

AUGUST 2020

# TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL SPORT AND RECREATION STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY REPORT



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1	19.05.2020	Draft 1	Tredwell
2	28.07.2020	Draft 2 - Amended following Public Exhibition	Tredwell
3	18.08.2020	Final Report	Tredwell

## Acknowledgements

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

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

- Samuel Eriksson, Strategic Projects Coordinator
- Paul Kelly, Manager Sports and Recreation

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

Photographs have been provided by Tamworth Regional Council.

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<b>01</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>02</b>	<b>Demands and Trends</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>03</b>	<b>Facility Inventory</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>04</b>	<b>Consultation</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>05</b>	<b>Supply and Demand Analysis</b>	<b>09</b>
<b>06</b>	<b>Challenges and Opportunities</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>07</b>	<b>Vision and Principles</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>08</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>16</b>

# 01 Introduction

## Project Overview

Tamworth Regional Council (Council) acknowledges the significant contribution that sport and recreation bring to the community. The planning and design of facilities needs to be carefully considered to ensure that the needs of the community are addressed now, and into the future. Council has worked with the specialist sport, recreation and open space planning firm, Tredwell, on the preparation of the Tamworth Region Sport and Recreation Strategic Plan.

The Plan provides a road map for planning and developing sport and recreation facilities (structured and unstructured) across the Tamworth region. This aligns with the planned growth identified in Tamworth's *Blueprint 100* (2020).

## Methodology

The project's five stage methodology included:

- STAGE 1** ○ **Background Research and Trends Analysis**  
October / November 2019
- STAGE 2** ○ **Audit and Consultation**  
November / December 2019
- STAGE 3** ○ **Issues and Opportunities Identification**  
January / February 2020
- STAGE 4** ○ **Draft Sport and Recreation Strategic Plan**  
March / April 2020
- STAGE 5** ● **Public Exhibition**  
June 2020
- STAGE 5** ○ **Final Sport and Recreation Strategic Plan**  
August 2020

## Regional Context

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

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

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



## Council's Role

Local government plays a major role in the development of sport and recreation, particularly at the community level. Successful networks of sport and recreation facilities, clubs and programs are dependent on partnerships and ongoing cooperation between a wide range of organisations, including all levels of government, peak bodies, state sporting organisations (SSOs), clubs and associations, and the wider community. The NSW sport and recreation delivery framework is outlined below.

### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- Department of Health
- Sport Australia
- Australian Sports Commission
- Australian Institute of Sport

### STATE GOVERNMENT

- NSW Office of Sport
- NSW Department of Industry

### GOVERNING BODIES

- Sport NSW
- School Sport
- Peak Bodies
- State and National Sporting Organisations

### SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Council
- Sport and Recreation Clubs
- Schools
- Private Providers

### COMMUNITY

- Participants
- Officials
- Coaches
- Volunteers
- Families

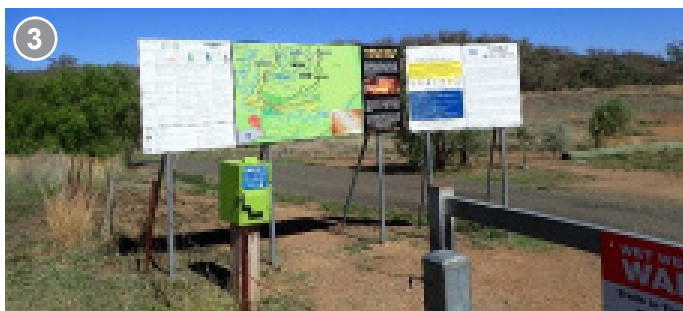
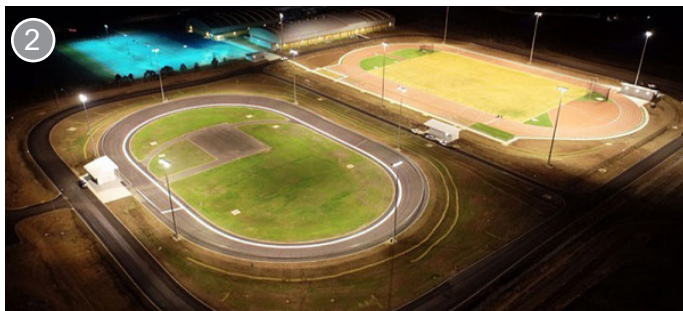
Council plays an important role in facilitating benefits and achieving positive outcomes for its community, through sport and active recreation provision. Key roles include:

- **Planning**
  - Strategic planning
  - Master planning
  - Policy development
- **Facility Management**
  - Asset management
  - Leasing and licensing
  - Compliance with legislation and standards
- **Partnerships and Advocacy**
  - Advocating on behalf of the community and clubs
  - Partnering with other Councils, State and Federal Government
  - Strengthening relationships with sporting clubs
- **Service Provision**
  - Club development and training
  - Information provision
  - Sports club liaison/engagement
  - Special events
  - Inclusive programs
- **Funding**
  - Grants
  - Capital investment
  - Accessing external funding

## Key Developments

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

1. Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre
2. The Northern Inland Centre of Sporting Excellence (NICSE) which includes:
  - Tamworth Sports Dome (2011)
  - Tamworth Regional Athletics Centre (2019)
  - Tamworth Regional Cycling Centre (2019)
  - Tamworth Regional Hockey Centre (2020)
3. Tamworth Mountain Bike Park (2014)
4. Tamworth Regional Playground (2015)
5. Scully Park Regional Sporting Precinct (2015)
6. The Youthie (2015)
7. Tamworth Adventure Playground (2015)
8. Tamworth Regional Skate Park (2019)



# 02 Demand and Trends

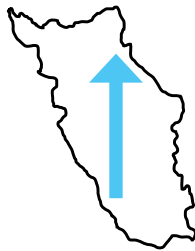
## Demographic Overview

Community sport and recreation needs are influenced by the demographic profile of the region. The Tamworth region has:

**One of the highest projected population growth rates in regional NSW.**

The NSW Government forecasts a population of up to

**75,000** people  
in 2036 (2016)



**A high proportion of the population**

**< 18** under 18  
and  
**> 60** over 60  
years of age

**A significantly higher proportion of**

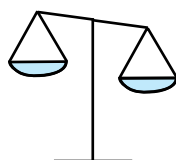
**Indigenous Australians** compared to other areas of regional NSW



**A high rate of volunteering** compared to other areas of regional NSW

**Varied levels of socio-economic disadvantage**

across the region



## Key Sport and Recreation Trends

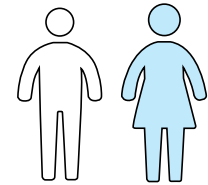
A range of trends have been identified which will influence sport and recreation into the future, as outlined below.

**Increasing popularity of individualised activities**



**Increasing need for active ageing**

**Increasing female participation**

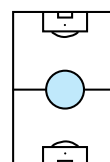
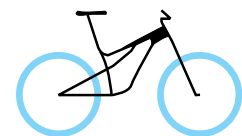


in traditionally male dominated sports



**Increasingly busy lifestyles**

**Increasing participation in informal recreation activities**



**Increasingly widespread use of synthetic playing surfaces**

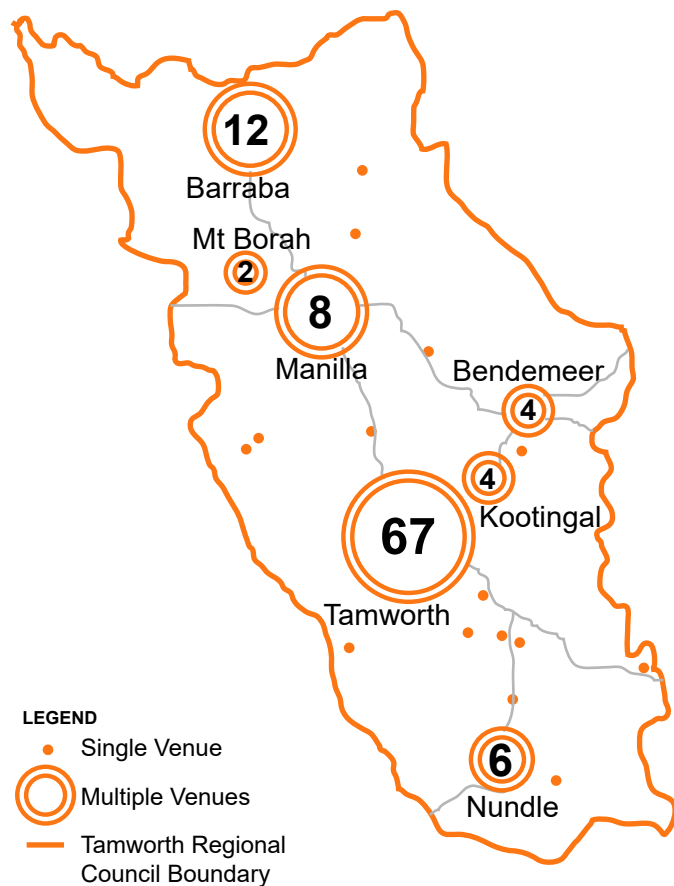
# 03 Facility Inventory

## Facility Network Distribution

The facility inventory identifies 118 venues, across the Tamworth region, which provide facilities for sport and recreation. The high-level distribution of facilities is shown in the map below.

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

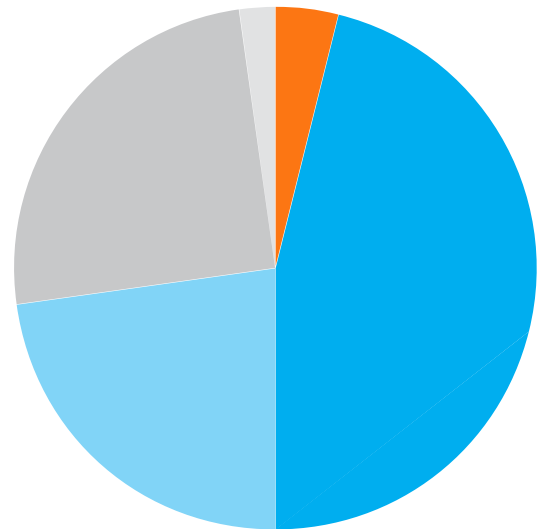
The network is also supported by the sport and recreation precincts in the villages of Kootingal, Nundle, Barraba and Manilla. Smaller, outlying settlements across the region typically have a recreation ground, managed under a Section 355 Committee, with a community hall, court(s), grass pitch or oval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



## Facility Condition Ratings

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

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



### LEGEND

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

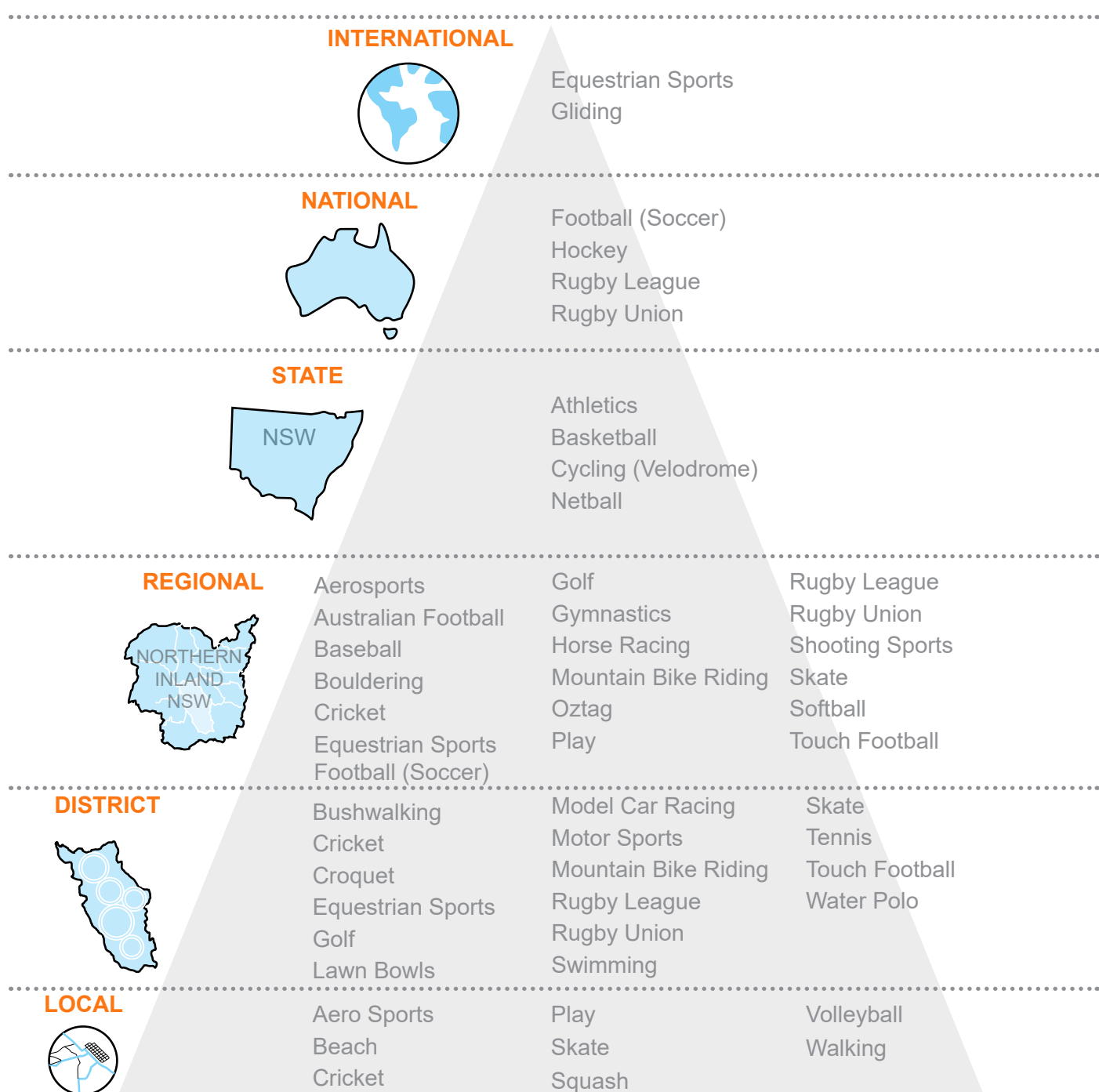


## Facility Hierarchy

Establishing a hierarchy of sport and recreation facilities assists in the review of existing facilities, and the planning of new facilities.

This hierarchy can be used to guide the strategic distribution of facilities and ensures that service levels are appropriate to the intended level of usage and the population catchment which is being catered for.

Facility distribution across the hierarchy is outlined below.



# 04 Consultation

## Consultation Mechanisms

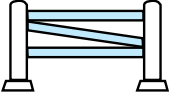
The following consultation mechanisms were used during November 2019 to inform the development of the Strategic Plan:

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

## Key Themes

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

### Key positive feedback related to:

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

### Key issues raised related to:

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

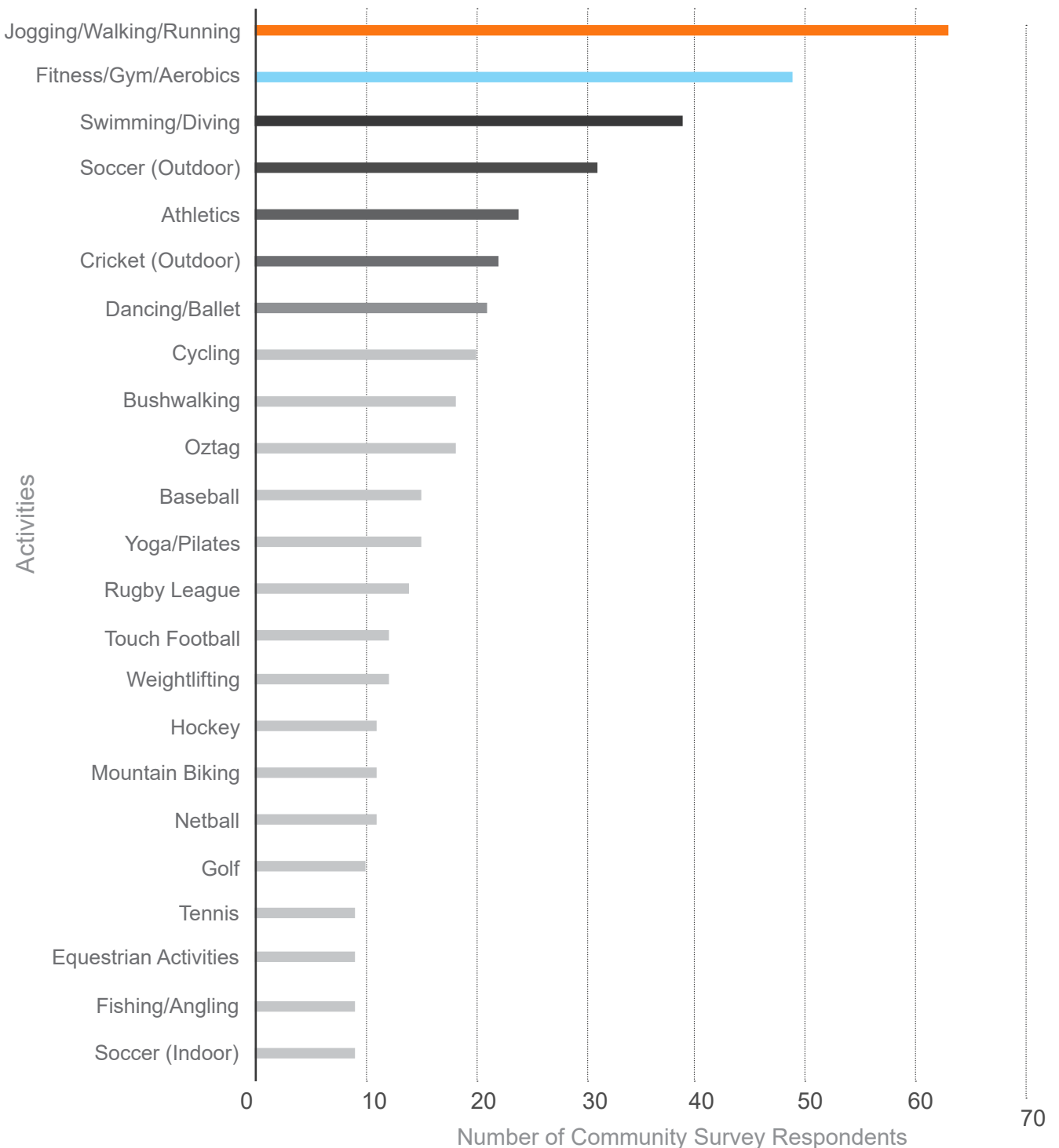
## Local Participation

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

The 'number of responses' identifies those who indicated participation on at least a fortnightly basis.

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

### Top Activities in the Tamworth Region (Community Survey Findings)



# 05 Supply and Demand Analysis

## Activity-Specific Provision Needs

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

- athletics
- hockey
- cycling
- netball & basketball
- swimming
- baseball & Softball
- tennis
- rugby league & union
- football (soccer)
- Oztag & touch football
- cricket
- Australian football
- gymnastics
- skate
- BMX
- equestrian sports
- motorsport
- lawn bowls
- golf
- mountain bike riding
- recreational walking & cycling.

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

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

- supply and demand factors used by ActiveXchange data analytics
- requirements of the broader population of Northern Inland NSW
- facility inventory (including location, condition, usage, hierarchy)
- Council, club and community plans and aspirations for the facility network
- strategic directions of the Federal Government, NSW Government, Council, state sporting organisations, clubs and associations.
- population projections and trigger points
- trends influencing sport and recreation
- best-practice facility provision which includes multi-use, adaptable and flexible spaces.

### Activity Focus/Directions

#### Athletics



Focus on activating the existing Tamworth Regional Athletics Centre through attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.

#### Hockey



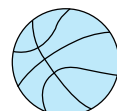
Focus on activating the existing Tamworth Regional Hockey Centre through attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.

#### Cycling



Focus on activating the existing Tamworth Regional Cycling Centre through attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.

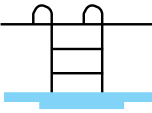



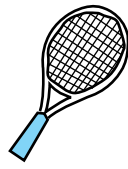

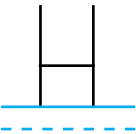
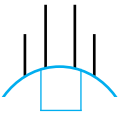
#### Netball and Basketball



Focus on maintaining existing high-quality indoor & outdoor courts at Tamworth Sports Dome.

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

Plan for three additional indoor courts when the population of the Tamworth region reaches 90,000-100,000.

Activity	Focus/Directions	Activity	Focus/Directions
 <p><b>Swimming</b></p>	<p>Focus on development of the Tamworth Regional Aquatics and Leisure Centre at the NICSE, and consolidation of the two aged district-level facilities in Tamworth urban area – both to remain open until new centre is constructed and operational.</p> <p>Continued provision of district aquatic facilities in Barraba, Manilla, Kootingal and Nundle.</p>	 <p><b>Football (Soccer)</b></p>	<p>Focus on optimising quality and usage of existing facilities, as well as developing additional multi-use playing fields.</p> <p>Support attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.</p>
 <p><b>Baseball and Softball</b></p>	<p>Focus on optimising quality and usage of existing facilities at Riverside Sports Complex.</p> <p>Ensure fields are multi-purpose where possible.</p> <p>Enhance the facility to attract and host tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.</p>	 <p><b>Oztag and Touch Football</b></p>	<p>Focus on optimising quality and usage of existing facilities, as well as developing new/additional multi-use playing fields.</p> <p>Support attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.</p>
 <p><b>Tennis</b></p>	<p>Focus on balancing the provision and distribution of tennis facilities across the region to support attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.</p> <p>Enhancements to include upgrades at Treloar Park Tennis Centre (13 courts), enhancements at facilities with five or more courts, and repurposing of disused courts in outlying settlements.</p>	 <p><b>Cricket</b></p>	<p>Focus on balancing the provision and distribution of cricket facilities across the region.</p> <p>Future provision to include development of state/regional-level venue at the NICSE, enhancements at Riverside Sports Complex, and repurposing of disused ovals in outlying settlements.</p> <p>Support attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.</p>
 <p><b>Rugby League and Union</b></p>	<p>Focus on optimising quality of existing facilities.</p> <p>Enhance community access.</p> <p>Develop Riverside Sports Complex with multi-use field capacity to host large tournaments/events as well as to support regular programs/competitions.</p>	 <p><b>Australian Football</b></p>	<p>Focus on developing state/regional-level venue at the NICSE, and enhancements at No. 1 Oval and Riverside Sports Complex.</p> <p>Support attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.</p>

**Activity Focus/Directions**

**Gymnastics** Focus on maintaining a high quality regional-level gymnastics facility, with access to additional capacity at Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (TRECC) to cater for large events.



**Skate** Focus on progressive development of new youth activity spaces (including skate facilities) as the population grows.



**BMX** Focus on upgrading existing competitive BMX facility to a state-level. Support attraction and hosting of tournaments/events as well as regular programs/competitions.



Progressively develop of new youth activity spaces (incorporating recreational skate and BMX facilities) as the population grows.

**Equestrian Sports** Focus on maintaining high quality national, regional and district level facilities, and continued attraction of equine events and regular programs.



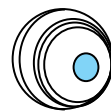
Ensure balance between elite and community level facilities and pathways for Tamworth to maintain its position as 'Australia's Home of Equine Sports'. Consider opportunities for additional facility to cater for district-level requirements.

**Activity Focus/Directions**

**Motorsport** Focus on developing state-level multi-use motorsport facility at Oakburn Park Motorsport Precinct.



**Lawn Bowls** Focus on supporting clubs to sustainably provide, high quality and highly valued facilities to the community.



Support clubs/facility owners to determine suitable redistribution and/or re-purposing of facilities, as required.

**Golf** Focus on supporting clubs to sustainably provide, high quality and highly valued facilities to the community.



Support clubs/facility owners to determine suitable redistribution and/or re-purposing of facilities, as required.

**Mountain Bike Riding** Focus on expanding and improving Tamworth Mountain Bike Park as a high quality regional-level facility.



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

**Recreational Walking and Cycling** Focus on strategically planning for a well distributed and connected network of recreational trails across the region.



# 06 Challenges and Opportunities

## Key Challenges and Opportunities

The following key challenges and opportunities have been identified for sport and recreation in the Tamworth region.

### Key Challenges

-  Water Security
-  Regional Catchment
-  Population Growth
-  Balancing Provision
-  Encouraging Active Lifestyles
-  Finite Resources
-  New Development Areas
-  Maintaining Tamworth's reputation as 'Australia's Home of Equine Sports'
-  Aged Aquatic Facilities
-  Flood Prone Areas
-  Playing Field Capacity
-  Support Facilities

### Key Opportunities

-  Sporting Hub of Northern Inland NSW
-  Maximising Usage and Attracting Events
-  Resilient and Fit-for-purpose Facilities
-  Effective Communication
-  Inclusive Sport and Recreation
-  Capacity Building and Community Empowerment
-  Tamworth Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centre
-  Regional-level Oval
-  Expansion of Riverside Sporting Complex
-  Strategic Provision of Park-based Recreation Facilities
-  Recreational Trails and Active Transport
-  Enhanced Tamworth Mountain Bike Park
-  Youth Activity Spaces
-  Upgrade of Tamworth BMX Track
-  Expansion of Oakburn Park Motor Sport Precinct
-  Long-Term Development of Additional Indoor Courts

# 07 Vision and Principles

## Vision

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



### Our Vision is:

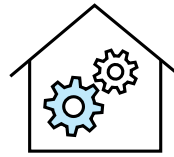
A balanced network of high-quality sport and recreation facilities, clubs/ service providers, programs and events which ensures Tamworth is the sporting hub of Northern Inland NSW and meets the needs of the growing and diversifying population.

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

## Key Components

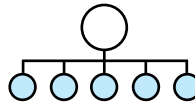
Planning for sport and recreation is multifaceted and interrelated. Consideration needs to be given to the following three major components of planning.

### Facilities



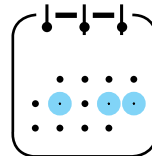
- planning (strategies, feasibility studies, master plans, reviews)
- delivery (upgrades, new facilities, re-purposing, co-location, multi-purpose, accessible)
- management (governance, occupancy agreements, programming, asset management, maintenance).

### Clubs and Service Providers



- club development
- communication
- engagement
- accessibility
- volunteering
- partnerships
- training and development.

### Programs and Events



- targeted population groups
- events, programs and services
- resourcing
- communication and marketing
- inclusion
- pathways



## Planning Principles

The following planning principles have been developed, based on community aspirations and industry best-practice, to guide the development and management of sport and recreation across the Tamworth region.

### Principle 1

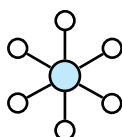
#### Maximum Community Participation



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

### Principle 2

#### Shared Precincts and Community Hubs



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

### Principle 3

#### Sustainability



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

### Principle 4

#### Partnerships



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

### Principle 5

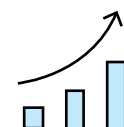
#### Working Together with Clubs and Community



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

### Principle 6

#### Maximised and Validated Community Benefit



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

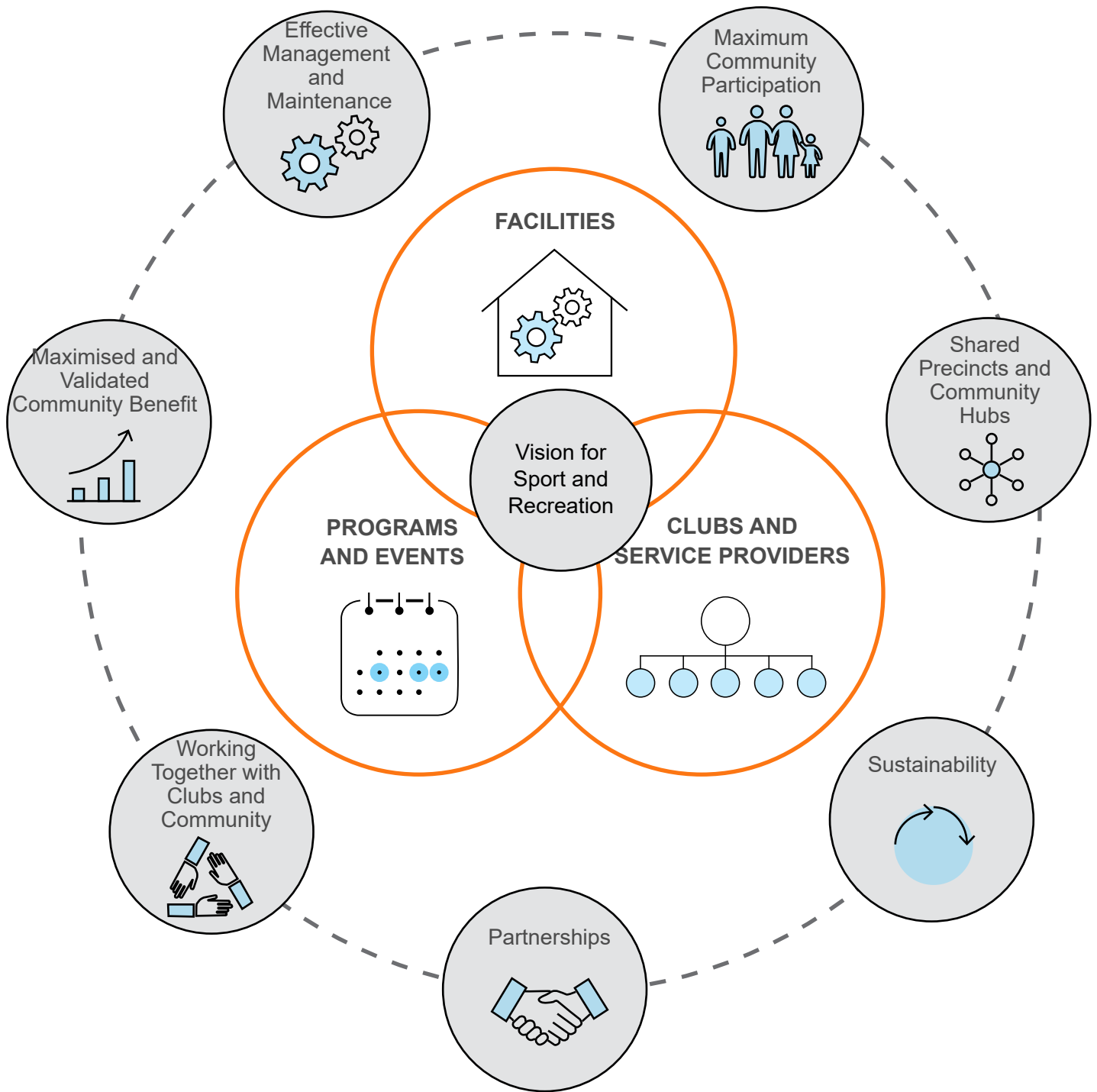
### Principle 7

#### Effective Management and Maintenance



- Facilities are managed and maintained in a manner that promotes safe condition, minimises financial liability and complies with relevant legislation, policies and standards.

### Interrelated Components of Sport and Recreation Planning



# 08 Action Plan

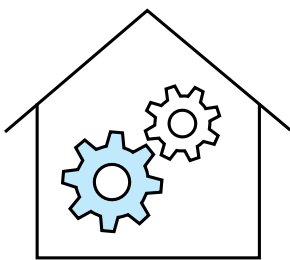
## Strategy and Action Plan

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

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

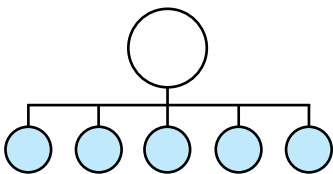
### Strategies

#### Facilities



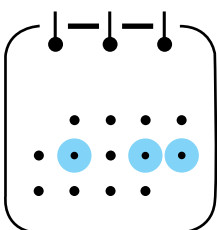
- 1 Northern Inland Centre of Sporting Excellence (NICSE)
- 2 Council Owned and/or Managed Regional-Level Sport and Recreation Facilities
- 3 Tamworth Urban Area - Council Owned and/or Managed District/Local-Level Sport and Recreation Facilities
- 4 Towns and Rural Localities - Council Owned and/or Managed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

#### Clubs and Service Providers



- 9 Governance, Training and Development
- 10 Volunteering
- 11 Partnerships

#### Programs and Events



- 12 Events
- 13 Communication
- 14 Resourcing
- 15 Inclusion and Access