

## **SPORT AND RECREATION VICTORIA - 2023 COUNTRY FOOTBALL NETBALL PROGRAM APPLICATION**

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Report Author: Executive Officer Recreation and Sport  
Responsible Officer: Director Built Environment & Infrastructure  
Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

### **SUMMARY**

This report identifies two proposed projects to be approved by Council for submission to the Sport and Recreation Victoria's 2022-23 Country Football Netball Program. These projects are to improve the netball court surface, fencing and lighting at Morrison Reserve, Mount Evelyn and the lighting at Belgrave Recreation Reserve. Both these projects are identified priorities based on factors such as access, participation, compliance and, safety.

A maximum total of \$250,000 is potentially available from this program. It is proposed Council provide a contribution from its Capital Expenditure Program to fund the balance (resulting in a \$1:\$1 ratio).

### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That*

- 1. Council endorses the following projects for submission to the 2022-2023 Country Football Netball Program:**
  - (a) Morrison Reserve Netball Court Surface, Fencing and Lighting Upgrade; and**
  - (b) Belgrave Recreation Reserve Sports Lighting Upgrade.**
- 2. Council endorses a contribution from the Capital Expenditure Program to fund the balance between estimated project cost and the Sport and Recreation Victoria funding should they be successful in submission to the Country Football Netball Program.**

## **RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS**

Previous rounds of the Country Football Netball Program have been presented at Council Meetings, the last being on 22 June 2021.

## **DISCUSSION**

### ***Purpose and Background***

The 2022-23 SRV Country Football and Netball Program applications opened on 3 February 2023 and will close on 27 March 2023. Council has been granted an extension to submit Council endorsement following the meeting of March 28.

The Program guidelines for 2022-23 are provided in Attachment 1.

The proposed projects have been identified as the next priority in asset renewal programs for Sports Lighting and Sports Court Renewal.

The projects will not only renew aging and deteriorated infrastructure, which is no longer fit for purpose, but will also deliver new infrastructure that provides opportunity for growth, increased participation and gender equity outcomes.

Should the proposed submissions be successful, the State Government's financial contribution allows Council to complete the projects at a reduced cost to Council, thus saving asset renewal funds to be put towards future projects. The renewal of sporting infrastructure also assists Council to continue to deliver community projects that provide increased health and wellbeing outcomes for the community.

### ***Country Football Netball Program***

The Victorian Government, in partnership with the AFL, AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria is proud to be kicking in another \$2.5 million into the Country Football and Netball Program to back even more football and netball clubs across rural and regional Victoria and outer metropolitan areas as they help make a difference in their communities.

Grants of up to \$250,000 are available to deliver projects that include the redevelopment and construction of new ovals and netball courts, installation of sports lighting, and construction of new and redevelopment of existing pavilions. Eligible organisations may submit up to three applications, however the total funding sought cannot exceed \$250,000 per LGA, and no application can exceed the maximum grant amount of \$250,000.

There is also a strong focus on supporting clubs who have recently experienced natural disasters such as the recent floods, or clubs in communities that are experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, strong population growth or other economic challenges.

Strong, active and healthy communities need high-quality, accessible, well-designed and well-managed infrastructure to conduct sport and active recreation activities. Developing football and netball infrastructure that supports participation and

inclusion of woman and girls and other under-represented groups along with disadvantaged communities, while boosting local economic activity is a priority for the Victorian Government.

The Program aims to achieve this by:

- Upgrading existing and constructing new football and netball infrastructure that will increase or maintain participation;
- Fostering inclusive, diverse, accessible and responsible development through universal design, gender neutral design, environmental sustainability, and strategically planned facilities;
- Encouraging involvement of football and netball organisations in planning and developing facilities;
- Encouraging collaboration between LGAs, SRV, AFL, AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria, country football and netball clubs, associations and umpiring organisations, schools, and community organisations to actively promote diverse, inclusive cultures and programs that increase or maintain football and netball participation;
- Supporting multi-sport outcomes, where football and/or netball are the primary beneficiary;
- Supporting access to football and netball development and pathway programs by improving access to higher quality facilities; and
- Developing local economic activity through the planning, building, activating, maintaining and managing of redeveloped or new infrastructure.

The Sport and Recreation Victoria's 2022-23 Country Football Netball Program guidelines were released by the Minister for Community Sport on 1 February 2023 (Attachment 2) and close at 5pm on Monday, 27 March 2022. Announcement of successful projects are anticipated from June 2023, with projects to commence construction by December 2023 (No later than six months from execution of the grant agreement) and construction completion by December 2024 (No later than 18 months from execution of the grant agreement).

The types of projects that are eligible for support include:

- Developing new or redeveloping change rooms and pavilions to increase capacity, inclusion and safety;
- Developing new or redeveloping sports ovals and courts to increase capacity, inclusion and safety;
- Sports lighting that improves facility capacity and participant safety. Requests for replacement of lighting with LED lights are not eligible unless part of a new lighting installation;

- Projects that result in energy or water efficiency, with a direct impact on participation, such as warm season grass conversions;
- Infrastructure on school land with confirmed community use; and
- Projects that benefit multi-sport outcomes where football is the primary beneficiary.

LGAs/ARBs must discuss potential project/s with their SRV representatives to receive feedback on eligible projects before submitting their application/s.

### ***Morrison Reserve Netball Courts Surface, Lighting and Fencing Upgrade***

Morrison Recreation Reserve hosts a regional athletics track, two soccer pitches and four netball courts which are home to Yarra Ranges Athletics, Lilydale Soccer, Mooroolbark Baptist Soccer and Mount Evelyn Netball Clubs. The Mount Evelyn Netball Club will field 22 teams in the 2023 season which equates to approximately 200 participants excluding coaches/volunteers/parents and guardians. With such high-level participation, adequate and safe infrastructure is imperative.

This project will see the resurfacing of four competition compliant netball courts to an acrylic surface (currently asphalt), new fencing and a new 200 lux competition standard LED lighting system. This upgrade will make the entire facility safe and usable for the club all year round. Currently, only two of the four courts have lighting, therefore the club cannot utilise the whole facility particularly during the winter months when natural light diminishes quickly.

This project will also include the multi-lining of tennis on the two back courts. Creating a multipurpose space that can be utilised by other groups including Mount Evelyn Tennis Club who are based at Birmingham Road and currently at capacity at their facility. The Morrison Reserve Courts will provide them two additional courts to utilise for training, competition, and coaching.

Morrison Reserve also neighbours three schools, Yarra Hills High School, Cire Community School, and Yarra Ranges Special Development School. Currently, Yarra Ranges Special Development School have an agreement in place whereby they access the courts at lunchtimes as an active area for the children to use. The upgrade of this facility will improve usability outcomes for the school and look to engage the other schools for use during Physical Education classes.

The facility provides lots of opportunity and will be of great benefit to the user groups once upgraded.

### ***Belgrave Recreation Reserve Sports Lighting Upgrade***

This project will see the installation of a brand new 100 lux AFL competition standard LED Lighting System at Belgrave Recreation Reserve. This will replace an existing inefficient metal halide system that no longer meets standard and meets the needs of the user groups.

Belgrave Junior and Senior Football Netball Clubs are large AFL sports clubs based in the heart of Belgrave where participation is continuing to increase. The clubs have worked very hard in recent years to improve their reputation and participation in their community. The clubs currently field 10 football teams (both male and female) and 5 netball teams. The club have had a strong focus on female participation and creating a safe welcoming environment for women and girls to participate.

This project will complement the recent completion of a new netball court with fencing and lighting at the reserve as well as landscaping upgrades to create a sporting hub for the township of Belgrave. Currently, the lighting infrastructure on the oval is so poor that when the new netball lighting is on, the spill aids in illuminating the forward pocket of the oval.

This project will improve the efficiency of the lighting system, reduce running costs for the community club, improve the safety of all players and provide the club with the flexibility to host night games and thus flexibility in scheduling which will create better outcomes for the surface of the oval in the long term.

### ***Options considered***

The options presented are that:

1. Council supports the submission of two applications to the current round of SRV's Country Football Netball Program to assist in the funding of two key projects that have been identified to be completed in Council's Capital Expenditure Program; or
2. Alternatively, Council do not submit applications and fully fund the projects from the Capital Expenditure Program.

### ***Recommended option and justification***

It is recommended that the proposed projects be submitted to Sport and Recreation Victoria's 2022-23 Country Football Netball Program to provide opportunity to deliver priority infrastructure for our community whilst leveraging funding opportunities available, reducing the financial burden on Council's capital budget and providing support to Councils community sporting groups.

Of the asset classes eligible for funding through this program, the recommended projects represent the best value for money for Council for projects ready for delivery within funding guideline timelines.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

Eligible organisations may submit up to three applications, however the total funding sought cannot exceed \$250,000 per LGA, and no application can exceed the maximum grant amount of \$250,000.

## 4.1 Funding Ratios

Sport and Recreation Victoria funding towards total project costs (excluding GST) will be based on the following ratios:

Funding available	Local Government Authority	Funding ratios
Up to \$250,000**	<b>Rural</b>	SRV \$ <u>3</u> : \$1 local
Up to \$250,000**	<b>Regional/Interface</b> Ballarat, Greater Bendigo, Greater Geelong, Cardinia, Casey, Hume, Melton, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Wyndham, Yarra Ranges	SRV \$ <u>2</u> : \$1 local
Up to \$250,000**	<b>Metropolitan</b> Greater Dandenong*, Kingston*, Frankston*	SRV \$ <u>1</u> : \$1 local

\* Only football and netball clubs competing in leagues affiliated with AFL Victoria Country are eligible for funding

\*\* Applicants may claim in-kind expenses to a maximum of 50 per cent of the total project cost.

### ***The proposed projects for discussion are:***

2022-23 Country Football Netball Program				
Site	Estimated Project Cost	SRV Contribution	Council Contribution	Council Contribution Source
Morrison's Reserve Netball	\$315,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$165,000.00	2023-24 Capital Expenditure Program
Belgrave Football Sports lighting	\$185,000.00	\$100,000.00	\$85,000.00	2024-25 Capital Expenditure Program*
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$500,000.00</b>	<b>\$250,000.00</b>	<b>\$250,000.00</b>	

\*Block funding program scheduled for 24/25. It is proposed to bring forward \$85,000 to capitalise on this opportunity.

## APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan:

### **Yarra Ranges Council Vision 2036**

“Whether you live here or visit, you will see how much we value our natural beauty how connected our communities are, and how balanced growth makes this the best place in the world”.

Yarra Ranges Council 2036 Strategic Objectives describe what we are working towards and how we want Yarra Ranges to be in the future.

The development of these proposed projects, through careful community consultation and master planning, will deliver facilities and infrastructure that meets the growing and diverse needs of our community, therefore contributing to the Yarra Ranges Council Vision.

### **Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025**

The Health and Wellbeing Plan sets strategic direction for how Council works to support optimal health and wellbeing for its community.

Council's vision for health and wellbeing is that: Yarra Ranges has connected and healthy communities that are resilient, fair and inclusive. Our places are liveable and sustainable.

The new priorities of the Plan are:

- respond to public health impacts of emergencies;
- tackle climate change and its impact on health;
- increase healthy eating;
- increase active living;
- improve mental wellbeing and social connection;
- prevent violence against women and children; and
- reduce harmful alcohol and drug use.

The proposed projects respond to this by providing opportunities and encouraging people to participate in physical activity in modern, fit-for-purpose facilities.

### **Recreation and Open Space Strategy (2013 - 2023)**

The Recreation and Open Space Strategy is a framework to manage and improve sport and recreation facilities, parks, community spaces and recreation services. It aims to create healthy and active environments and services, including the development of clubs and participation initiatives.

The Strategy "consolidates recreation strategies and feasibility studies and reserve master plans under one umbrella document and prioritises actions in an action plan".

A series of key outcomes and recommendations, with associated actions, are detailed in the document. Of relevance they include:

- Provision of quality and diverse sport and recreation facilities, parks and community spaces, including by "adopt[ing] principles to maximise use of reserves and shared use...in master planning and building projects" and by

“identify[ing] opportunities to diversify open space functions or settings to offer greater variety in recreation opportunities”;

- Council support with the activation and improvement of public spaces through Council programs, services and capital works, including by “reflecting local art, culture and heritage in the design of public spaces”, by “designing spaces that encourage enhanced activity, social experiences and events in public spaces that include all people in a community”, and by “designing environmentally sensitive spaces”;
- Council support for a connected community through “...accessible facilities; services; and opportunities [and] a network of trails and footpaths...” and the specific actions of “adopt[ing] principles of access and connectedness in master planning park improvement projects” and “implement[ing] the Hike and Bike Plan...prioritising projects that connect communities to open spaces”; and
- Protection of the environment, including by “explor[ing] opportunities for nature-based recreation and tourism activities” and “integrat[ing] environment sustainable design and water sensitive urban design features in capital works improvement projects, where practical”.

### **Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023**

Through this Strategy, Council recognises that inclusion for people with disability in all aspects of community life is a human right that also brings many social, cultural and economic benefits for the wider community. It further states as one of the goals that Council buildings and infrastructure are accessible to everyone in our community.

### **Child and Youth Strategy 2014-2024**

This Strategy has the vision that Yarra Ranges will be a place where every child and young person will be able to thrive, reach their potential and actively participate in decision making. Outcome 2 has the most relevance to this project, stating that “Adequate Infrastructure exists to meet the needs of children, young people and their families.”

### **RELEVANT LAW**

Not Applicable

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

#### ***Economic Implications***

Construction of these key infrastructure projects will increase the sporting footprint within the municipality. There is a significant opportunity to leverage existing visitation and add significant value to the local and regional sports infrastructure



offering. The opportunity for twilight/night games for both projects will increase usage and likely result in increased revenue for clubs.

### ***Social Implications***

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy identifies that high levels of obesity, dementia and poor mental health are significant issues for our community. The strategy recognizes that increasing physical activity will deliver more substantial health and wellbeing outcomes. The development of these priority projects will actively support the outcomes of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

There are strong links to social and community impacts resulting from the delivery of these projects. They include:

- Enhanced community access to infrastructure that encourages health and wellbeing outcomes
- The revitalisation of local communities
- Reduction of social isolation
- Greater connection to place
- Increased visitor footprint
- Increased female participation in sport and recreation; and
- Increased levels of physical activity.

### ***Environmental Implications***

Environmental impacts will be fully explored as part of the ongoing process for each project. It has been determined that the installation of LED lighting systems in comparison to metal halide systems improves the efficiency of the lighting infrastructure and reduces the CO<sup>2</sup> emissions dramatically.

Therefore, both projects will include the installation of new LED Lighting systems to improving running efficiency and thus remove outdated metal halide systems that are creating a large emissions output at both sites.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Throughout the preliminary stages of these projects, initial community and key stakeholder consultation has been undertaken.

The tenant club at Morrison Reserve has been consulted on this project and welcome the renewal of the facility. With such a strong participation base (22 teams, approx. 200 female players), the upgrades will create a safer environment for the entire club as well as the wider community and schools that's utilise the facility. The club will provide a letter of support to be included with the application as well as letters from other community groups and potential users such as Yarra Ranges Special Development School.

Residents surrounding the reserve will be notified of Councils intention to submit an application to the 2021-22 Country Football Netball Program via a letter box drop and social media posts targeted to Mount Evelyn and surrounding areas.

Initial discussions with the Belgrave Football Netball Club have taken place regarding the sports lighting project. The club have been advocating to Council for numerous facilities upgrades at the reserve including highlighting the decline in operation of their lighting system and therefore fully support the project.

Residents surrounding the reserve will be notified of Councils intention to submit an application to the 2021-22 Country Football Netball Program via a letter box drop and social media posts targeted to Belgrave and surrounding areas.

## **COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Successful application to the Country Football Netball Program would see these projects completed in collaboration with the State Government through Sport and Recreation Victoria as well as Netball and AFL Victoria.

Council officers have existing strong working relationships with these bodies and look to continually work with external bodies where collaboration opportunities exist.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The list of proposed projects attempts to capture high priority community projects which align with the Country Football and Netball Program guidelines. Projects that align more strongly with other funding streams cannot be supported via this funding stream.

The current facility standard at Morrison Reserve netball poses some risk to participants as well as the broader community who may utilise the courts on a casual basis when compared with more modern facilities. The aged, bitumen surface and poor lighting increases the risk of injury to players at the tenant club and broader community.

The existing lighting system at Belgrave Recreation Reserve does not meet standard and exposes a risk to players who may be injured whilst training or competing as they cannot see potential surface undulations or the ball clearly enough.

Should no improvements take place, the total project costs will likely continue to increase as more work will be required to bring the facilities up to standard.

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

## **ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT**

1. Sport and Recreation Victoria 2022-23 Country Football Netball Program Guidelines