

17 April 2023

Council Undertakes Development of Regional Sport and Recreation Master Plan

In the 2023-2024 financial year, Roper Gulf Regional Council will be undertaking the development of a Regional Sport and Recreation Master Plan.

This project came into fruition after the Council conducted extensive community consultation in 2021 as part of the development of its [Strategic Plan 2022-2027](#).

The results of the consultation stated that of the people interviewed:

- 23% identified sport and recreation as integral to making somewhere a good place to live;
- 33% identified Sporting Facilities as the most important function of Council (with only rubbish collection scoring higher at 37%); and
- Only 49% thought that Council were performing adequately in its current provision of Sporting Facilities.



Image description: Community consultation with Manyallaluk residents in 2021 for the Strategic Plan 2022-2027.

This consultation highlighted the importance that Roper Gulf residents place on sport and recreation and that the availability of sport and recreation activities and facilities directly impacts on the liveability of the region.

To meet the needs of its constituents, Council requires a proactive approach to developing and maintaining sport and recreation facilities in each community.

Council has engaged a highly qualified consultant called Better Cities Group, who has specialist recreation facility knowledge and experience, to develop a Sport and Recreation Master Plan.

The Plan will provide clear strategic and operational guidance for the provision of services and investment in sport and recreation facilities for the short (1-3 years), medium (4-7 years), and long (8-10 years) term.

Once complete, the Plan will address and provide guidance on:

- The remaining useful life of legacy infrastructure;
- Sustainable facility management costs;
- The suitability of current facilities to meet population growth projections;
- Opportunities for new investment in facilities to meet population growth projections, including the identification of current and future grant funding opportunities for refurbishment and/or development of facilities;
- Opportunities for new sport and recreation programmes based on demonstrated community needs;
- Reducing facility and programme duplication across different community provider sectors;
- Realistic project targets for infrastructure refurbishments, upgrades, and builds; and
- Potential income stream opportunities to support the running costs associated with the sport and recreation infrastructure and facilities.

The development of the Sport and Recreation Master Plan will be undertaken in three key stages:

Stage 1: Audit of existing legacy sport and recreation facilities and infrastructure, including determining approximate end of useful life dates.

Stage 2: Community consultation and forward planning to determine future needs based on population growth projections, ancillary events being held within these communities and other activity trends which will impact on these assets.

Stage 3: Delivery of a fully scoped document which sets the framework for decision making and direction for sport and recreation facilities in the Roper Gulf region, called the *Sport and Recreation Master Plan*.

The consultation phase will start this month and will encompass workshops with internal and external stakeholders.

Visitation by Better Cities Group to each community location will also take place in April, with visits scheduled for Barunga, Bulman, Jilkminggan, Manyallaluk, Mataranka and Wugularr.

Dates are still to be confirmed for visitation to other communities in the region and are anticipated to take place in June. Residents are encouraged to contact their local Council office for the consultation details for their community.

The Council solidified its support for the development of a Sport and Recreation Master Plan by approving to partly fund the project at its Ordinary Meeting of Council in February 2023.

Chief Executive Officer Marc Gardner is also a strong advocate for the Plan.

“The development of the Sport and Recreation Master Plan aims to increase liveability in the region and decrease youth disengagement, while also addressing the current and future challenges to meet sport and recreation requirements in each community.

“It will provide a road map of the steps that our Council needs to take to reach a destination where each community has the appropriate facilities and the capacity to meet the needs of its residents now and in to the future,” said Mr Gardner.

The Northern Territory Government’s Department of Territory Families, Housing & Communities will fund 50% of the project cost and the other half will be funded by Roper Gulf Regional Council.

If you are interested in being involved in the consultation process for this Plan, please email info@ropergulf.nt.gov.au.

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For more information, please contact:

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Image description: AFL being played on the Barunga Oval, a key sporting hub in the Roper Gulf region.