



BENALLA INDOOR RECREATION CENTRE MASTER PLAN

November 2019



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INTRODUCTION

The Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre (BIRC) is located about 1km from the centre of Benalla at the United Friendlies Society Reserve.

Along with BIRC, the Reserve also has a multi-purpose sports field, lawn tennis courts, hard surface tennis courts and netball courts, meeting and social spaces, a Country Fire Authority training area and car parking and associated infrastructure.

BIRC consists of three multi-purpose courts, one of which has bleacher seating, meeting rooms, an office, café, change facilities and toilets and storage areas.

It is home to the Benalla Basketball Association, U3A Lifeball competition, Benalla Badminton, Benalla Table Tennis and is used occasionally by a number of other groups including the Benalla Netball Association, Benalla All Blacks Football Netball Club and FCJ College.

The BIRC Master Plan aims to build on previous strategic work undertaken by the Council relating to the ongoing support and development of indoor sports including basketball, squash, racquetball, badminton and gymnastics as well as the provision of sports facilities and infrastructure at the United Friendlies Society Reserve and around Benalla.

CURRENT SITUATION

Management structure

The BIRC is located on crown land with Benalla Rural City Council the appointed land manager. The Council in turn has engaged a not-for-profit, incorporated committee of management to oversee the day to day management and maintenance of the facility.

The committee receives a maintenance allowance from the Council and charges users hire fees.

The current annual cost to the Council for the operation of the BIRC is close to \$6,000. Over the last few years the cost has varied between \$500 and \$15,000 depending on major maintenance support provided.

The committee states that they now have the BIRC in a position where it is usually able to operate at a small surplus, in the vicinity of around \$4,000 annually.

Stakeholder mapping

The chart below highlights the primary stakeholders in relation to the ongoing management and future development of the BIRC, i.e. those that are critical. Secondary stakeholders, i.e. those who are influential in the direction but not necessarily critical are also shown.

PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS	SECONDARY STAKEHOLDERS
Department of Environment & Primary Industries (DEPI)	All Blacks Football Netball Club
Benalla Rural City Council	Bushrangers Cricket Club
BIRC Committee of Management	Benalla Gymnastics Club
Benalla Basketball Association	Benalla Squash and Racquetball Association
Benalla Badminton Association	Benalla Lawn Tennis Association
Benalla Table Tennis Association	U3A Lifeball
Benalla Netball Association	

Land use and restrictions

The BIRC is primarily located on land zoned as Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) with the section to the left of the blue line on the map, effectively west of the existing buildings, being in an Urban Flood Zone.

The Urban Flood Zone will mean that any proposals for buildings or structures in this space will need specific approvals and potentially additional mitigation works if approvals are in fact granted



TENNANT SPORTS CLUBS

The table below provides an indication of the number of participants in the organised sports conducted at the BIRC. The numbers are estimates based on team numbers and do not include the significant number of other critical people involved in the facilitating of these activities such as committee members, etc., nor the people who attend events as supporters.

Tennant clubs of BIRC and player numbers

Organisation	Players
Benalla Basketball Association	400
Benalla Table Tennis Association	60
Benalla Badminton Association	30
Benalla Netball Association	60
U3A Lifeball	15
Total	555

Usual usage by day/evening

User	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Basketball	■			■			
Table tennis		■					
Badminton		■	■				
Netball			■				
Lifeball	■						

Based on information provided by the key users it is estimated that they use the BIRC for around 20 hours each week spread across Monday and Tuesday mornings and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

Benalla Basketball Association

The Benalla Basketball Association generally plays on Monday and Thursday with 40 weeks of competition and a further 26 weeks of full training with squads.

They estimate they have over 600 people involved each week including players, members and supporters and are responsible for around 95% of the facility usage.

Previous reports suggest that the Association had an estimated 315 players in 2001, 378 in the Spring 2017 competition and 357 in the Spring 2018 competition. Players are a mix of junior and senior and male and female teams.

In addition to this the Association hosts a tournament every February that brings over 70 teams to town and utilises all three courts as well two school courts.

The Association also fielded a team in the North East Conference of the Country Basketball League (CBL) for the first time in the 2018/19.

The Association hopes that the BIRC will become the centre of basketball for the region and as the key user is interested in managing the facility.

Key issues:

- Additional storage around the stadium would be beneficial for all users.
- Car parking continues to be a key issue, both from an access and safety perspective
- The current change-rooms while suitable for competition use may present issues with their CBL team, however the football club change-rooms may provide a suitable back up.
- While their numbers have been reasonably steady for a decade, they believe they are ready to move into a growth phase.
- They would like an additional 2 courts as well as a show court with seating.
- At the last Annual General Meeting they started with 16 committee members, which has now moved back to 12, however effectively there are 4 active committee members. This is a key reason as to why they would prefer to keep all activities at a single site as playing across several sites may stretch their limited resources.

In reviewing Basketball Victoria Facilities Master Plan 2017, the Association provided the following advice relating to future development opportunities:

Benalla Basketball Association would be fully supportive of the prospect of having a 4-court venue in Benalla.

With the current growth of the sport and Benalla's central location between Melbourne and the NSW border and within the North East Region, Benalla would be in great position to win the rights to additional Basketball activities throughout the region and Victoria.

Examples:

- Skills days
- Junior Championship tournaments (Age Groups)
- NITP program training venue
- Academy training
- Home of NE Bushrangers VJBL Juniors
- NBL & WNBL practice games
- Host Wheelchair Basketball
- Masters Basketball events
- Holiday school training camps
- Elite Basketball camps
- Country Basketball League Grand Final Venue
- Schools programs
- Boxing events

While this would give the Benalla business community a real boost by bringing events to this town, the economic impact created would give our community a real positive outlook on such a positive step in this already strong sporting town. The Association believes there is a big opportunity to create a sporting hub for the future. This could be built into a community multi-sport precinct for the future that could be utilised 7 days a week with the correct mindset.

The following features would be of additional benefit to the facility:

- Facility manager - hire, community events, conferences, sporting events, lunch or breakfast, school programs
- Gymnasium facility, weights, aerobics, boxing – training kids for the future

- Office rental - second story (office worker, physiotherapist, massage, etc)
- Meeting/conference room
- Full café/catering facility
- Indoor cricket nets (all year)
- Sponsorship - facility naming rights (3 year deals) - yearly income
- Sponsorship - internal throughout the stadium (all user groups) - yearly income
- School holiday activities

Revenue opportunities:

- Stadium naming rights sponsorship
- Internal signage
- Café income
- Stadium hire
- Conference room hire
- Office space
- Major events (500 seats plus spectators)
- Holiday programs
- School events

Sports creating the hub:

- Basketball
- Netball
- Squash
- Racquetball
- Table Tennis
- Badminton
- Boxing
- Life Ball
- Lawn Tennis
- Football
- Cricket
- Martial Arts
- Fire Brigade
- Gym
- Little athletics
- Junior Football

The Association would also like to raise the concept of Benalla Basketball as the main user of the stadium to take over the running of the facility. They have stated they have fresh ideas to bring more use to the stadium from other sports and opportunity to increase the revenue chains.

Benalla Table Tennis Association

The Table Tennis Association games currently run on a Tuesday evening and this timing arrangement suits their members. Players tend to arrive for set up at around 6.30pm, warm up from 7.00pm and play from 7.30pm to 9.00pm.

The Association has approximately 60 members, of which 44 are regular players. Numbers have been steady for a number of years. They have a strong family focus. Membership is evenly split between male and female members.

They can fit 12 tables on Court 3 and this fits with their current usage. 12 tables are what they would see as their maximum requirement.

The Association is open to moving to a multi-purpose space as long as it fits their tables.

They are not affiliated with the state body and see themselves as more of a 'social competition'. At this stage they have no plans to change this or look at hosting any tournaments or events.

Benalla Badminton Association

Badminton currently has around 30 active members and they play a competition on Wednesday evenings, usually between 7.00pm and 9.30pm and usually across a single court. They also have a social morning session on Tuesday mornings that generally has between 8-10 players. They have a mix of around 80% adult and 20% junior players.

They estimate their player numbers have dropped off compared to 2 or 3 years ago, by up to half.

The Association is not affiliated with the state body and has no plans for this to change as they consider themselves more a social type competition. Competing in state competitions and championships is not a priority.

They have identified storage space as an issue.

They have also suggested that if there were a net or curtain or similar between courts then they could share their evening with another user and are open to doing so.

Benalla Netball Association

The Netball Association are mostly junior focussed. They run a social competition and occasional hire. Generally, they use the BIRC on Tuesday evenings, which fits with other junior sport. They usually play over two hours with eight teams.

They have held higher level games at BIRC in the past.

Overall participation has been in decline over last five years, due primarily to football netball league development and they are uncertain of where they will be over the next five years.

At their current location only two out of seven courts are usable.

They are open to relocating, however sensitive on cost and hire fees compared to what they currently pay.

U3A Lifeball

The Benalla and District University of the Third Age (U3A) play Lifeball at the BIRC year-round, generally on a Monday morning. Games start at around 9.30 or 10am and are played over 90 minutes. Based on reports it appears numbers vary between 8 to 20 depending on the time of year and numbers can drop a little over the winter period.

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Benalla Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club Inc

The Benalla Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club Inc are located at the United Friendlies Society Reserve, they are happy where they are and consider their location and club facilities a key strength. They state that their current footprint is suitable for their activity, but no smaller.

Currently the club has an area equivalent of 24 grass courts available for the playing of tennis/croquet.

On current usage the Club have stated that the changing of 2 courts to multipurpose facilities would not disadvantage the tennis opportunities and there is sufficient space for croquet.

If opportunity arose the club has a program of court refurbishment and currently is running with equivalent area of santé anna couch to cover 14 tennis court but would like to achieve the balance be renovated in the future.

The club is always investigating ways improve its operation efficiencies and recently installed an automatic watering system. To further enhance its efficiencies, it is looking at installing permanent net post holes and would be most appreciative if any opportunities for funding were to become available.

With lights being promoted for the multipurpose courts it raises the question to invite interest to extend lighting to some area of the grass complex. This may allow tennis and croquet playing times to be extended during the summer months.

Because of logistical difficulties it may be acceptable to the Club to make the proposed netball/tennis courts netball only as difficulties arise with management of use etc. If that was the case it maybe an opportunity to argue more strongly in favour of the upgrading options discussed.

All Blacks Football Netball Club

The All Blacks Football Netball Club are a tenant of the United Friendlies Society Reserve and use the stadium occasionally, generally during pre-season and on wet nights.

They have identified the limited number of car parking spaces as a key issue, in particular when other activities such as bingo are being held.

They have also highlighted the need to ensure emergency vehicle access and delivery access is considered in any developments.

The Netball Club wants a second court and is open to moving to the lawn tennis area.

Bushrangers Cricket Club

The Bushrangers Cricket Club uses the Reserve as a secondary venue after the show grounds around 6-8 times each year.

They raised no concerns or issues and stated that they just need somewhere to get changed and a kiosk.

Benalla Squash and Racquetball Association

The Benalla Squash and Racquetball Association currently plays at a privately owned 2 court facility. Their primary concern is that they have no security relating to their future and that the facility could be sold at any time.

The age and condition of the facility is also a concern to the Association.

They currently play Monday nights, Wednesday mornings, Wednesday nights, Sunday morning inter-town, Sunday afternoon coaching and Sunday night social and casual court hire sporadically.

In their current location they have no school use with 2 courts as teachers cannot supervise or keep kids occupied.

The Association estimates that in peak times when all courts (including those that used to be at the caravan park) were operating they had around 100 members. They now have around 42 members.

The strategic vision of the Benalla Squash & Racquetball Association is to establish 6 multipurpose Squash and Racquetball Courts of a 'Regional' standard at the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre. They suggest that a regional facility should form the basis of any proposed re-development due to the significant economic benefit through hosting regional competitions and tournaments in Benalla. Such a facility would also significantly increase the capacity to accommodate the needs of larger casual groups such as schools. The Association strongly believes re-developed courts could fulfil the Council's wish to provide at least one more state or national facility and that they could be the first and only facility in regional Victoria to have 4 doubles courts due to moveable walls on 6 singles squash courts.

The building of such a facility would mean that a sport that now finds itself entrenched in the Commonwealth Games and is vying to be included in the Olympic Games could be expanded in Benalla. Participation numbers could be increased with the better facilities, plus on top of use the courts already enjoy, the new courts could provide for even more use in the future, thus expanding.

Examples:

- Use by all the schools in the area
- Scope to have squash and racquetball incorporated into schools' physical Education syllabus
- Running a Benalla open squash tournament
- Running a Benalla open racquetball tournament
- Inclusion into Professional Squash Association (PSA) tournament circuit, bringing international players to Benalla
- Inclusion into Squash & Racquetball Victoria Grand Prix tournament circuit
- Inclusion into Victorian Masters Squash Association (VMSA) tournament circuit
- A doubles squash tournament

- A doubles racquetball tournament
- Host the Victorian Open Squash Tournament
- Host the Individual Country Championships Squash Tournament
- Host the Squash & Racquetball North East Victoria (SARNEVA) Inter-town Squash Competition Finals

Benalla Gymnastics Club

The Benalla Gymnastics Club has 150 regular participants. The Club holds around 20 classes per week between Monday and Saturday as well as some additional programs with schools.

They have just commenced a new lease at the Drill Hall which meets their needs currently. The Club has flagged a desire for a larger facility with more floor space in the future.

They are open to relocating to a larger space and ideally would like about 25m x 40m based on advice from Gymnastics Victoria.

Due to the nature and size of their equipment they have also stated it is difficult for them to have shared or multi-use spaces.

EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

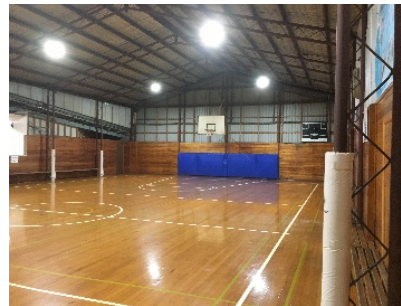
Meeting Room

The meeting room is located off the Ackerly Avenue car park with separate access to the main stadium. It can also be accessed from a hallway. The room is used generally through a booking system.



Court 1

The first court is located off the Ackerly Avenue car park and behind the meeting room. While the court is still suitable for use for a range of activities it is non-compliant for netball and basketball primarily due to limited run off space.



Foyer Area

Entering from the ramp off Ackerly Avenue the foyer area has a milling space along with a small administration area and kiosk. This area links Court 1 with Courts 2 and 3.



Toilets and Change Rooms

Male and female toilets and change facilities are located between Court 1 and Courts 2 and 3 behind the kiosk. These facilities house showers, toilets and small change areas.



Courts 2 and 3

Courts 2 and 3 are entered via the Ackerly Avenue entrance and through the foyer area. One of the courts has bleacher seating and currently acts as a show court.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Council Planning

Benalla Rural City – Community Plan 2016-2036

The Benalla Community Plan outlines how, over the next 20 years the community, the Council and other organisations and groups will work in partnership to achieve maximum health and wellbeing for the community. The Plan, developed in 2016 outlines broad objectives and strategic directions directions for strengthening liveability, sustainability, inclusivity and resilience under seven themes:

- Community wellbeing and sense of place
- A well-connected and accessible community
- A vibrant, thriving and progressive economy
- Planned population growth
- A sustainable environment
- Benalla Rural City, a destination of choice
- Leadership and community spirit.

The Plan states that the community value that sport and recreation have an established role in the Benalla Rural City and that sport and recreation facilities and clubs encourage physical activity and social interaction in many ways. All forms of physical activity, including organised and individual activity, are valued as a means to build personal and community wellbeing.

Some key strategic directions include that Benalla Rural City will:

- continue to offer a diverse range of sporting and recreational opportunities with leisure services, programs and events to encourage active lifestyle choices.
- Develop a proactive plan for population growth with a target of 1.5-2% annual increase, in line with regional Victoria projections.
- Identify opportunities to enhance assets within Benalla Rural City and develop at least one more asset of a state or national significance level.

Benalla Rural City - Council Plan 2017-2021

The Benalla Rural City Council Plan is the Council's key strategic document and incorporates the Municipal Public Health Plan with the Council's commitment to health and wellbeing reflected throughout the entire plan.

Opportunities and challenges identified for the Benalla community include those relating to:

- Increased costs and reduced funding
- Limited population growth
- Ageing population
- Population turnover
- Young People
- Vulnerable communities
- Global economy
- Climate Change

The Plan outlines broad objectives and strategic directions for strengthening liveability, sustainability, inclusivity and resilience under seven themes:

- Community wellbeing and sense of place
- A well-connected and accessible community
- A vibrant, thriving and progressive economy
- Planned population growth
- A sustainable environment
- Benalla Rural City, a destination of choice
- Leadership and community spirit.

An initiative of the Council Plan is to progress the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre projects.

Benalla Major Recreation Reserves Planning Study – Delatite Shire Council – 2002

The first piece of major strategic work undertaken that considered the future development of the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre.

This report stated that:

- The capacity of the Benalla community to support most sporting activities is unlikely to grow over the coming years as the total population of the town and its immediate hinterland are in decline. If some activities do grow, it will almost certainly be at the expense of others.
- The population of young people available to participate in sporting activities can be expected to decline as the overall population ages. Participation levels will thus decline unless participation rates can be increased.
- The capacity to attract sub-regional and regional events could decline as Wangaratta and Shepparton compete for events unless action to exploit Benalla's special strengths (such as the lake, equestrian activities and the Botanic Gardens) is taken.
- There will be a growing need for greater provision on non-competitive, indoor and outdoor social leisure opportunities.
- The level of leisure support needs can be expected to grow as the population ages and as the average household size declines.
- The capacity of the community to afford sport and recreation opportunities can be expected to decline, and
- The high levels of population mobility mean that significant numbers of residents will not be willing or able to make continued commitment to activities such as team sports and will opt instead, for more casual, irregular and non-sporting pursuits. Leadership will be needed if this trend is to be overcome.

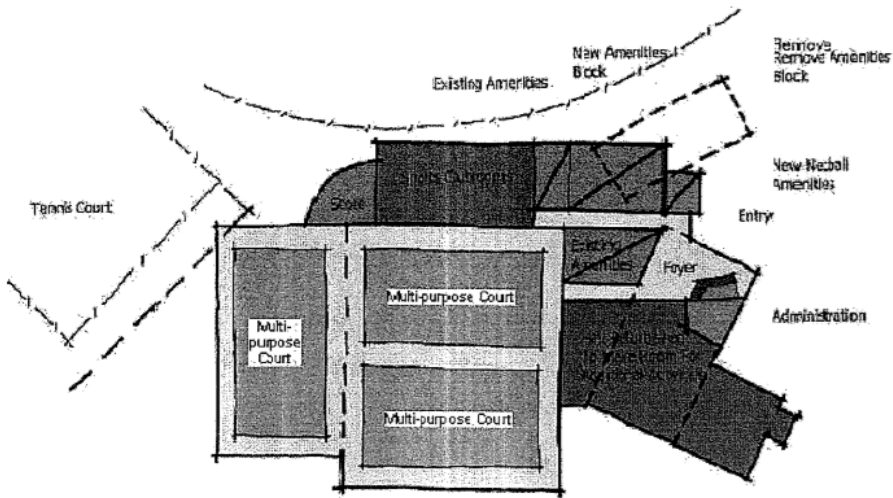
Specifically relating to the Indoor BIRC it states that the facility is well used, however, has inadequate facilities including toilets and change rooms and describes a number of issues with site access and parking. It describes the venue as being in poor condition with restricted access to amenities and no facilities for the disabled. The older single court is undersized for its use with limited run offs for the appropriate sports (p.31)

The report goes on to provide recommendations relating to roles of various recreation reserves and facilities and priority developments. For the United Friendlies Society Recreation Reserve (incorporating BIRC) these include:

- Sporting activities at local, district, regional and State level.
- Ecosystem protection and enhancement
- Indigenous and European heritage protection and enhancement
- Linear corridors for travel, recreation and habitat purposes, and
- Water management, flood mitigation and related riverine management needs.

The report provides a Master Plan for the United Friendlies Society Reserve which recommends:

- Redevelop new entry and foyer within single court stadium to provide an entry to the east directly from the existing car park.
- Form new administration offices and control
- Redevelop existing toilet/change facilities with access for all.
- Develop balance of single court stadium, existing foyer and meeting room into multi-purpose facilities.
- Provide sufficient storage within the new multi-purpose facility for all user groups.
- Provide separate circulation from new foyer to football social rooms.
- Develop new toilet/change facilities for sports ground and football/netball facilities integrated with new building
- Provide a new multi-sport stadium to the east of the existing two court stadium (this position will not be detrimental to the outdoor tennis courts)
- Further develop the existing football social rooms, and
- Building to be totally accessible for all people.



Proposed Master Plan
Shire of Delatite - Benalla Sports Complex



Project:
 Shire of Delatite
 Benalla Sports
 Complex
 Master Plan
 2014-2016
 Prepared by:
 Prior Cheney
 www.priorcheney.com.au



Shire of Delatite
Benalla Sporting Complex Masterplan (Draft)

2014
 2014-2016
 2016
 2016
 2016



Project:
 Shire of Delatite
 Benalla Sports
 Complex
 Master Plan
 2014-2016
 Prepared by:
 Prior Cheney
 www.priorcheney.com.au



Benalla Recreation Reserves Masterplans Review 2007

Following the creation of the Rural City of Benalla in 2003, a number of the new Council's needs and priorities changed as well as its financial position. A review of the 2002 Major Recreation Reserves Planning Study was undertaken aiming to identify those initiatives for which there was a good expectation of achieving over the next 5 years.

The report provides reviewed recommendations including the following:

- The most significant new recommendation is the proposal to provide 4-6 new synthetic multiuse courts on the eastern courts of the Lawn Tennis Club, to link these courts with the indoor leisure centre to allow joint use and to remove the old asphalt courts at the front of the Lawn Tennis Club on Ackerly Avenue. The new courts will be jointly used by the Tennis Club, the stadium and the football club netball teams. This will significantly strengthen the value of the Lawn Tennis Club assets, diversify the opportunities offered by the stadium and allow the restructuring of the area presently occupied by the netball courts. In the longer term it will also facilitate the recommended amalgamation of the Benalla Gardens Tennis Club and the Benalla Lawn Tennis Club.
- Adopt the 2002 concept design of the Indoor Recreation Centre as the basis for its upgrading and expansion to create a multi-purpose and multi-user venue and initiate the following urgent works within the design framework provided by the 2002 concept plan:
 - i. Redevelopment of existing toilet and change facilities to provide fully accessible facilities
 - ii. Provision of ramp access into the Centre
 - iii. Replacement of kitchen with a larger modern, safe facility which complies with all relevant regulations
 - iv. Development of a new Centre entry, foyer and paved entry forecourt facing Maginnes Street
 - v. Install tanks to collect roof water runoff for use for non-drinking purposes
- Commission the further major redevelopment of the Indoor Recreation Centre with the following works being undertaken:
 - i. A new multi-sport show court stadium (of international standard for netball, basketball and badminton, with tiered seating) to the east of the existing two court stadium and link this to the outdoor synthetic courts recommended for provision in association with the redevelopment of the Lawn Tennis Club
 - ii. New administration offices and control
 - iii. Redevelop the balance of the existing single court stadium (court 3), foyer and meeting room into multi-purpose facilities
 - iv. Storage for all user groups
 - v. Separate circulation from new foyer to football social rooms
 - vi. Further development of the existing football social rooms
 - vii. Two squash courts with space reserved to add 2-4 more courts (if space permits).

Benalla Recreation Strategic Plan – 2015

The Benalla Recreation Strategic Plan was undertaken to:

- Identify the gaps in the current service provision of sporting and recreation
- Identify community needs, demands and priorities for sporting facilities and services within the municipality
- Increase access to and sharing of facilities and resources, and the opportunity to consider co-location and multi-use of facilities
- Develop a plan which targets the identified gaps and improves the level and standard of sports provision within the municipality
- Propose a framework for the effective and efficient development, maintenance and management of sports facilities and services within the municipality.
- Give a clear and accurate understanding and assessment of recreational facilities across the municipality
- Establish an equitable process for prioritising requests for funding and support to infrastructure and recreational facilities and precincts based on identified needs
- Provide the Council with an opportunity to align recreational planning with other planning strategies and processes.

The key findings for the BIRC were:

- The most common use of the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre as indicated by the resident survey was to watch competitive sports (32.7%) compared to playing (22.4%)
- The resident survey indicated that the addition of new squash and racquetball courts (24.5%), better spectator facilities (19.4%) and the addition of more courts (17.4%) are likely to increase the number of the community that use the Centre
- Court 3 is undersized and the runoffs are not safe
- The Committee of Management are united on the following three projects:
 - i. Need for a third basketball/netball court
 - ii. Squash and racquetball need a home
 - iii. Need for a larger car park and treatment to the entry to enhance safety issues
- A new agreement with the Council is required outlining responsibilities for all parties
- Badminton are looking to increase their junior participation numbers
- Basketball registrations have risen by 25%
- Netball is unable to meet demand due to lack of space and believe they could double their participation if they had more space. The courts do not meet the specifications for run offs but do when the court is realigned to run across the 2 indoor basketball courts
- Squash/Racquetball - Looking at options be included in any redevelopment that occurs at the indoor centre. Want to have moveable walls for doubles courts so they can be used as flexible multi-use spaces. Prefer 4-6 courts squash courts
- There are two full size basketball courts at the Benalla Secondary College that are available for community use which could meet some of the current need pending a feasibility study being undertaken.

Summary and Recommendations:

- The facility is very well used, however, it requires redevelopment to meet current facility standards.
- The key action required for the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre is to undertake a feasibility study to verify the demand for a third court as well as consider the needs of squash and racquetball. The gymnastics club currently based at the Show Grounds Recreation Reserve also require new facilities and this need should be considered within the Indoor Recreation Centre Feasibility Study.
- Review the car parking and access arrangements to service the indoor stadium and improve safety.

Other Sports

Benalla Squash and Racquetball Association Business Plan

The primary issue being addressed in the Business Plan is that Association suggest that the current facilities for playing squash and racquetball in Benalla are inadequate to service the needs of existing players and clubs, and do not accommodate future growth of the sports in Benalla and surrounding areas.

This Business Plan outlines the background and progress of the Benalla Squash and Racquetball Association and the plans for future growth of squash and racquetball in the Benalla Rural City.

The Plan confirms the preferred location of new courts at the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre.

Squash and Racquetball Victoria – Regional Facility Strategy 2014

The Regional Facility Strategy was developed to provide a framework for the provision and development of squash and racquetball infrastructure and for stakeholders and partner participation in the planning and development of squash/racquetball facilities for the next 10 years.

The report states that the sports have lost more than 70% of its facilities since the 1960's, 70's and 80's due primarily to increasing land values and changing community lifestyles, although this loss is not as pronounced in regional areas as metropolitan ones.

Key participation findings and considerations impacting future squash/racquetball facility developments include:

- Steady decline in squash/racquetball participation throughout the majority of Regional Victoria over the past 10 years indicates the development of additional squash/racquetball facilities in the short term is unjustified. Future investment and resources should be directed towards improving existing facility condition and accessibility and the programs/services being offered as opposed to the development of new (high growth areas excluded).
- The current volume and distribution of squash/racquetball facilities throughout the majority of Regional Victoria is deemed adequate with very few facilities operating at capacity.
- While current demand for additional squash/racquetball facilities in Regional Victoria is low, improved facility condition and accessibility, greater sport promotion, targeted programming, more innovative facility management, coupled with forecasted population growth and existing 'pro squash' communities suggests future consideration should be given

to the investigation of additional squash facility development in the Local Government areas of Geelong, Bendigo, Shepparton, Mildura, Ballarat and Wodonga.

- From a squash/racquetball competition and player pathway/development perspective, consideration should be given to the provision of a 'Regional' level squash/ racquetball facility within (or close to the border of) the Regional Planning areas of the Great South Coast, Loddon Mallee North and Wimmera Southern Mallee who currently have no 'Regional' level facility within their catchment areas.
- Whilst the internal club competition structure and culture in Regional Victoria may be more apparent than in Metropolitan Melbourne, consideration should be given to the consolidation of existing facilities in areas of high provision to enable more targeted funding, resource allocation and optimise facility usage.

From a facility planning and provision perspective the report goes on to state:

- Standalone squash/racquetball facilities used purely for squash/racquetball related facilities during squash 'peak usage' times (weeknights and weekends) are fast becoming financially unviable. Future squash/racquetball facility improvements or new developments must be focussed on providing opportunity for alternate facility usage (e.g. dance/karate classes) to increase revenue and attract external funding.
- When developing existing facilities or planning for additional facilities, ensure facilities are equipped with moveable walls to enable the court/s to be opened up into a larger programmable floor space, hence increasing the appeal for alternate uses and revenue through hire fees.

The report also provides for a hierarchy of courts including preferred facility standards in planning and for regional access. These include:

Club level	Local level	Regional level
Minimum of 2 squash/racquetball court (moveable walls desirable)	Minimum of 4 squash/racquetball court (moveable walls desirable)	6-8 squash/racquetball court (moveable walls desirable)
Unsealed court floors	Unsealed court floors	Minimum 4 doubles courts (moveable walls required)
Glass back walls	Glass back walls	Unsealed court floors
Court wall, surface, clean and moderately marked	Court wall, surface, clean and moderately marked	Glass back walls
Artificial light 500 lux (minimum 300 lux)	Artificial light 500 lux (minimum 300 lux)	Court wall, surface, clean and moderately marked
Male change facilities (2 showers, 2 toilets, 1 urinal)	Male change facilities (2 showers, 2 toilets, 1 urinal)	Artificial light 500 lux (minimum 300 lux)
Female change facilities (2 showers, 2 toilets)	Female change facilities (2 showers, 2 toilets)	Male change facilities (2 showers, 2 toilets, 1 urinal)
Heating/ventilation	Heating/ventilation	Female change facilities (4 showers, 4 toilets)
Office facilities	Office facilities	Heating/ventilation
Club room area	Club room area	Office facilities
	Minimum 50 spectator viewing space (main court)	Club room area
	Pro Shop	Minimum 100 spectator viewing space (main court)
		Pro Shop

The Plan seeks to have a minimum of one ‘Regional’ level facility in each planning zone. Benalla is located in the Hume planning zone which currently homes the Wangaratta and Wodonga facilities which have been defined in the report as Regional.

The Plan also sets a strategic objective to explore opportunities for squash/racquetball court facility development in regional TAFE/University country campus precincts.

Squash and Racquetball Victoria – Update on Facilities and Participation

The following update has been provided by Kevin Quick, a Director with Squash and Racquetball Victoria.

The Regional Facility Strategy 2014-2024 was based on investigations and statistics gained in the period 2012-2013. This period was marked by a decline in participation numbers. It also coincided with a period (2008-2012) of focus by Squash & Racquetball Victoria (S&RV) on governance and administration, with a simultaneous reduction in promotional efforts. However, following that time, a number of initiatives across the State have seen growth in playing figures.

In relation to centre closures in Victoria, the closures predominantly occurred in the 1990s. The actual figure is 61.3% of centres have ceased operating, primarily due to rising real estate values. However, the vast majority of the closures happened in Melbourne Metro area. The percent of country centres that have closed is closer to 15%-20%. The net result of this disparity in the rate of closures is that there are now significantly more facilities in country Victoria than Melbourne Metro – 83 versus 52.

VICTORIAN SQUASH CENTRE CLOSURES		
PERIOD	CENTRE CLOSURES	%
Pre 1990	74	21.2
1990-99	108	30.9
2000-2018	32	9.2
Remaining	135	38.7
TOTAL	349	100.0

The rate of closures has slowed drastically. To put these numbers in perspective, squash still boasts more than double the number of facilities that Badminton and Table Tennis have.

It is true that losing a centre will result in reduced playing numbers, simply based on capacity (Benalla being a perfect example – 100 players reducing to 30 odd), but the impact has been much higher in Metro than country Victoria.

Globally, squash has been booming, now being played in some 120 countries by over 22 million people. All continents are represented – Europe, North America, South America, Africa, Asia, Oceania. The Professional Squash Tour has just staged its first \$1Million event in Chicago.

In Australia, the participation statistics show that numbers are increasing. In Victoria, we have witnessed a number of successful growth centres – Bendigo, Wodonga, Warrnambool and Ballarat. These successes demonstrate that the sport has not lost its intrinsic attraction – all body, high intensity workout that can be played 24/7/365 in any weather, day and night. All that is required is some promotion by motivated individuals.

The Australian participation statistics (below) confirm the growth of the sports at the national level. The increase in participation between 2013-14 and 2017-18 is significant – 73.8%. Even allowing for some question about the 2013-14 figures (see NOTE below), the trend from 2015-16 to 2017-18 is strong – 18.6%.

SQUASH AND RACQUETBALL PARTICIPATION STATISTICS					
PERIOD	GROUP	TOTAL (000s)	MALE	FEMALE	%
2005-06	15+	182.3	132.5	49.8	1.1
2009-10	15+	171.8	118.7	53.1	1
2011-2012	15+	164.2	123.1	41.1	0.9
2013-2014 *	15+	104.5	83.8	20.7	0.6
2015-2016 (Oct-Sep)	15+	153.1	119.8	33.3	0.8
2016-2017 (July-June)	15+	158.8	122.3	36.5	0.8
2017 (Jan - Dec)	15+	175.3	134.6	40.7	0.9
2017-2018 (July-June)	15+	181.6	137.6	44	0.9

Table 1 – Participation numbers for Squash and Racquetball in Australia 2014-2018. (Sources: ABS and Ausplay bi-annual surveys of Australian Sport participation.)

*NOTE: The 2013-14 statistics for most sports showed steep declines compared with 2011-12 (e.g. Table Tennis dropped 33%, Tennis 25% Volleyball 8% Squash 36%). There is a natural suspicion that, for some reason, the 2013-14 figures were understated. However, the growth exhibited to 2015-16 is sustained through 2017 and into 2018.

In 2017 a Regional Association was established for North East Victoria (SARNEVA Inc.) The primary purpose of this entity is to assist clubs in their promotion of the sports, running their clubs and generally raising the profile of the sports.

To this end, an inflatable squash court is available for all regional clubs. Benalla has just utilised that resource at a Sports Open Day organised by Valley Sport and Tomorrow Today Foundation. School initiatives have been established at Wodonga and Albury and assisted in reviving the club at Tallangatta. Plans are in place to assist Milawa Squash Club to offer a program for their local primary school.

Experience has shown that, to adequately service school groups, the average class size of approximately 20 requires four courts.

The biggest boost to the public profile of the sport has resulted from the launch in 2018 of the largest Inter Town Squash competition in Australia, spanning two States (NSW and Victoria) and involving some 23 towns and almost 400 players. Benalla is an active participant in that competition.

Squash and Racquetball Victoria is responsible for the promotion of the sports across the State. The organisation has undergone a significant refresh over the past 8 months, culminating in a new Board being elected in March. A new General Manager has just been appointed (a successful manager from one of the larger country clubs).

With the majority of centres being located in the country, a new general manager from the country and board directors from the country, it is a given that there will be more emphasis on developing country squash and racquetball in 2019 and beyond.

In addition, the resources available to Squash and Racquetball Victoria are higher than previous years, there are now three staff versus two and a willing group of 21 volunteers committed to various areas of action, such as marketing, fund raising, talent development etc.

Basketball Victoria – Facilities Master Plan 2017

The purpose of the Basketball Victoria Facilities Master Plan report is to identify priority locations throughout Victoria for basketball facilities and to provide information that can assist organisations to develop a business case for the build and operations of basketball facilities.

The report suggests that based on previous research a single court can cater for 300-500 participants per year.

On this basis 3 courts at the BIRC should have capacity to cater for up to 1,500 participants. With around 360 current players, based on the Basketball Victoria data, the provision of 3 courts should allow for basketball participation to grow by up to an additional 1,100 players.

The report identifies future development and need by each local government area.

For Benalla the report states that the Council has advised that it has identified the need to develop an additional 2 courts at the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre, currently proposed for development in 2020/21 at a cost of \$2.5m (well below likely build cost) with no funding allocation at this stage. If the project proceeds it would bring the facility up to sub-regional standard.

Gymnastics Victoria – Facility Guide and Strategy Plan 2015

The purpose of this report is to identify priority locations throughout Victoria for Gymnastics facilities and to provide information that can assist organisations develop a business case for the build and operations of Gymnastics facilities.

Gymnastics Australia and Gymnastics Victoria are both undertaking projects aimed at ensuring existing and planned facilities are utilised to maximum efficiency. Based on analysis to date most clubs that operate as successful businesses have 500 plus members. When clubs get to 500 gymnasts, they are ready to employ at least one full time staff member. When clubs get to this level, they reach a new level of professionalism in the running of the club and club numbers grow significantly.

The Report states that after factoring in the average number of participation hours and weeks attended per year it is estimated that on average 1,000m² of program space could cater for approximately 520 gymnasts per year or approximately 1500 visits per week.

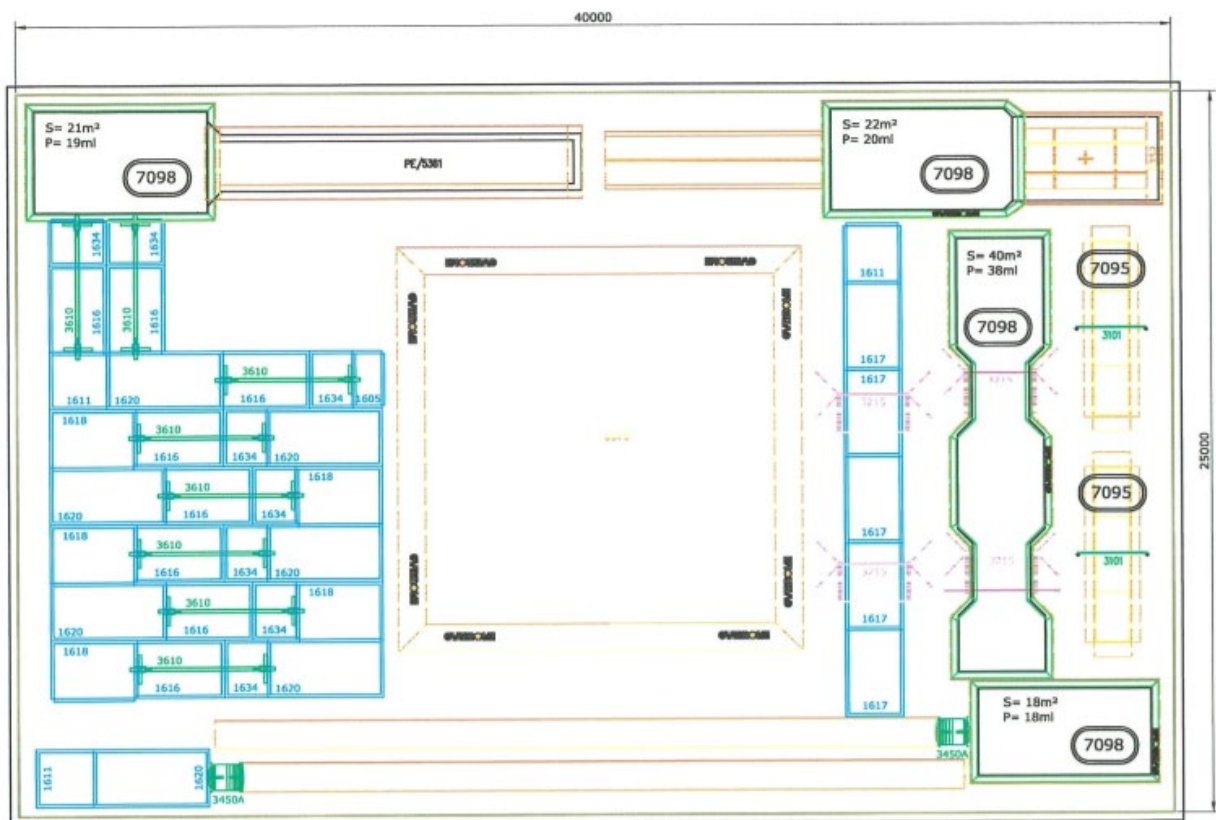
The report also provides for a hierarchy of facilities and describes the key requirements of each. For a Local Club Facility these include:

- Minimum size of venue for training and basic competitions is a program space of 700m² configured approximately as 35m x 19m for WAG and GG only, with limited capacity for Trampolining. The floor area can be adapted for use of cheer-leading, basic RG and Sport Aerobics
- Minimum size of venue for Acrobatics and Tumbling training and basic competitions is a program space of 320m² configured approximately as 20m x 16m
- Approximately 50m² of amenity space is required for training and programs. Key amenity spaces are:
 - change rooms with showers

- storage areas
- toilets (unisex)
- spectator viewing areas
- reception area and circulation space
- kitchen and canteen
- multi-function spaces for first-aid, meetings, coaches and other personnel, social and event administration, officials and control room.

Access to additional amenity space of 50m², excluding spectator seating, is required for the conduct of basic level competitions and events. There should be space externally to locate temporary marquees and parking/circulation space for at least 70 cars. During events if spectator space is in the same area as the program space, spectator circulation areas should be well clear of gymnasts and officials. Configuration of space should enable gymnasts to move from change/ marshalling areas to competition assembly space without circulating with spectators.

The plan below developed by Gymnastics Victoria provides an indicative floor plan for a 40m x 25m gymnastics area and highlights the difficulty in providing for multi-purpose use of such an area.



DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2016 census states that the Benalla township has a population of around 10,330 people. Of these 47% are male and 53% female. The median age is 49.

There are 2,699 families with an average of 1.8 children per family.

The tables below provide some further breakdown by age as well as projected population growth.

People aged 24 years and under

Age Range	Number
0-4	500
5-9	536
10-14	557
15-19	582
20-24	524

Based on this data it can reasonably be expected that age-based participation will remain relatively stable, especially for junior sports where age number are sitting between 500 and 600 across all sub-groups between 0 and 24.

Benalla LGA Estimated and projected population, 2011 to 2031

Estimated Resident Population				
2011	2016	2021	2026	2031
14,318	14,820	15,251	15,663	16,018

Source: (former) Dept Planning and Community Development Victoria in the Future 2012

The Council Plan states the current population is 13,597 and projects it will be around 14,834 by 2031.

The Benalla Rural City – Community Plan 2016-2036 sets a target of between 1.5 and 2% growth per annum to 2036. Should this target be sustained it would suggest a population of around 19,950 by 2031.

CONSULTATION

Between July and November 2018 key user groups and stakeholders participated in an online survey as well as stakeholder representative interviews.

Interviews were held with the:

- Committee of management
- Benalla Basketball Association
- Badminton Club
- Table Tennis Club
- Benalla Netball Association
- Lawn Tennis Association
- All Blacks Football Netball Club
- Bushrangers Cricket Club
- YMCA
- Gymnastics Club
- Benalla Squash and Racquetball Association.
- Squash and Racquetball Victoria

Further to this a number of discussions were held with Council staff and briefings with Councillors.

As highlighted in the key user section, each organisation has their own perspectives and interests however in general terms users are happy with the current facilities, pricing and management of the BIRC. Across the board car parking , access and storage are the main issues.

BENCHMARKING

Operating Costs

The Basketball Victoria Facilities Master Plan 2017 includes the following table providing some benchmarking data for the ongoing operation of indoor sports facilities.

Operational Performance	CERM Survey 39 Centres <2000m ² ; avg 1320m ²	CERM Survey 42 Centres >3000m ² ; avg 3845m ²	SGL Indoor Sports Centres 2012/13 28 Centres
Annual surplus	N/A	N/A	2%
Annual visits/m2 program space	49	44	55
Annual revenue/m2	\$493	\$189	\$424
Annual expenditure/m2	\$536	\$236	\$409
Receipts per visit (includes secondary spend)	\$7.49	\$5.23	\$6.74
Cost recovery	79%	92%	98%
Average participant hrs/week	N/A	N/A	2.2
Annual subsidy/visit	\$1.67	\$0.37	\$0.05

The BIRC is estimated to be a bit over around 2,000m², around 2,030m² for the exercise of comparison for benchmarking. The comparison between the CERM and the SGL figures show the complexities of benchmarking facilities. Based on the CERM figures a facility like the BIRC could well expect to have an annual operating cost of up to \$87,290 per annum. However, applying the SGL data, it could well expect to generate a \$30,450 surplus.

This information highlights critical factors such as the catchment population, quality of management and suitability of facilities.

Worth noting however is that based on both the CERM and the SGL benchmarks a 2,000m² facility could be expected to generate up to \$1m per annum in revenue.

Case Studies – Capital Cost of Facilities

The Basketball Victoria Facilities Master Plan 2017 stated that Benalla anticipated adding two additional courts for \$2.5m and commented that this was likely ‘well below the likely build cost’.

For an indication of some recently promoted projects:

- A new 3 court facility to be built on to an existing single court facility in Torquay on Victoria’s Surf Coast has a cost estimate of \$13.5m.
- A new 3 court facility in Port Macquarie NSW incorporating partial demolition of an existing facility, 3 new courts, multi-purpose activity rooms, change-rooms, kiosk, conference room, offices and car park upgrades was opened in February 2017 at a cost of \$7m.
- A 2-court facility with retractable seating for 1,500 and support infrastructure in the Macedon Ranges has a cost estimate of \$10m.
- The Myrtleford Indoor Sports Stadium is under construction. It is estimated it will cost \$2.6m and will include a multi-sports timber sprung floor, accessible change-room, a new meeting room and entry foyer attaching the new stadium to existing adjoining indoor stadium.
- An initial cost estimate for the Shepparton Sports Stadium suggested the addition of two courts, including a show court, fixed seating for 500 spectators and re-furbished spectator amenities would cost \$5.9m while the addition of 6 squash courts would cost \$1.4m

The Benalla Squash and Racquetball Association also provided a number of case studies that they wished to highlight including:

- Bairnsdale facility built in 2009, 6 courts and table tennis at a total project cost of \$1.3m. This project was funded with contributions by the state (\$400,000), federally (\$750,000), locally (\$150,000) and squash themselves (\$750,000).
- The Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre, constructed in 1997 at a cost of \$65m and includes 6 courts with moveable walls allowing for 4 doubles courts. The project was funded by the City of Port Phillip and the Victorian State Government.
- The Carrara facility was constructed with funding from the Gold Coast Council and Queensland State Government.
- A Darwin facility constructed in 2012 includes 12 courts, 6 of which have moveable walls that can be converted to 4 doubles courts. This project was funded by the Northern Territory State Government.
- The Shepparton and Horsham facility proposals will be asking for State Government funding.

KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Current provision and suitability of indoor sports courts

Based on the current use, projected population and capacity recommendations of key sports such as Basketball Victoria it appears that the current number of courts at the BIRC meets current and projected requirements for now and beyond the next 10 years. Should access to other facilities such as the courts at the Benalla Secondary College be available, then it would appear there will be enough indoor courts to service the community of Benalla for the longer term.

The existing facility is ageing and the single court in particular, while suitable for some activity is no longer fit for purpose for key user's such as basketball and netball. Upgrading this area provides a number of benefits, including providing more suitable playing spaces for the medium to long term, the opportunity to provide a new show court with seating that will make larger events more attractive and the seating can be used to provide space for additional change facilities and storage, which has been identified as a key issue by many user groups.

The provision of two additional courts is expected to meet the demand for basketball for the medium to long term.

Management and operation of the venue

While there is scope to conduct further review of the operational management of the venue, based on benchmarking the BIRC currently appears to be presenting good value to both the Council and the users of the facility.

Site planning restrictions

The Urban Flood Zone (UFZ) area to the west of the current building may present some challenges to any developments in those areas. By concentrating any new construction to the existing footprint, or to the areas outside the UFZ, issues relating to this may be avoided. This in part may be facilitated by relocating some of the activities that are more likely able to be placed in the UFZ, such as outdoor courts into this area and freeing up space in those places for further future developments.

Traffic and car parking

Car parking has been identified as a key issue by many of the stakeholders, in particular at times when multiple activities are occurring at the same time. The football netball club also raised concerns around any new works impacting on both emergency access to the site and deliveries.

By re-locating the existing netball courts to the west of the existing stadium, this could provide for two new hard surface courts marked for multi-use (tennis and netball) to be developed over the eastern most lawn courts and provide additional parking spaces as well as some room for stadium expansion to the east.

In addition to this, there is also potential to widen and seal the fire brigade training area to provide additional hard surface car parking as well as possibly provide additional bitumen based netball courts that could be used for events or should the netball association consider a move to the United Friendlies Recreation Reserve.

Storage

Key stakeholders all identified storage as an issue at the BIRC and any redevelopments should ensure this is a consideration.

Squash and Racquetball

Being that they are located in a privately-owned building that can be sold or closed at any time, indoor racquet sports such as squash and racquetball are at high risk in their current location in Benalla.

Squash and Racquetball Victoria have suggested that the sport is enjoying a period of growth with international, national and regional numbers on the increase and a current focus on growing participation supported by strategic and structural changes in the organisation.

They have also suggested it is feasible and safest to have no more than four students on a court at a time, and therefore a minimum of 5 courts would be required to facilitate a class of 20, six courts if the class size was larger.

The Benalla Squash and Racquetball Association is a progressive and aspirational club and is confident, based on its historical participation levels when it had access to more courts that it has capacity to grow and fully utilise a regional 6 court facility.

Based on the current and projected participation (including noting Benalla's projected population changes) in these sports it is reasonable to conclude that Club or Local type facilities as defined in the Squash and Racquetball Victoria Regional Facility Strategy would meet the base need for participation in these sports in the short to medium and possibly even long-term.

Ensuring that they are constructed in a way that allows for the clubs to continue to access them in a manner and at a similar cost to what they currently pay is important for the ongoing viability of the sport and the financial operation of the BIRC.

Multi-use spaces will provide some additional flexibility in programming for the BIRC.

The Squash and Racquetball Association strongly believe re-developed courts could fulfil Council's wish to provide at least one more state or national facility and that they could be the first and only facility in Victoria to have 4 doubles courts due to moveable walls on 6 singles squash courts.

Gymnastics

While the idea to relocate to the BIRC is attractive to the gymnastics club, it is not a priority for them at this stage.

Due to the nature of the activities and the equipment, fixtures and fittings it is unlikely the space could be used for anything other than gymnastics.

With the space required and constraints potentially linked to growth and expansion of the BIRC due to the UFZ, it would be preferred that should there be scope for additional indoor space to the west of courts 2 and 3 that this should be saved for long-term creation of additional multi-purpose courts in order to keep all similar activity at this site.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The following development plan is based on the current and projected use, operational sustainability, condition of assets, industry trends and directions and consultation with stakeholders, including facility users, Council staff and elected officials.

BIRC developments

1. New stadium (similar size to existing) to be constructed on the footprint of existing court 3. The stadium will incorporate two east/west facing courts with a 'show court' line marked north south across both courts. Construction to include amenities change rooms, reception area and 6 x squash courts to the east.

The seating and amenities to the west of 'show court' and upper tier of squash courts which will also facilitate the 'show court' may be done at a later stage.

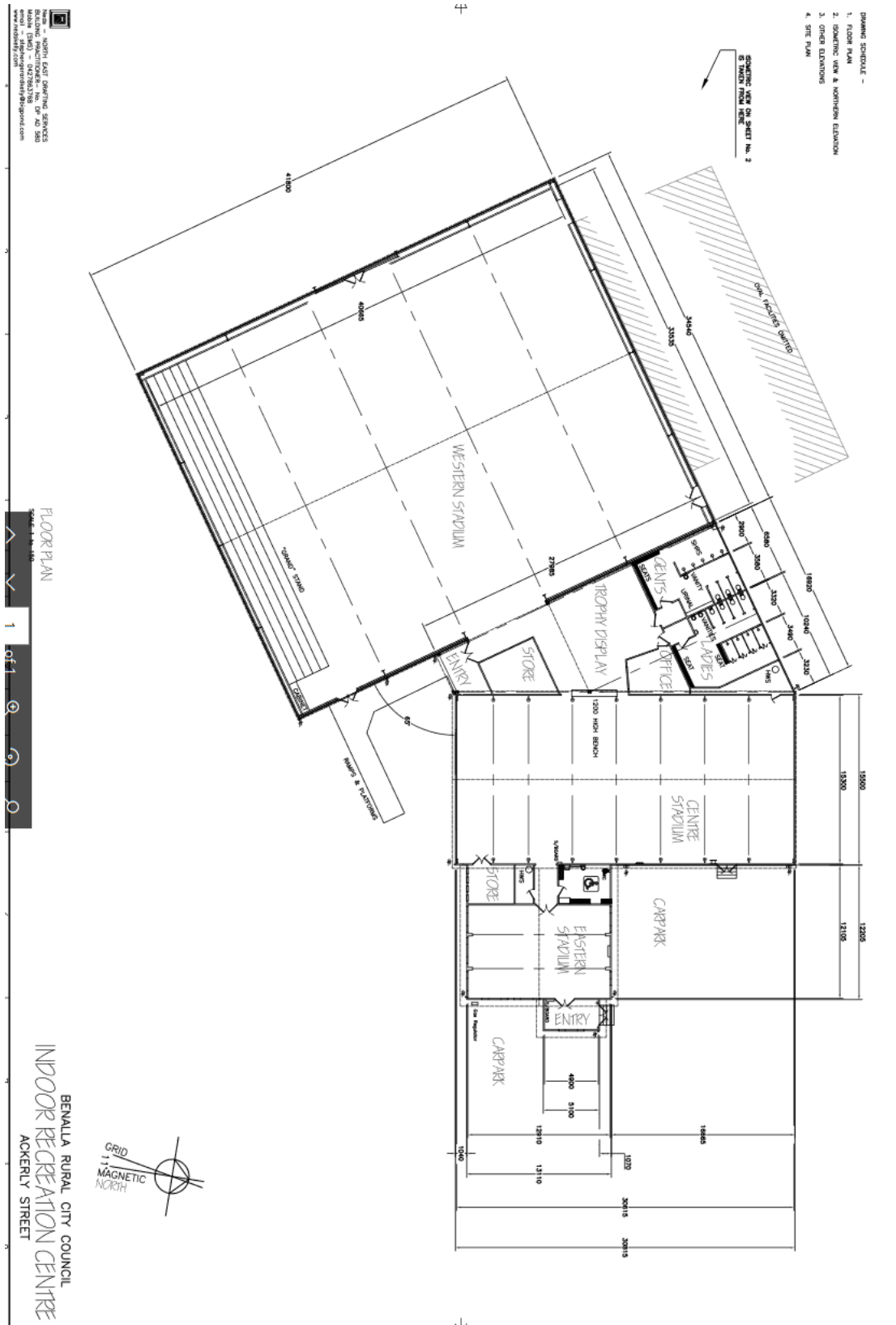
2. New tiered seating for 'show court' with amenities and change rooms facilitate existing court 1 and 2
3. Entrance to be established at the northeast side of the proposed building (as recommended in the 2002 report) enabling easy passage to the new courts and squash precinct.
4. Bus stop to be established along southern side of proposed building Ackerly Avenue.

Broader recreation reserve opportunities

5. All Blacks to commission 2 x multi-use netball courts to the eastern end of the existing lawn tennis club courts with lighting.
6. All Blacks to commission female friendly change rooms to the west end of the existing club room building.
7. New stadium (similar size to existing) to be constructed on the footprint of existing court 3, construction to include amenities change rooms, reception area and 6 x squash courts to the east.
8. Carpark to be upgraded to facilitate increased capacity due to increase in size of facilities and to accommodate entrance from the main entrance to the UFS reserve.
9. Existing fire brigade running track to be upgraded and widened to accommodate a multi-use sealed area for increased car parking (for large events) competitive fire brigade running and asphalt netball courts. This would enable the rationalization of netball in the township to the UFS reserve and create greater opportunity to facilitate larger competitions.

CONCEPT PLANS

BIRC Existing Floor Plan

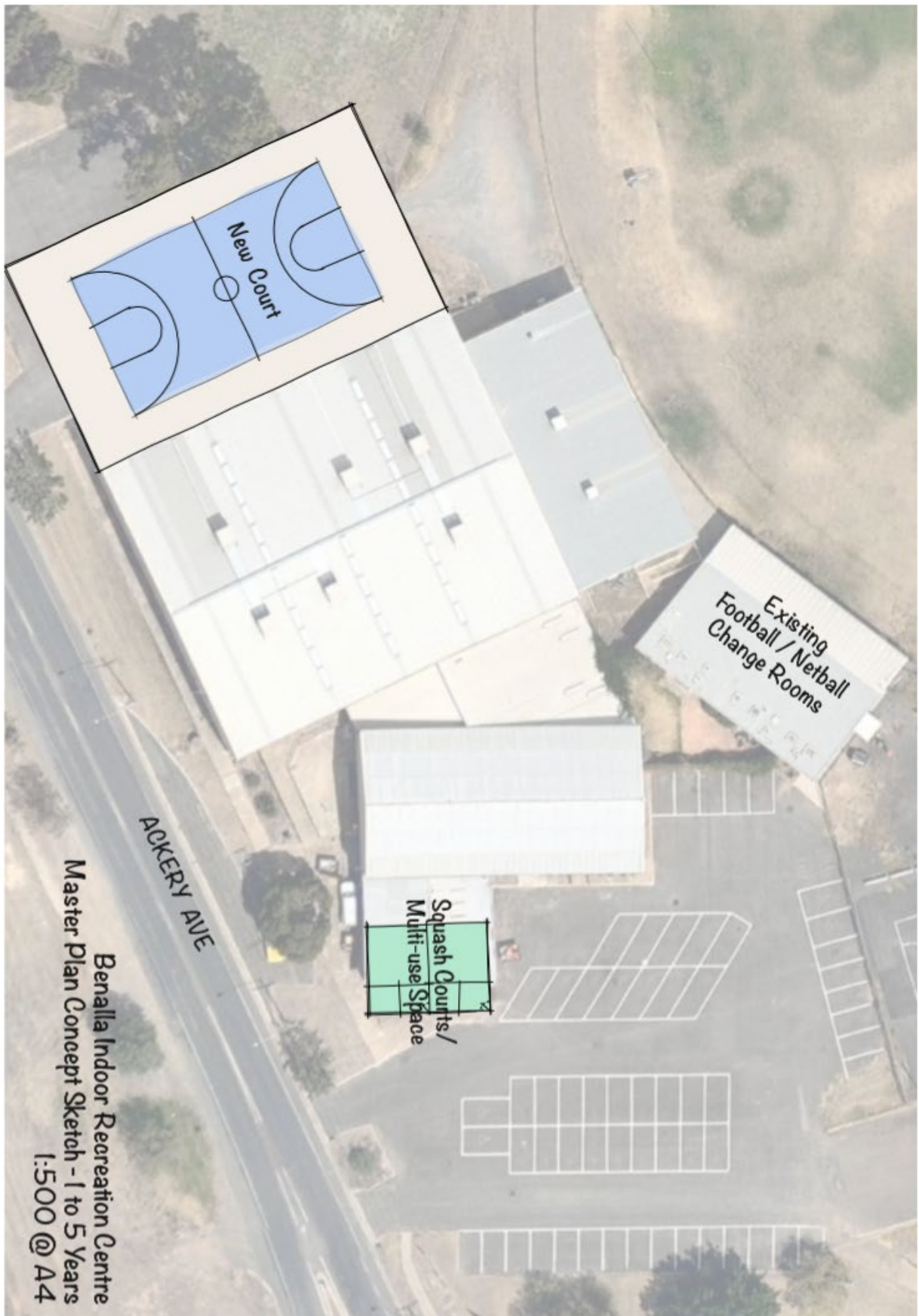


BIRC Existing Building



Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre
Existing Building
1:500 @ A4

BIRC Concept Floor Plans - 1 to 5 years

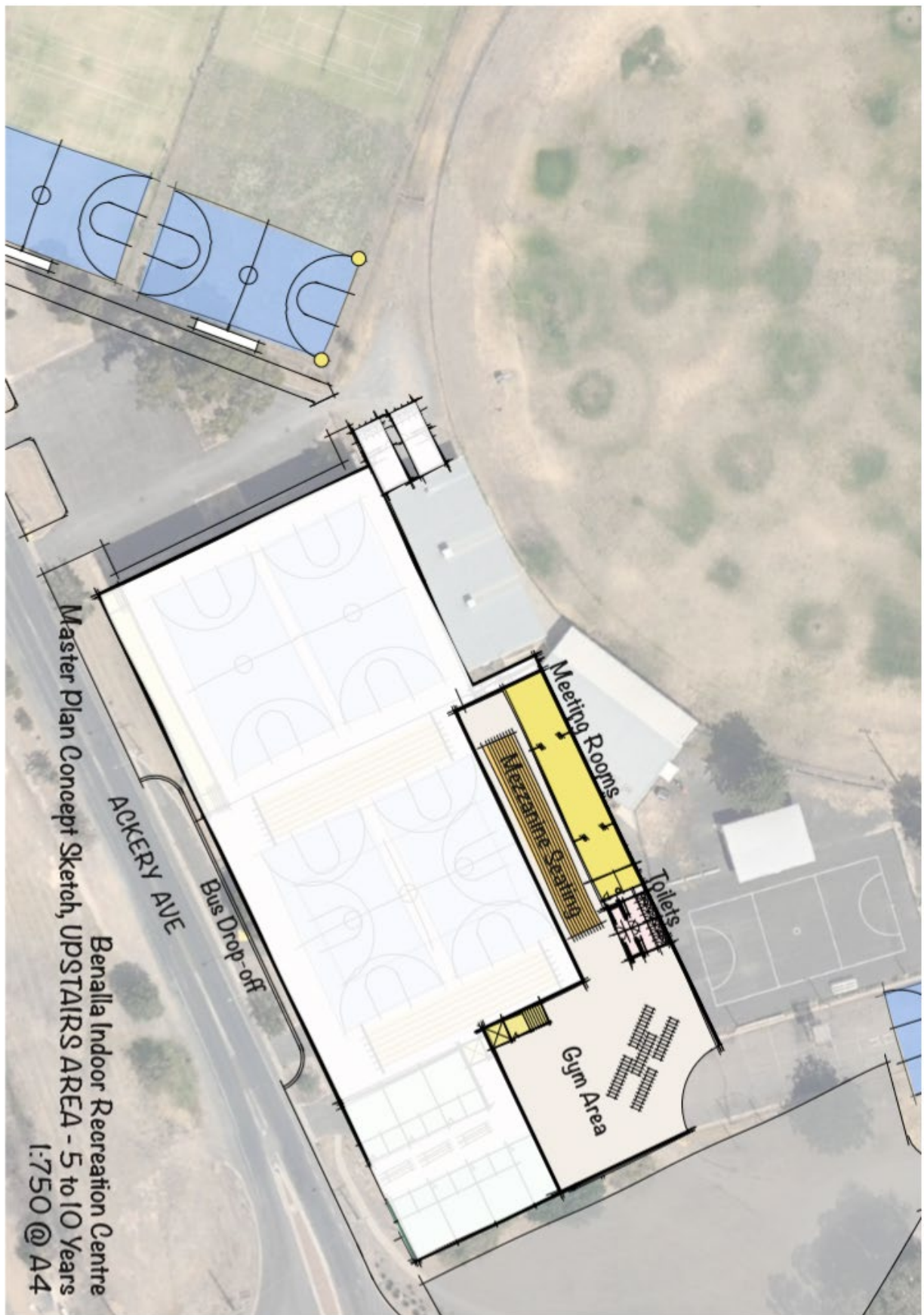


Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre
Master Plan Concept Sketch - 1 to 5 Years
1:500 @ A4

BIRC Concept Floor Plans – 5 to 10 years

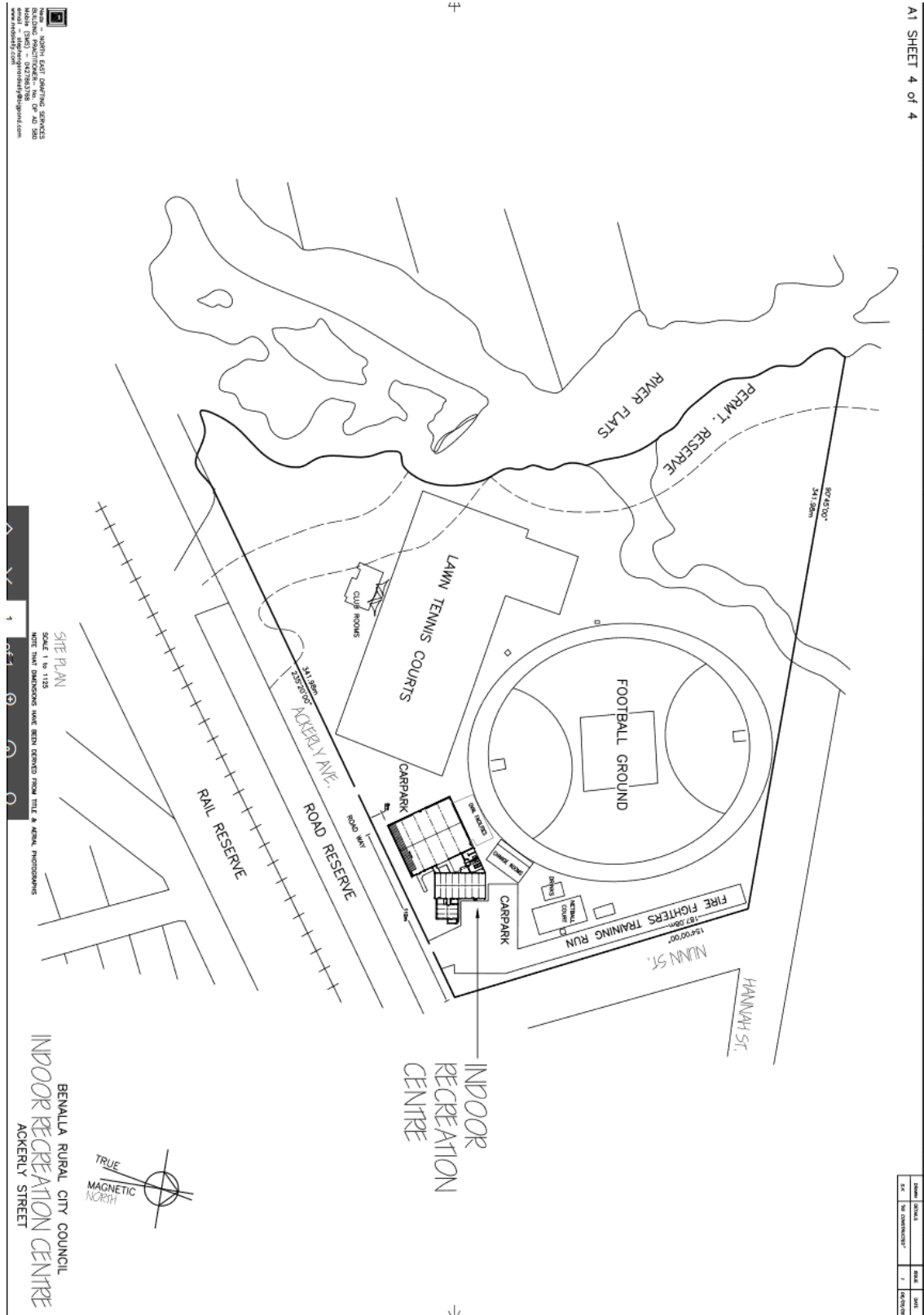


BIRC Concept Floor Plans – 5 to 10 years Upstairs Mezzanine

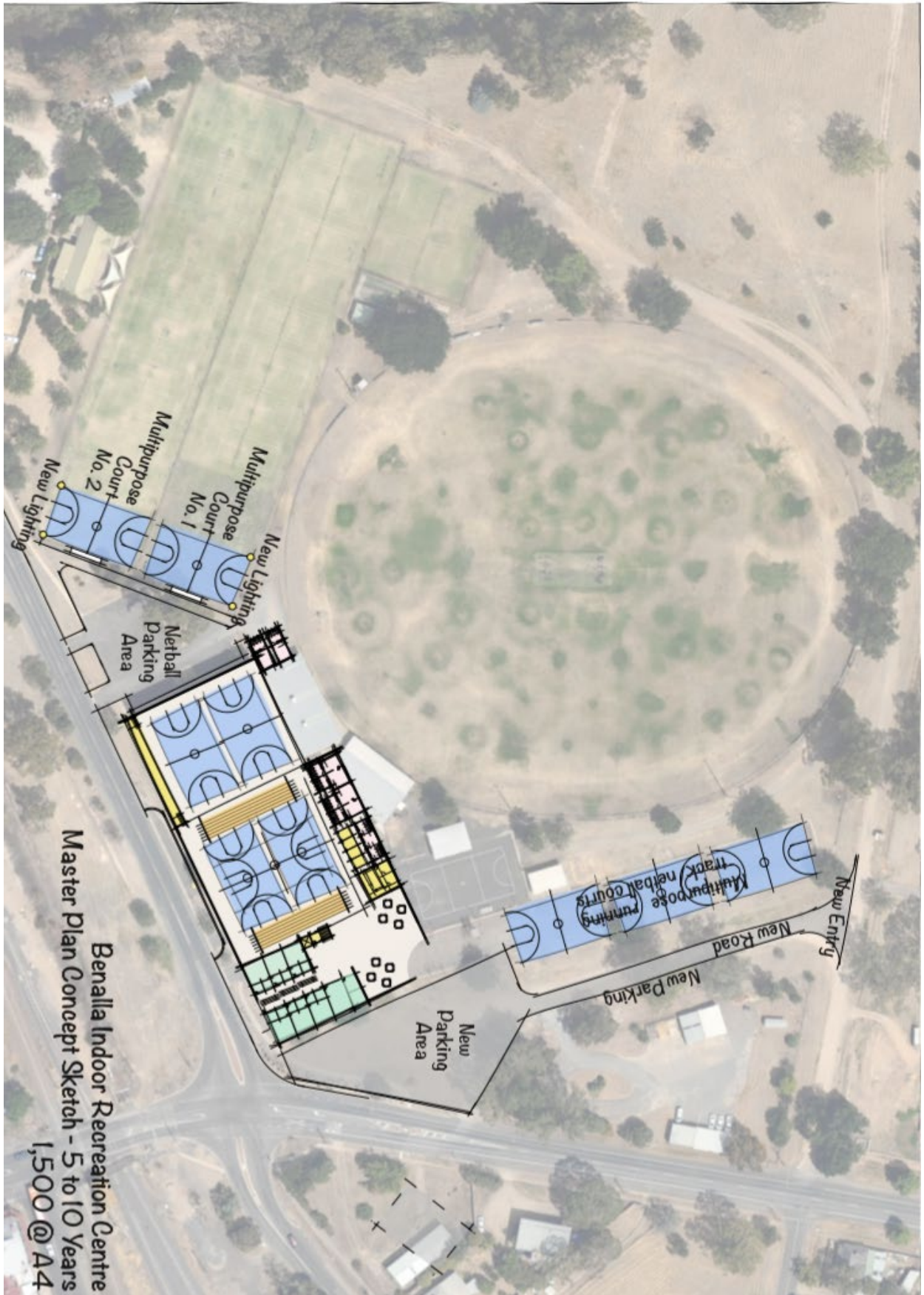


United Friendlies Reserve Concept Plan

Existing Conditions



Future Concept Plan



COST ESTIMATES

At this stage of concept planning, the variables in relation to final placement of key components, selection of materials, ability of user groups to contribute (noting the squash and racquetball association have acquired some material's such as glass walls) and services and planning considerations make estimating cost a very broad exercise.

The example highlighted in the case study section of this report that showed the two facilities at Torquay and Port Macquarie, both incorporating three new courts constructed as part of an existing facility, with one completed for \$7m and the other estimated to cost \$13.5m, representing a \$6.5m difference or almost double the cost for largely comparable projects.

For the purpose of assisting with planning three cost estimates have been provided based on experience and cost estimates and actual costs of comparable projects.

The low-priced cost estimate allows for the cheapest build, including the provision of in-kind services and materials as well as cheaper materials and finishes. An example of a low-priced type outcome might be something like the indoor sports (cricket) facilities built in sheds in industrial areas.

The high-end estimate is very much as described and allows for higher end design and architectural features as well as fixtures and fittings.

The median cost estimate sits in the middle.

The Rawlinson's 'Australian Construction Handbook' also provides indicative cost for construction projects based on square metre costings and provides estimates for squash courts and basketball centres. The current edition estimates squash courts costing around \$250,000 each and basketball courts at around \$1m each, positioning them around the median cost estimates.

As noted, the Myrtleford Indoor Sports Stadium is under construction. It is estimated it will cost \$2.6m and will include a multi-sports timber sprung floor, accessible change-room, a new meeting room and entry foyer attaching the new stadium to existing adjoining indoor stadium, but with no seating, extra change facilities or squash courts or mezzanine floors and viewing areas.

Design Element	Low Priced Cost estimate	Higher End Cost Estimate	Median Cost Estimate
Stage 1			
New Courts x 2 with show court markings	\$2,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$3,500,000
Squash Courts x 6	\$750,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,125,000
Re-Furb Café and Foyer Etc	\$250,000	\$1,500,000	\$875,000
Additional change facilities	\$100,000	\$500,000	\$300,000
Sub Total – BIRC	\$3,100,000	\$8,500,000	\$5,800,000
Car Parking	\$150,000	\$1,500,000	\$825,000
Landscaping	\$30,000	\$150,000	\$90,000
TOTAL	\$3,280,000	\$10,150,000	\$6,715,000
Stage 2 – Future Works			
Show Court – Seating and Change	\$500,000	\$2,500,000	\$1,500,000
Mezzanine	\$500,000	\$2,000,000	\$1,250,000
Sub Total – Stage 2	\$1,000,000	\$4,500,000	\$2,750,000
TOTAL PROJECT	\$4,280,000	\$14,650,000	\$9,465,000

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Outside of local government funding and community support there are several other opportunities to source additional funding support for the BIRC Project.

Note the State and Federal programs can be for set periods or change with government.

State Government Funding

The primary state government funding avenue is the Department of Sport and Recreation administered Better Indoor Stadiums Fund. This fund has been specifically set up to support projects of this kind. Council's may submit one application request of up to \$3m with a \$1:\$1 funding ratio for rural councils.

Federal Government Funding

The Building Better Regions program will run until 2020-21 and provides grants of up to \$10m for projects that build stronger regional communities into the future. While generally funding at up to 50% there have been projects that have received funding of up to 75% in remote areas.

The Coffs Harbour Council received \$6.5m towards a \$13.5m stadium redevelopment and Ballarat Council received \$10m towards a \$23m upgrade of the Ballarat Sports and Entertainment Centre.

Private Sector Funding

While traditionally much more difficult to gain outside of major regional or metropolitan areas, there are examples of private sector investment into facilities.

One example is the 'Community Bank' stadium in Nillumbik which received \$750,000 in funding via the Bendigo Bank.

Australian Sports Foundation

The Australian Sports Foundation (ASF) provides a platform for Sporting Associations to fundraise for projects and programs. By donating through the ASF organisations and individuals are able to claim contributions as tax deductions.

Examples of projects that received funding via the ASF program include the Moroochy Gymnastics Club who raised over \$200,000 towards construction of a gymnastics facility and the 'Community Bank' stadium in Nillumbik that received over \$250,000 via the program.