

Financials

Council spent approximately $470,000 per year between 2009-2012 on upgrade and renewal works for public toilets.

For the 2016-17 financial year, Council spent approximately $418,000 on operational costs across the entire public toilet network, about 33% of which was related to cleanliness. On average, this means that each of the 80 toilets across the network costs $5,225 to maintain, possibly matched by $5,875 on average for upgrade / renewal costs.

The recommended Capital Works Plan in Chapter 5 of this Strategy identifies a number of new public toilet facilities, in accordance with the standards outlined in the Public Toilet Toolkit in Chapter 4.

The cost of providing new public toilets has been kept to a minimum by encouraging the use of unisex facilities to consolidate the overall number of pans and urinals required for persons of all genders and abilities to have the same number of facilities available. An indicative price for each the main hierarchies is provided on this page.

At least eight (8) facilities are recommended for decommissioning, theoretically reducing Council's annual maintenance costs by $41,800.

Twelve (12) facilities are recommended for replacement (in some cases accompanied by relocation and / or upgrades). Not all of these facilities are in poor condition, but those which are will benefit from potentially lower maintenance costs that may be associated with newer facilities.

Opening Hours

The opening hours of toilets in Mildura vary between 24 hours and dawn and dusk. Standalone toilets are often open 24 hours and co-located toilets are often open from dawn to dusk.

In some locations, particularly in remote or otherwise isolated areas, toilets that are open 24 hours can attract antisocial behaviour. There are several known 'hotspot' locations where antisocial activities have been reported. Actions to minimise anti-social behaviour through alternative management practices include:

- Locking toilets during the evening
- Installation of CCTV cameras
- Installation of automatic door locks
- Security patrols

Determining the most appropriate response to an issue should be site/context specific and what works in one location to deter antisocial behaviour may not apply in other locations. Responses should also consider the diversity and density of activities around the toilet, particularly evening activities. 24 hour availability presents a range of challenges, particularly in relation to safety and perceptions around anti-social behaviour during the evening. A number of 24 hour toilets are available for use in the CBD at key locations that attract night time activity including:

- Restaurants and bars;
- Nightclubs and other entertainment precincts; and
- Transport hubs such as bus and taxi terminals.

Given the role of the Mildura CBD in providing for late night social activities, servicing a regional catchment, there continues to be a need for some 24 hour toilets, which should include robust, anti-vandal fittings. These toilets should be located near transport hubs and on pedestrian routes.

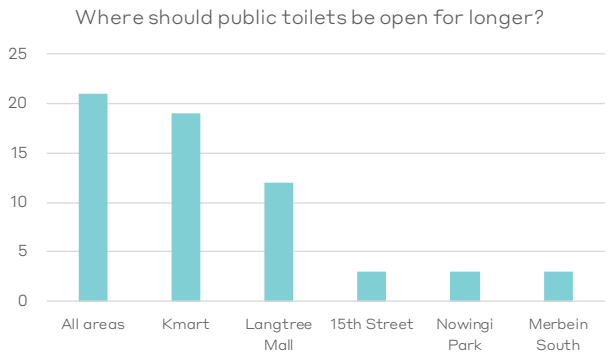
Council should continue to monitor this need as development and land use patterns change over time.

Costs associated with the operation of Council's public toilet network included a range of wages

and contractor hire, some of which may relate to staff travelling between locations to manually lock and unlock facilities each day. This ongoing expense could be reduced or eradicated with the implementation of automatic locks across the network.

Recommendation

- Investigate the need for alternative management practices at known hotspot locations to minimize anti-social behaviour.
- Identify two to three locations for late night, 24 hour toilets in the Mildura CBD. These locations/facilities may replace existing, older facilities.
- Implement auto-timer or otherwise self-locking doors at public toilet facilities that are not open 24 hours.



Seasonal Demand

The use of portable toilets is common practice for large municipal events. Legislative and planning requirements require approval of an event management plan prior the commencement of a large event. Unless there is a considerable demonstrated community need, the provision of permanent toilet infrastructure is not necessary as it encourages the proliferation a dormant toilet network (i.e. toilets that are inaccessible to the public as they locked for the majority of the year).

In addition to the requirements of event management plans, consideration for accessible and changing places facilities should be taken into account for large events. Council is in the process of purchasing a portable Marveloo Changing Places facility that is to be made available for rent at large events. The provision of these facilities will enable members of the community with additional mobility requirements to participate in municipal events.

Aquatic centres and other recreational facilities for water play are locations where peak demand is concentrated around the summer months. Feedback from the community identified the Water Play Park as a key location for a new public toilet, however the immediate need for this is offset by the two (2) relatively new facilities already provided in this general area.

Recommendation

- Consider the long term need for the two (2) existing facilities in Nowingi Place.