Acknowledgments
Tamworth Regional Council and Tredwell acknowledge the Gamilaroi/Kamilaroi people, who are the Traditional Custodians of this land. Council would like to pay respect to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in and visiting our region.

The Tamworth Regional Council Project Team have significantly contributed to the development of this Strategic Plan:

- Sam Eriksson, Strategic Project Coordinator
- Paul Kelly, Manager Sport and Recreation

All stakeholders and community members who have contributed through an online survey, workshop or interview are also thanked for their time and effort.

Photographs have been provided by Tamworth Regional Council.

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Summary Draft</td>
<td>27.04.2020</td>
<td>Supporting Tamworth Region Sport and Recreation Strategic Plan Draft R3</td>
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Tamworth Regional Council (Council) acknowledges the significant contribution that sport and recreation bring to the community. The planning and design of such facilities needs to be carefully considered to ensure that the needs of the community are addressed now and into the future. Council has worked with the specialist sport, recreation and open space planning firm, Tredwell, on the preparation of the Tamworth Region Sport and Recreation Strategic Plan. The Plan provides a road map for planning and developing sport and recreation facilities (structured and unstructured) across the Tamworth region to align with the planned growth identified in Tamworth’s Blueprint 100 strategy.

**Methodology**

The project’s five stage methodology included:

**STAGE 1** Background Research & Trends Analysis
- October / November 2019

**STAGE 2** Audit & Consultation
- November / December 2019

**STAGE 3** Issues & Opportunities Identification
- January / February 2020

**STAGE 4** Draft Sport & Recreation Strategic Plan
- March / April 2020
  - Public Exhibition
  - June 2020

**STAGE 5** Final Sport & Recreation Strategic Plan
- July 2020

**Regional Context**

Tamworth is the major centre for the broader catchment area of Northern Inland New South Wales (NSW) which has a growing population of more than 200,000 people encompassing other major towns such as Inverell, Armidale and Gunnedah. Tamworth is also the largest population centre in the New England North West planning region.

The Tamworth region covers a diverse geographic area with a growing population of over 60,000 residents. The towns of Manilla, Barraba, Nundle and Kootingal, along with another 17 hamlets offer an attractive lifestyle underpinned by a strong regional economy.

Provision of high-quality sport and recreation facilities, clubs and programs are increasingly contributing to the attractiveness of the Tamworth region for lifestyle.
Council’s Role

Local government plays a major role in the development of sport and recreation, particularly at the community level. Successful networks of sport and recreation facilities, clubs and programs are dependent on partnerships and ongoing cooperation between a wide range of organisations including all levels of government, peak bodies, State Sporting Organisations (SSOs), clubs and associations, as well as the wider community.

Council plays an important role in facilitating benefits and achieving positive outcomes for its community through sport and active recreation provision. Key roles include:

- **Planning**
  - Strategic planning
  - Master planning
  - Policy development

- **Facility Management**
  - Asset management
  - Leasing and licensing
  - Compliance with legislation & standards

- **Partnerships and Advocacy**
  - Advocating on behalf of the community and clubs
  - Partnering with other Councils, State and Federal Government
  - Strengthening relationships with sporting clubs

- **Service Provision**
  - Club development and training
  - Information provision
  - Sports club liaison/engagement
  - Special events
  - Inclusive programs

- **Funding**
  - Grants
  - Capital investment
  - Accessing external funding
Key Developments

Since Council’s previous Recreation and Open Space Plan was prepared in 2008, the Tamworth region has experienced significant developments relating to sport and recreation. Key infrastructure projects have included:

1. Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre
2. The Northern Inland Centre of Sporting Excellence (NICSE) which includes:
   - The Tamworth Sports Dome (2011)
   - Tamworth Athletics Centre (2019)
   - Tamworth Cycling Centre (2019)
   - Tamworth Hockey Centre (2019)
3. Tamworth Mountain Bike Park (2014)
4. Tamworth Regional Playground (2015)
5. Scully Park Regional Sporting Precinct (2015)
8. Tamworth Regional Skate Park (2019)
Demographic Overview

Community sport and recreation needs are influenced by the demographic profile of the region. Such as the fact that the Tamworth Region has:

- One of the highest projected population growth rates in regional NSW, with NSW Government forecasting a population of up to 75,000 in 2036 (2016).

- A high proportion of the population:
  - Under 18
  - Over 60

- A significantly higher proportion of Indigenous Australians compared to other areas of regional NSW.

- A high rate of volunteering compared to other areas of regional NSW.

- Varied levels of socio-economic disadvantage across the region.

Key Sport and Recreation Trends

A range of trends have been identified which will influence sport and recreation into the future, as outlined below.

- Increasing popularity of individualised activities.

- Increasing need for active ageing.

- Increasing female participation in traditionally male dominated sports.

- Increasingly busy lifestyles.

- Increasing participation in informal recreation activities.

- Increasingly widespread use of synthetic playing surfaces.
Facility Network Distribution

The facility inventory identifies 117 venues across the Tamworth Region which provide facilities for sport and recreation. The high-level distribution of facilities is shown in the map below.

Tamworth is the primary hub for sport and recreation across the region’s facility network, with many high-quality facilities of international, national, state, regional and local significance.

The network is also supported by the sport and recreation precincts in the villages of Kootingal, Nundle, Barraba and Manilla. Smaller, outlying settlements across the region typically have a recreation ground, managed under a Section 355 Committee, with a community hall, court(s), grass pitch or oval and associated amenities.

Facility Condition Ratings

The condition of venues and facilities across the region’s network vary considerably. In outlying settlements, this is often dependent on population numbers and the availability of community members to use and maintain these facilities.

Each venue has been given a rating to reflect an assessment of its current condition, with the overall percentages outlined in the graph below.

Legend:
- **Very Good Condition (4%)**
  - Only normal maintenance required
- **Minor Defects Only (46%)**
  - Minor maintenance required
- **Maintenance Required (23%)**
  - Significant maintenance
- **Requires Renewal (25%)**
  - Significant upgrade/renewal required
- **Asset Unserviceable (2%)**
  - Over 50% of asset requires replacement
Facility Hierarchy

Establishing a hierarchy of sport and recreation facilities assists in the review of existing facilities, and the planning of new facilities. The hierarchy can be used to guide the strategic distribution of facilities and to ensure that service levels are appropriate to the intended level of usage and population catchment catered for. The facility hierarchy is outlined below.

Facility Distribution across the Hierarchy

- **INTERNATIONAL**
  - Equestrian Sports
  - Gliding

- **NATIONAL**
  - Football (Soccer)
  - Hockey
  - Rugby League
  - Rugby Union

- **STATE**
  - Athletics
  - Basketball
  - Cycling (Competitive)
  - Netball

- **REGIONAL**
  - Aerosports
  - Australian Football
  - Baseball
  - Cricket
  - Equestrian Sports
  - Football (Soccer)
  - Golf
  - Gymnastics
  - Horse Racing
  - Mountain Bike Riding
  - Oztag
  - Play

- **DISTRICT**
  - Bushwalking
  - Cricket
  - Croquet
  - Equestrian Sports
  - Golf
  - Lawn Bowls
  - Model Car Racing
  - Motor Sports
  - Mountain Bike Riding
  - Rugby League
  - Rugby Union
  - Swimming

- **LOCAL**
  - Aero Sports
  - Beach
  - Cricket
  - Play
  - Skate
  - Squash
  - Volleyball
  - Walking
Consultation Mechanisms

The following consultation mechanisms were used during November 2019 to inform the development of the Strategic Plan:

• Six community workshops held in Kootingal, Nundle, Barraba, Manilla and Tamworth.
• Online community survey receiving 164 responses.
• Online club/user group survey receiving nine responses.
• Key stakeholder interviews

Key Themes

The themes which emerged from the consultation processes are outlined with regards to key positive feedback and key issues.

Key positive feedback related to:

- Location of facilities
- Facilities being generally well maintained and looked after
- Facility provision at NICSE and AELEC
- Low cost and affordable sport and recreation opportunities
- Broad range of facilities
- Council planning for the future
- Community connectedness

Key issues raised related to:

- Need for specific facility improvements and enhanced maintenance regimes
- Facilities unavailable at times
- High participation and facility use costs
- Aged/basic aquatic facilities
- Limited spectator facilities
- Limited car parking
- Facilities without disability access
- Need for improved access and connectivity between facilities for active transport
- Need for improved sports lighting
- Need for improved changerooms
Local Participation

The following graph is based on community survey responses to the following question:

What sport and recreation activities do you participate in, and how regularly?

Top Activities in the Tamworth Region (Community Survey Findings)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Number of Community Survey Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jogging / Walking / Running</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness / Gym / Aerobics</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming / Diving</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer (Outdoor)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket (Outdoor)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing / Ballet</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bushwalking</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oztag</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoga/Pilates</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rugby League</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch Football</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weightlifting</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Biking</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netball</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian Activities</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing/Angling</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer (Indoor)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity-Specific Provision Needs

To assess the facility provision requirements to cater for anticipated population changes across the Tamworth Region, supply and demand factors have been considered where possible across the following key sport and recreation activities:

- Athletics
- Hockey
- Cycling
- Netball & Basketball
- Swimming
- Baseball & Softball
- Tennis
- Rugby League & Union
- Football (Soccer)
- Oztag & Touch Football

The following table outlines the projected future facility requirements and the focus/directions for each of the key activities listed above.

This analysis and focus/directions are based on consideration of:

- Supply and demand factors used by ActiveXchange data analytics
- Requirements of the broader population of Northern Inland NSW
- Facility Inventory (including location, condition, usage, hierarchy)
- Council, club and community plans and aspirations for the facility network
- Population projections and trigger points
- Trends influencing sport and recreation
- Best-practice facility provision which includes multi-use, adaptable and flexible spaces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Focus/Directions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>Focus on activating the existing NICSE Tamworth Athletics Centre through attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>Focus on activating existing facility at NICSE Tamworth Hockey Centre through attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>Focus on activating existing facility at NICSE Tamworth Hockey Centre through attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netball and Basketball</td>
<td>Focus on maintaining existing high-quality netball and basketball facility with indoor &amp; outdoor courts. Support attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plan for the development of three additional indoor courts when the population of the Tamworth Region reaches 90,000-100,000.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Activity Focus/Directions

**Swimming**  
Focus on development of the Tamworth Regional Aquatics and Leisure Centre at the NICSE, and consolidation of the two aged district-level facilities in Tamworth urban area – both to remain open until new centre is constructed & operational.

Continued provision of district aquatic facilities in Barraba, Manilla, Kootingal and Nundle.

**Baseball and Softball**  
Focus on optimising quality and usage of existing facilities at Riverside Sports Complex.

Ensure fields are multi-purpose where possible.

Enhance facility to attract and host tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.

**Tennis**  
Focus on balancing the provision and distribution of tennis facilities across the region to support attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.

Enhancements to include upgrades at Treloar Park Tennis Centre (13 courts), enhancements at facilities with five or more courts, and repurposing of disused courts in outlying settlements.

**Rugby League and Union**  
Focus on optimising quality of existing facilities and enhancing community access, as well as developing Riverside Sports Complex with multi-use field capacity to host large tournaments/events as well as to support regular programs/competitions.

**Football (Soccer)**  
Focus on optimising quality and usage of existing facilities, as well as developing additional multi-use playing fields.

Support attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.

**Oztag and Touch Football**  
Focus on optimising quality and usage of existing facilities, as well as developing new/additional multi-use playing fields.

Support attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.

**Australian Football**  
Focus on developing state/regional-level venue at the NICSE, and enhancements at No. 1 Oval & Riverside Sports Complex.

Support attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.

**Cricket**  
Focus on balancing the provision and distribution of cricket facilities across the region. Future provision to include development of state/regional-level venue at the NICSE, enhancements at Riverside Sports Complex, and repurposing of disused ovals in outlying settlements.

Support attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Focus/Directions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>Focus on maintaining high quality regional-level gymnastics facility, with access to additional capacity at Tamworth Regional Events and Conference Centre (TRECC) to cater for large events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skate</td>
<td>Focus on progressive development of new youth activity spaces (including skate facilities) as the population grows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMX</td>
<td>Focus on upgrading existing competitive BMX facility to a state-level. Support attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions. Progressively develop of new youth activity spaces (incorporating recreational skate and BMX facilities) as the population grows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equestrian Sports</td>
<td>Focus on maintaining high quality national, regional and district level facilities, and continued attraction of equine events and regular programs. Ensure balance between elite and community level facilities and pathways for Tamworth to maintain its position as ‘Australia's home of equine sports’. Consider opportunities for additional facility to cater for district-level requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorsport</td>
<td>Focus on developing state-level multi-use motorsport facility at Oakburn Park Motorsport Precinct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawn Bowls</td>
<td>Focus on supporting clubs to sustainably provide, high quality and highly valued facilities to the community. Support clubs/facility owners to determine suitable redistribution and/or repurposing of facilities as required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>Focus on supporting clubs to sustainably provide, high quality and highly valued facilities to the community. Support clubs/facility owners to determine suitable redistribution and/or re-purposing of facilities as required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Walking and Cycling</td>
<td>Focus on strategically planning for a well distributed and connected network of recreational trails across the region.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following key challenges and opportunities have been identified for sport and recreation in the Tamworth region.

### Key Challenges

- Water security, drought and usage restrictions
- Some venues with limited support facilities (e.g. change rooms, lighting)
- Wide regional catchment across Northern Inland NSW
- High forecast population growth
- Maintaining Tamworth’s reputation as ‘Australia’s Home of Equine Sports
- Limited formal networks for active transport and recreational trail use
- Some sport and recreation precincts located in flood prone areas
- Limited surface capacity of existing playing fields
- Aquatic facilities age, costly to operate and require renewal
- Requirement for facilities & open spaces in new developments
- Encouraging active lifestyles at all life stages
- Balancing need for community-level & elite sport
- Balancing needs of traditional sport & emerging activities
- Balancing needs of Tamworth City and villages
- Aquatic recreation along the Peel River
- Formalising connectivity between facilities

### Key Opportunities

- Balanced regional-level provision
- Enhancing support facilities
- Strategic framework for play space provision
- Attracting sport and recreation events
- Enhancing motor sport facilities
- Promoting and optimising usage of facilities
- Three additional multi-use indoor courts
- Resilient and fit-for-purpose facilities
- Youth precincts
- BMX Track/s
- Tamworth Regional Aquatic & Leisure Centre
- Developing an oval for elite competition
**Vision**

The following vision has been developed as a reflection of the aspirations of the Tamworth region community in relation to sport and recreation.

A balanced network of high-quality sport and recreation facilities, clubs/service providers, programs and events which ensures Tamworth is the sporting hub of Northern Inland NSW and meets the needs of the growing and diversifying population.

A network which enables sport and recreation to contribute significant social and economic benefit through maximising community participation, encouraging active lifestyles, attracting a wide range of events and offering pathways for sporting excellence.

**Key Components**

Planning for sport and recreation is multifaceted and interrelated. Consideration needs to be given to the following three major components of planning.

- **Facilities**
  - Planning (strategies, feasibility studies, master plans, reviews)
  - Delivery (upgrades, new facilities, re-purposing, collocation, multi-purpose, accessible)
  - Management (governance, occupancy agreements, programming, asset management, maintenance)

- **Clubs and Service Providers**
  - Club development
  - Communication
  - Engagement
  - Accessibility
  - Volunteering
  - Partnerships
  - Training and development

- **Programs and Events**
  - Targeted population groups
  - Events, programs and services
  - Resourcing
  - Communication and marketing
  - Inclusion
  - Pathways
The following planning principles have been developed, based on community aspirations and industry best-practice, to guide the development and management of sport and recreation across the Tamworth region.

**Planning Principles**

**Principle 1**
**Maximum Community Participation**

- Facilities, clubs and programs offer a range of accessible recreational opportunities targeted to the needs of the community and deliver associated health benefits to all people regardless of age, socio-economic status or ability.
- A balanced approach to the provision of facilities across community-level participation, as well as elite pathways, programs and events.
- A balanced approach to the provision of facilities which facilitate active lifestyles through informal recreation activities as well as through competitive sport.

**Principle 2**
**Shared Precincts and Community Hubs**

- Where appropriate and practical, facilities are clustered and co-located with compatible users to optimise use whilst maintaining organisational identity and individual needs through adaptable and flexible designs.

**Principle 3**
**Sustainability**

- Facilities, clubs and programs effectively integrate long and short-term economic, environmental, social and cultural considerations.
- Facility and program developments strategically align with Council strategies to meet current and future community needs and provide value-for-money.

**Principle 4**
**Partnerships**

- Collaborative approaches are used to plan, deliver and manage facilities, clubs and programs with the community, government, clubs, associations, educational institutions and the private sector.
- Partnerships are utilised to achieve community outcomes beyond sport and recreation.

**Principle 5**
**Working Together with Clubs and Community**

- Clubs and the wider community are effectively engaged in the planning and design of sport and recreation facilities and programs.
- An inclusive culture of sport and recreation is achieved through club development programs, positive relationships and provision of facilities that support opportunities for all.

**Principle 6**
**Maximised and Validated Community Benefit**

- Community benefit is identified, validated and maximised through the investment of sport and recreation facilities.
- Investments which demonstrate the maximum local and regional community benefits are prioritised.

**Principle 7**
**Effective Management and Maintenance**

- Facilities are managed and maintained in a manner that promotes safe condition, minimises financial liability and complies with relevant legislation, policies and standards.
Interrelated Components of Sport & Recreation Planning

- **FACILITIES**
  - Effective Management & Maintenance
  - Maximum Community Participation
  - Shared Precincts & Community Hubs

- **PROGRAMS & EVENTS**
  - Maximised & Validated Community Benefit
  - Vision for Sport & Recreation

- **CLUBS & SERVICE PROVIDERS**
  - Working Together with Clubs & Community
  - Sustainability

**Vision for Sport & Recreation**

**Partnerships**
Strategies and Action Plan

Strategies and actions for developing sport and recreation across the Tamworth region have been categorised into the three key components of planning. The topics covered by each of the strategies are outlined below.

The complete Strategy and Action Plan with corresponding rationale, timeframes, partners and resource estimates is included within the comprehensive version of the Tamworth Region Sport and Recreation Strategic Plan.

### Facilities
1. Northern Inland Centre of Sporting Excellence (NICSE)
2. Council Owned and/or Managed Regional-Level Sport and Recreation Facilities
3. Tamworth Urban Area - Council Owned and/or Managed District/Local-Level Sport and Recreation Facilities
4. Villages and Outlying Areas - Council Owned and/or Managed District/Local-Level Sport and Recreation Facilities
5. Non-Council Owned or Managed Sport and Recreation Facilities
6. New Developments
7. Facility Management and Operation
8. Research and Planning

### Clubs and Service Providers
9. Governance, Training and Development
10. Volunteering
11. Partnerships

### Programs and Events
12. Events
13. Communication
14. Resourcing
15. Inclusion and Access