

# *Eastern Region Soccer Strategy*

## *Volume 1. Strategy Report*

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## Glossary of Terms

The Eastern Region Soccer Strategy comprises the following definitions and abbreviated terms:

- CALD – Culturally and linguistically diverse
- Disadvantaged population groups – sectors of the community that typically suffer from a socioeconomic status that inhibits their ability to access opportunities compared to other sectors, and thus creates a barrier to participation (these are known to include women, people with disabilities, people from CALD backgrounds, older adults and youth)
- FFA – Football Federation Australia
- FFV – Football Federation Victoria
- Football – Australian Rules football
- LGA – Local Government Authority
- Soccer – the emergence of the International term of 'football' for what is traditionally known as soccer in Australia by the soccer community is recognised. Given the relatively recent change in this language, and the existence and strength of Australian Rules football in Victoria, the term soccer has been retained throughout this Study for the 'round ball' form of football, with any reference to 'football' being to Australian Rules football (except where soccer organisations are referred to that include football in their name)
- SRV – Sport and Recreation Victoria



# EASTERN REGION SOCCER STRATEGY

## PART 1. SYNOPSIS



## Executive Summary

Participation in soccer has grown in each of the six municipalities within the study area over recent years, and continues to rise. As a result, the provision of appropriate resources and facilities to cater for the current and prospective growth of the sport is a growing concern for the Councils in the eastern region of Melbourne.

The Eastern Region Soccer Strategy is the result of an innovative collaboration to planning for a sport within local government, through jointly addressing the planning, provision and management of soccer with peak bodies and across different levels of government. This Study represents a regional, coordinated approach to identifying and addressing the needs of soccer to achieve consistency in the way in which the growth of the sport and demand for provision (predominantly for facilities) is catered for, in a strategic and proactive manner. The custodian councils of the Strategy include the Cities of Whitehorse, Boroondara, Manningham, Knox, Maroondah and Monash, in partnership with the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) through Sport and Recreation Victoria, and Football Federation Victoria (FFV).

From the research and consultation, this Study is structured as two reports;

**Volume 1. the Strategy Report** is presented in two parts: Part One, the Synopsis is a summary of the key findings, directions and recommendations of the Strategy; Part Two, the Strategy discusses and presents the situational assessment of soccer in the eastern region and establishes the strategic directions, the model of facility provision and recommendations based on the key findings, opportunities, directions as determined throughout the report. For ease of referencing, Volume 1 (both Part One and Part Two) directs the reader to supportive data that provides further detail including at the municipal level.

**Volume 2. Research Findings** presents the compiled detailed data from the research and consultation phases in a format that is useable by each organisation.

The eastern region comprises a substantial portion of metropolitan Melbourne, including some of the more densely developed and populated municipalities. Combined, the region represents some 23% of the metropolitan Melbourne population, or over 788,000 people (2001 Census).

## Project Aim

The Strategy conducts a situational assessment of participation in, planning and provision for soccer within each of the municipalities; to thoroughly and accurately examine participant needs and barriers, and capacity and constraints of facilities for soccer. A long-term, strategic plan that identifies future opportunities to support provision for soccer for each organisation is achieved, with a focus on an integrated approach across the region.



## ***Project Objectives***

This has been achieved through:

- Joint decision making by the eight custodian organisations
- Establishing participation levels in soccer within the region, and anticipating the impact of future trends on provision;
- Identifying barriers and restrictions to participation and the limitations on provision within each organisation, with regard to policies and strategic directions;
- Identifying the existing level of provision for soccer and opportunities to maximise existing resources in catering for future demand;
- Mapping the soccer facilities provided by local government across the region;
- Preparing a facility provision plan that outlines the facility infrastructure requirements according to the needs of the peak soccer bodies, including identifies of facility improvements within each municipality;
- Determining the opportunity and need for a regional level facility, and investigating opportunities for provision;
- Establishing the roles and responsibilities of the six Local Government Authorities and other stakeholders in providing for soccer; and,
- Examining partnership opportunities for facility provision between stakeholders.

## ***Methodology***

The views of all soccer stakeholders have been incorporated into the directions of the Strategy through a comprehensive research and consultation process that has included:

- A review of relevant literature including strategic plans and policies;
- A demographic analysis of each municipality, including population projections;
- A review of soccer participation rates in Victoria and Australia;
- Preparation of visual maps depicting all soccer facilities owned and managed by the six Councils, soccer facilities owned by the Education Department, indoor facilities that provide for soccer participation, and private outdoor soccer facilities;
- Benchmarking (nationally and internationally) to explore regional soccer facility developments;
- Stakeholder consultation across the six Council areas which included surveys, interviews, forums and workshops with residents, peak soccer bodies and leagues, soccer clubs, council staff, non-council land owners that provide for soccer, casual soccer facility users, primary and secondary school students and community agencies that represent disadvantaged population groups.

## **Background & Context for Soccer in the Eastern Region**

Local Government is the major provider of soccer facilities in the region, with 60 Council owned / managed venues (comprising some 100 pitches) supporting an estimated 7,600 plus participants across 50 or so clubs. Further, some \$8.7M has been spent by the councils in the past five years on soccer related facility improvements, and \$46.6M worth of assets are provided to support soccer participation.

The key providers of soccer participation opportunities in the eastern region are Football Federation Victoria, Bayside League, Victorian Churches Soccer Association and the Amateur Soccer Federation Victoria (known as VicSoccer). The majority of clubs are affiliated with Football Federation Victoria, which is the recognised State representative body for soccer in Victoria. The Victorian Institute of Sport assists with the development of elite level players to feed into National and International playing opportunities.

A range of services are provided by clubs, Leagues and Football Federation Victoria (besides managing and administering junior, women's and senior competitions) to support participation through non-competitive playing opportunities such as; school holiday programs, junior development social participation programs (e.g. GoalKick, Rooball), coaching clinics and guidelines, coaching equipment and resources, out of school hours programs and school based programs, club administration and risk management manuals, referee training; and others aimed at providing opportunities to enhance ability including; talent search clinics, tournaments, academies.

***Refer Section 2.1 of this report for further detail.***

There is general consistency in the type of provision for soccer across the six councils, to include; planning for sport and policy development, identifying community sporting needs, providing and managing the use of facilities, maintaining and upgrading facilities, providing community grants and applying for grant funds, ensuring access to disadvantaged population groups, supporting elite level athletes, providing information and knowledge sharing with club administrative personnel, introducing pilot participation programs, and promotion of local sporting opportunities. There is some variation in the emphasis on provision in the areas of programming, club development or promotion within the Councils.

A number of stakeholders besides local government, State government, clubs and associations and leagues were identified as contributing to provision for soccer in the eastern region, including Federal government, the education sector, other public land owners such as Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Churches and the private sector. The various roles of all stakeholders across the four levels of the sports development pathway has been plotted.

***Refer Section 2.4.2 of this report for further detail.***

Overall, each organisation involved in the Study has an aim of increasing participation, and access to opportunities to participate by the broader community. Strategies aimed at achieving this include multi-use and shared use of facilities, increasing volunteering, providing a diversity of opportunities, encouraging partnerships, ensuring safety and risk management are addressed, and provision for disadvantaged population groups. At localised levels, some municipalities have policy directions that impact on provision for soccer, including environmental sustainability, constraints over the provision of ground floodlighting, no net loss of public open space. The Department of Education has a policy to encourage and guide partnerships for the development and enhancement of facilities on school sites.

A previous strategic plan for soccer prepared by local government in partnership with the peak soccer body (then Victorian Soccer Federation) established a facility hierarchy aimed at supporting different levels of competition (amongst other recommendations). The facility classification included ground and pavilion requirements to support participation at these different levels. These standards are still applied by Football Federation Victoria today, and are known as the Grounds and Facilities Criteria.

***Refer Section 2.2 of this report for further detail.***

### ***Population Characteristics & Trends Impacting on Soccer***

Each municipality has experienced population growth since 1996; the most significant occurring in the Cities of Knox (8.4%) and Maroondah (5.6%). Overall, the regional population across all six Councils is ageing, with the proportion of younger age groups (children, youth and young adults) projected to decline further in the future. The Cities of Manningham, Knox and Maroondah are projected to experience the greatest change as a result of this ageing population trend. This growth represents potential new markets of soccer participants.

Even considering this ageing trend, there are sectors of the region that have high proportions of children and youth (aged 5 to 17 years). This is important to note, as this population grouping represents the sector of the population that is the most active across the board. As at 2001, the City of Knox had the highest proportion of residents aged 5 to 17 years, followed by Maroondah, and this trend is expected to continue in the short term.

The relatively high proportion of Australian born residents and low level of cultural diversity across the region as a whole would relate to a preference for sports traditionally favoured by Australians (eg. cricket, football, netball, tennis). As a result of this, it can be anticipated that participation in soccer is not likely to increase above average participation levels. As participation in soccer increases, it will most likely compete for players, facilities and resources from sports that have large participant bases – in addition to attracting new sports participants.

The Cities of Monash and Manningham have high proportions of residents born in non-English speaking countries which is likely to increase interest in soccer in these areas.

Combined, the regional community profile indicates that soccer clubs are in the midst of a peak of the demographic characteristics that relate to strong levels of participation in sport. Trends indicate that in the short term, the changes within the population will mean that, based on community change alone, there is not likely to be a significantly strong influence on increasing participation in sport. Instead, any such change will result from a change in the structure of sports participation and competition to cater to new markets, housing development encouraging new residents to the area, or mass marketing campaigns aimed at changing sports participation behaviour.

***Refer Section 2.3 of this report for further detail.***

### ***A Framework for Integrated Planning for Soccer***

A sports development pathway is proposed as a framework for identifying the various stakeholders involved in providing for sport at different levels of participation, and their related roles and responsibilities that differ from other providers, and the interconnections between them to ensure that the full range of opportunities is provided for participants. The Strategy nominates the stakeholders, their interest in providing for soccer and their influence in shaping the participation opportunities offered. Compared to the pathway, the participation opportunities provided by Football Federation Victoria have a heavy emphasis on competitive progression to elite level resulting in a gap in the areas of social competition; this is particularly an area that is filled by VicSoccer, the Bayside League and the Victorian Churches Soccer Association which also add to the physical activity, participation and performance development levels of the pathway.

***Refer Section 2.4 of this report for further detail.***

### ***Soccer Participation Trends***

Whilst participation in soccer has anecdotally 'gone through the roof', research shows that participation in outdoor soccer has been relatively stable since 2001, whilst participation in indoor soccer has increased in Victoria by 25% (from a low base of 2% in 2005). In Victoria, outdoor soccer is still placed behind tennis, golf, Australian Rules football, basketball, netball and cricket in terms of overall participation rates.

When examined for children only, participation and demand for soccer is greater, with a National study (Children's Participation in Cultural & Leisure Activities Australia, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006) indicating soccer has the second largest participation rate and greatest demand by children aged under 15 years.

Registrations across all Leagues in the eastern region show a 37% increase since 2000; with the growth occurring from within the junior sectors. Senior men's registrations have remained relatively stable with declines in some Leagues. The most significant increase in soccer participation is occurring amongst juniors and women, although participation by males overall is higher than females.

The following comments on local participation trends and demand across the six Council areas is based on a summary of the survey conducted with local soccer clubs and is provided to complement existing research. The information should be considered with caution and used as a guide only, as it is not representative of the views of all clubs (43% return). In particular, there is little information provided by the Boroondara based soccer clubs and data from the Boroondara Soccer Strategy has been used to supplement this survey.

- Barriers to participation by women include balancing competing needs, lack of affordable and accessible childcare, poor body image, low self esteem, few role models and misconceptions surrounding elite level participation. Participation in indoor soccer is considered to be part of the solution for women's participation as it is seen as being easier, less rough, not impacted on by weather etc.
- The trend in participation between boys and girls reflects the two genders playing alongside equally to the age of U/12 – where they begin to play separately (and need separate change rooms).
- Soccer was the sport that the second highest proportion of primary and secondary school students undertake after school. Secondary school students participated in soccer mainly in clubs and at school.
- Soccer was also the sport nominated by the largest proportion of secondary and primary school children as an activity that they would like to participate in but don't at present, followed by basketball and football. Lack of time was a key reason that prevented uptake of the sport.
- Over 30% respondents to the general survey currently participate in soccer (indoor and outdoor).
- The reason provided by the largest proportion of respondents to the general survey for no longer playing soccer was 'not having access to quality facilities'. Time, work commitments, risk of injury and clashing with other sports (i.e. all time related factors) were also factors that impacted on soccer participation.
- Participation in soccer clubs has increased by 73% from 2003 to 2006 across the eastern region.
- 63% of clubs are targeting juniors specifically, with 60% of these targeting females specifically. 21% of clubs are targeting senior players and only one club identified people with disabilities as a particular target market.

- The proportion of senior women members is very low, being just 5% of all club members (297 people).

The cost to participate in soccer within the Leagues is variable (between each League). In particular, the cost to participate in the higher standards of competition within Football Federation Victoria stand out. The dearer charges of the FFV have been highlighted by clubs and participants as a barrier to participation in the League, and a notable motivator for participating in the lower cost leagues. There is less of a variation in the cost to participate amongst the junior levels of competition, although the FFV competition is still more expensive.

***Refer Section 2.5 of this report for further detail.***

### ***Soccer Management & Governance***

The administration of soccer at the National level has undergone significant change since 2002. This has led to a new National governing body to administer major reforms, which included a new National level competition (A-League). Some years later, these changes have affected an identity change for soccer represented by name changes of the National and State (Victorian) governing bodies and introduction of the term 'football'. A consistent administrative and governance model for soccer is now emerging across Australia, with a positive vote for constitutional reform of Football Federation Victoria occurring in April 2006. The new Constitution will be based on the National model, with the implications being a closer integration between the National and State bodies at a structural, managerial and governance level. A major direction in moving soccer forward is to remove the cultural branding of the sport and ethnic specialisation of clubs.

There is a strong desire by Football Federation Victoria to represent the broader interests of all soccer bodies in Victoria including centres that run indoor competitions, with the intent of providing a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated voice for the sport. To achieve this, there is acknowledgement of the different needs of these organisations and the demands of the market niches that they cater for, and a desire for these to continue to be provided in a more coordinated format.

The A-League is developing positively in Victoria with strong on field success by the Victorian representative team, Melbourne Victory, and off-field support by spectators. The high profile and media exposure of the A-League and Melbourne Victory are gaining, combined with the generic and non-ethnically biased positioning of the League and its teams, will only increase the popularity of soccer in Victoria with an anticipated impact of a further increasing demand from new participants and desire from players to progress up a competitive pathway.

***Refer Section 2.6 of this report for further detail.***

## Summary of Stakeholder Consultation

A number of stakeholders were engaged to identify issues, constraints and opportunities affecting the development and growth of soccer in the eastern region. Following is a summary of the key directions from the consultation which represents the views of stakeholders; presented under headings that represents the key roles related to the provision of soccer:

### *Planning (including policy, partnerships and consultation)*

- Enhancing relationships and communication to provide for soccer and integrate participation opportunities across the sports development pathway is required; between schools and clubs, local government and Football Federation Victoria, councils and clubs, winter and summer sport clubs.
- Cost is a barrier to participation for some, especially when the cost of uniform, registration, playing fees, transport etc is combined.
- Transport can also be a barrier to participation for some.

### *Participation*

- Opportunities for growth in soccer are considered to be in juniors, social competitions, females.
- There is an issue of participants being restricted from playing – caused by clubs having to cap members due to facility constraints, which has resulted in some clubs prioritising participation for higher standard players – as a result, lower standard players miss out on occasions.
- Some school staff have limited knowledge of soccer which can limit opportunities for students.

### *People (disadvantaged population groups, club development and management)*

- Governance, risk management, insurance, strategic planning, media profile are management issues impacting on soccer.
- Volunteer recruitment, retention and development are significant issues for local clubs, as is the supply of accredited referees.
- Council assistance is requested with the strategic planning of clubs. Clubs also identified that they would gain benefit from resources (e.g. newsletter, promotion) to assist with management.
- Soccer is a preferred sport of migrants from emerging CALD communities in Australia.
- There is a need for people with disabilities, people from CALD backgrounds and young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds to be catered for by clubs in an inclusive manner.

- There is a desire for both integrated and specialised activities (e.g. for people with disabilities, CALD).
- Any programs need to be carefully planned to be appropriate to the target market (eg. use CALD coaches for a CALD program).
- Players from disadvantaged population groups also want opportunities to participate in competition pathways (i.e. play at a high level).
- There is a need to provide more female friendly environments through; facilities, coaching, uniforms, welcoming environments; and to provide for female representation in administration, governance.

### ***Provision (programs, services and pathways)***

- 27% of clubs indicated that they provide soccer for all abilities (i.e. to cater for people with disabilities), although only 5% specifically target people with disabilities.
- There is not a lot of opportunity for social soccer at present and this is particularly desired by women. The timing of competition games for women is not always conducive to the times that women can participate (due to other commitments).
- Over half of all clubs in the region offered the GoalKick (junior skills development) program.
- Schools often don't have the equipment required to provide for a sport, including soccer.
- Seasonal creep is an issue, with clubs running pre-season competitions, summer competitions and academies. There is demand from players for extra-curricula soccer, eg. to run after school soccer program, pre-season cups, summer soccer program. There is also pressure to run some GoalKick programs 12 months. Football Federation Victoria does not plan to shorten the season length to less than 22 weeks, and the Men's and Women's Premier League competition is scheduled to commence prior to the 'official' winter season, thus placing pressure on containing participation within the nominated seasons.
- Clubs not affiliated with Football Federation Victoria did not partake in FFV programs and therefore rely on their own programming. The lack of facilities and/or inappropriateness of facilities was a significant factor that inhibited clubs' involvement in special programs. The availability of volunteers was also a factor.
- There is demand for casual soccer programs (particularly by the corporate sector).
- Masters / veterans participants' have more of an emphasis on social competition.
- Women represent a high proportion of spectators.

### ***Facilities (existing facilities, future facilities - including a regional facility, and management)***

- Facility constraints (i.e. undersupply of facilities and access to playing fields to cater for demand) are a significant factor that impact on clubs' ability to cater for demand. Specifically this includes the need to upgrade facilities to meet basic expectations, achieve



maximum use, cater for females or meet FFV standards. There is a need for more facilities, the need for facilities to be available for pre-season use and to cater for women players.

- It is considered essential that soccer pitches are also made available for casual soccer use.
- There is an opportunity to contribute to the design of new schools to ensure that facilities are provided to meet the needs of the broader community (i.e. constructed to full size).
- Larger facilities are more efficient and sustainable to manage / operate than smaller facilities.
- Specific guidelines are sought from Football Federation Victoria for facility developments (eg. service levels for councils to ensure that soccer developments are undertaken to be most appropriate for soccer). Only 25% of clubs indicated that the Football Federation Victoria minimum facility standards presented an issue for them.
- It is recognised that facilities need to cater for females.
- There is demand for year-round use of facilities.
- The use of portable goals is a potential method of increasing the use of grassed areas not nominated for soccer.
- Greater contributions from clubs are required to enhance facilities beyond a minimum standard of provision.
- The shared use of grounds with cricket (i.e. a cricket wicket in the middle of a soccer ground) restricts the use and functionality of facilities for soccer.
- A regional facility is considered to have merit on the basis that there are too few facilities in the east to service demand. However, there is a strong feeling by clubs, peak bodies and Councils that a regional facility should not be developed to the detriment of local facilities.
- Nearly all clubs surveyed showed interest in using a regional facility, with most (69% of those indicating use) nominated a preference to use natural grass pitches, followed by artificial pitches (58%) and social rooms (54%). The greatest anticipated use of an artificial pitch was for training. Respondent clubs anticipated use of natural pitches at a regional facility for training and competition, followed by smaller proportions suggesting use of natural pitches for pre-season use and tournaments. Most respondent clubs indicated that they would not use social rooms at a regional facility.
- The views towards the provision, management and use of a regional facility varied amongst the Councils; with some expecting that a regional facility would be managed in a semi-commercial capacity (e.g. through contracting out of the management function), and others preferring to retain full control through in-house management. All Councils indicated a need to seek external funding for a major development (i.e. State Government).
- There is a strong view held that the responsibilities of State Government and Football Federation Victoria would need to be determined (especially regarding funding) regarding a regional facility.

- There was a view that large catchment facilities can be sustained from within municipal populations regardless of broadening to a regional catchment; i.e. question whether one regional facility would be enough to service the demand across six Councils.
- The views of stakeholders varied regarding the type and structure of use of a potential regional facility, to include;
  - A centralised competition, i.e. all competition games of a particular level played at the same venue each week, regardless of home team.
  - Cater for higher standard participation, Show matches and major events,
  - Other nominated uses included off-season training, representative squad training / playing, a training base for squads, host academies, coaching and referee courses, and corporate events,
  - Some clubs felt that a regional facility should not cater for grass roots level participation, as parents prefer less travel and home and away competition would require less travel, yet others felt it would aid travel through competition being conducted regularly at the same, centralised venue.
  - Conversely, another view was that a regional facility could cater just for juniors or sub-juniors (and thus not require a high standard of development, e.g. grandstands) to take the pressure off juniors using senior level facilities,
  - A suggestion was made for a regional facility to be a home for women's soccer;
- Opinions on the management of a regional facility varied, and included;
  - FFV and soccer leagues were nominated by large proportions of clubs,
  - FFV regional offices could be based at such a facility and be responsible for the management. There was also an alternative view that a regional facility should not be controlled by the FFV.
  - A number of stakeholders commented that a regional facility should not be allocated to one club, but be a playing base for clubs (i.e. not a home base),
  - A number of stakeholders suggested a management committee involving the sports peak bodies and local government.
- User pays and sponsorship were other suggestions for funding a regional facility development.
- The development of a multi-sport regional facility (i.e. cater for sports with similar requirements and complementary uses) was suggested to enhance viability. Including elements that can be run commercially such as an indoor venue for indoor soccer / Futsal, corporate competitions and social competitions is considered to be necessary as part of any regional facility proposition.
- Regardless of the provision of a regional facility, the need for a high quality pitch to provide for Premier League teams in the region is considered to be necessary.

### **Perception & Profile** (information, education, promotion)

- Positive role models are considered to be essential in encouraging participation by different target markets. Role models should be relevant to the market being targeted, e.g. females for women soccer programs.
- Schools are important in promoting sport and in identifying participants that experience barriers to participation and thus may require additional support.
- The opportunity exists to coordinate the promotion of soccer across the region – although there is an argument that promoting soccer will only increase the facility congestion issues, and thus clubs will be limited in catering for additional demand.
- Clubs need to be educated on the needs of people from disadvantaged population groups and understand the benefits of inclusion.
- Cultural differences inhibit people from playing soccer and the perception that the sport has ethnic / cultural conflicts.
- There is a need for new communities to understand how sport ‘works’ (i.e. is structured); education is required on how clubs operate, the rules and expectations of members etc.

***Refer Section 3.1 of this report for further detail.***

### **Facility Review & Options for Provision**

Consideration of a regional level facility in the eastern region is a key requirement of this Study. Such a model has been raised previously; the Local Government & Victorian Soccer Resource Study (1999) proposed a structure of provision that represented a mixture of both local and district or regional level facilities. In particular, it identified that junior competitions should be locally based (i.e. within 10 kilometres) at appropriate, local level facilities (i.e. low level infrastructure). Further, it proposed that higher levels of competition be provided at district or regional level facilities (the idea being that a district level facility can accommodate the higher level competition needs of a larger geographic area, and as such there may be only one or two such facilities within a municipality, and similarly, a regional facility can accommodate the needs of a region – being approximately three municipal areas).

The concept of district / regional level provision is to cater for the identified needs across a larger geographic area; with district considered to be approximately one to two municipal areas, and a region normally considered to be three or more. In the case of this Study, the region has been defined as a significant area comprising six municipalities, and therefore sub-regional level of provision may need to be considered.

A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken to understand and learn from the benefits, constraints, managerial and operational considerations of provision for soccer at a regional level. A number of examples were identified internationally and within Australia of varying levels of development and models of provision. Learning's from the benchmarking for regional facility provision examples investigated include:

- The benefits of the regional facility developments have included regeneration of sites and communities, including the provision of local employment;
- Environmental sustainable and efficient resource use have been key principles, in particular water recycling;
- Most developments have included the provision of an artificial surface pitch (although this is common practice in the United Kingdom);
- Some developments have a multi-sport focus and include commercial elements, administrative headquarters;
- Some developments include planning for a facility manager;
- It is considered beneficial, and important to involve stakeholders in the planning of facilities, and in allowing for flexibility where possible.
- Partnerships are crucial in the planning and development phases, and ongoing management and use.

Public and private primary and secondary schools and universities are regarded as key providers of sporting facilities, as the scope of provision at these facilities often include sports fields, and sometimes indoor facilities. The provision of this open space presents these facilities as great potential for aiding the undersupply issue experienced by the Councils. The level of development of these facilities however varies significantly and is greatly inhibited by financial constraints, and the priorities of individual schools.

Synthetic grass pitches have been identified as a particularly strong opportunity for increasing provision for soccer, as the surfaces can tolerate high intensity use and are drought tolerant, however the capital cost for provision is substantial (estimated at around \$750K for a full pitch size with a medium quality surface). The synthetic grass technology continues to evolve to overcome player burning and discomfort and performs closely to natural grass surfaces. There is a willingness among players to play on synthetic surfaces, although the standard of play considered to be appropriate differs based on individual opinion.

The State Soccer Centre includes three synthetic grass pitches that are used for all forms of participation, from training to lower levels of competition, tournaments and academies. The peak soccer bodies identify synthetic grass as the future for facility provision, and recognise the significant benefit of the increased carrying capacity of the surface compared to a natural grass pitch, and all-year, all-weather durability. Amongst the soccer community, there are differing views on synthetic grass. There is still some reluctance to play high level competition (ie. Premier League or A-League) on a synthetic grass surface until further advancements can prove natural grass-like performance and no burning.

***Refer Section 4.1 of this report for further detail.***

Football Federation Victoria has criteria that specifies the minimum standard for facilities to meet different levels of participation that are largely not adhered to or applied by councils. A conflict therefore exists between Football Federation Victoria, soccer clubs and councils for the development of facilities to the standard required to support the level of participation of the tenant club, further strained by many councils having independent minimum sports facility standards that don't always reach the same level of development required of FFV (particularly for higher standard facilities), and policies of not developing exclusive use facilities that do not provide for public access.

In particular, the standards for the highest class facilities (A and B level) are those on which the conflict predominantly centres, as Class C level is generally consistent with the minimum level of sports facility provision of the councils in the eastern region (those that have minimum facility standards). The basis for this conflict is the strong emphasis of local government on provision for grass roots sport, and desire to facilitate participation in physical activity broadly.

Of interest is the inequity in the requirement for the Women's Premier League (Class C level facility) compared to a Class A facility for Men's Premier League games. There is no acknowledgement of the standards required to support junior or social level competition in the current facility criteria.

There are no prescribed facility standards by the Bayside League, VicSoccer or Victorian Churches Soccer Association.

***Refer Section 4.2 of this report for further detail.***

## Facility Provision by Local Government in the Eastern Region

To ascertain the utilisation and level of use of the facilities (pavilions and buildings, pitches and supporting infrastructure such as team benches and scoreboards) used for soccer in the eastern region, their level of development, facility components and supporting infrastructure, siting and management, an inventory was prepared with this information on each facility. The following observations are made on the level and standard of provision in the eastern region:

- The majority of the facilities are single pitch developments;
- The majority of the facilities include only one set of change rooms (i.e. 2 rooms);
- Most buildings are old, and therefore constructed to outdated design and use trends;
- The majority of the facilities are shared with a summer tenant, resulting in few year-round use opportunities for soccer;
- Some facilities do not include pavilions, or basic toilet / change facilities to support use. Pavilions that are provided tend to include social rooms, change rooms, kiosk / canteen and public toilets; additional items to these (such as bar, gym, separate referee's room, first aid room, media room, players race and disabled toilets) are provided on a far less frequent basis.
- There are few facilities that have scope for expansion; instead, alternative strategies for achieving increased provision on constrained sites need to be explored (e.g. reconfiguration);
- Most facilities are surrounded by other sports infrastructure;
- Most, but not all pitch surfaces are supported by some level of infrastructure such as drainage and irrigation, and floodlighting that is provided to allow for training only.

The Study nominates the current classification of each facility used for soccer provided by the councils in the eastern region according to the 2008 Grounds and Facilities Criteria, and identifies the facilities currently used for State and Premier League level participation, to assist in the formulation of facility recommendations. Analysis of the facility ratings clearly indicates the absence of Class A standard facilities. A large proportion of facilities could not be classified due to certain elements of the Grounds and Facilities Criteria not being provided, thus rendering the whole facility non-rateable, regardless of the level of provision and standard of development of the existing elements. In most cases, the additional infrastructure elements required for compliance with Criteria include the provision of covered team benches, disabled toilets or a referee's room.

***Refer Section 4.3 of this report for further detail.***

## Summary of Key Themes Informing Recommendations

The following key findings have been gathered from the information gathered throughout the Strategy research (these have been nominated where they have been repeated from different sources, or are anticipated to have a significant impact on participation in, or provision for soccer), and include:

- Participation growth is strongest by juniors and females;
- Greater provision for females is required in terms of facilities (i.e. both male and female change rooms), and club cultures / social environments;
- There are not enough facilities to service demand for participation in soccer, and there are few opportunities to develop new facilities (i.e. available open space);
- Consensus does not exist between local government and FFV regarding the FFV Grounds and Facilities Criteria which creates conjecture between the standards of facilities developed;
- School facilities present an opportunity to achieve the use of additional sports facilities, on the basis that occupancy agreements (including management and maintenance arrangements) can reasonably be negotiated;
- General sports participation trends have an impact on soccer; a range of competitive opportunities is important and should respond to sports participation trends, namely demand for casual and social participation;
- Cost is a determinant of participation and membership in clubs / Associations;
- Participation in indoor soccer is increasing;
- Partnerships between providers of soccer are crucial and require improvement, particularly in relation to communication; especially across clubs from other sports (i.e. cricket), councils, schools, Associations and FFV;
- FFV needs to be adequately resourced to facilitate stronger relationships with local government, and provide more developmental support to club administrators;
- FFV must address the planning of facilities for soccer more proactively and strategically, and in partnership with local government;
- Club administrators require support to enable the governance and operations of clubs to be enhanced, particularly in relation to strategic planning;
- In some cases the policy position / past practices of local government should be challenged to ensure they respond to emerging sports participation trends and modern requirements, and facilitate improved provision for sport;
- The status of soccer administration in Victoria is still developing and maturing;
- Information dissemination and education is important in promoting participation opportunities and developing players and administrators.

The recommendations and actions of the Strategy have been prepared in response to these key drivers, as these are the areas that are deemed to most require attention, and have also concentrated on what is most achievable.

The role of Football Federation Victoria is crucial to the successful implementation of the Strategy, as the State representative body for soccer is to be the leader and driver to oversee and coordinate the achievement of these recommendations and the action plan. This responsibility includes facilitating communication between the custodian organisations of this Strategy to ensure the regional relationships are maintained, through convening and administering meetings and correspondence, establishing annual work programs and monitoring achievement of the action plan; with an annual review of priorities. FFV must be resourced to undertake these roles to ensure implementation is achieved. Without such a coordinated approach, the successful implementation of the Strategy will be severely hindered.

The role of each Council is equally important, in ensuring that work plans are incorporated into internal resourcing and budget programs, a willingness to implement regional actions to ensure an integrated and coordinated approach, and a commitment to providing for soccer to the intent of the Strategy.

***Refer Section 5.1 of this report for further detail.***

## **Future Facility Provision Directions for the Eastern Region**

A review of the opportunities to strategically cater for the growth of soccer through the development of existing, and provision of new facilities has been conducted for each municipality for all levels of facilities as per the Football Federation Victoria standards; rated Class A to Class D, and those not eligible to be rated. The gaps and opportunities analysis of the facilities is based on the following considerations:

- The current standard of facilities (i.e. classification according to the FFV criteria);
- Priority is given to facilities that have scope for expansion, and to those that lend themselves to the establishment of precinct-type developments (i.e. multiple-pitches);
- The status of the tenant clubs, i.e. standard of competition played and prospect for promotion, level of participation (i.e. senior / junior), membership size and growth;
- Priority will be given to the upgrade / development of facilities that are centrally located within the region and each municipality (however this is not given a high priority as it is considered that, particularly for a regional level facility, a high quality 'offering' will attract users almost regardless of location);



- The status of each municipality in terms of number of clubs and facilities, facility mix, and demographic trends (i.e. population growth, age dispersal);
- It is recognised that the availability of adequate Greenfield land is rare in the highly developed eastern region, therefore the availability of space for expansion at existing facilities will dictate opportunities for new developments to service either the municipality or region;
- Priority is given to schools primarily where municipal facilities are lacking, and of these, secondary and private schools;
- Where appropriate, priority is given to considering the use of school facilities that already provide specifically for soccer;
- Achieving a balance in provision across each municipality and the region is considered to be ideal, but it is recognised that other factors may impact on the ability to achieve this (e.g. land availability, Council policy); and,
- The anticipated growth of soccer and the proposed changes based on the recommended model of provision.

The future model of provision for soccer in the eastern region was based on the following principles:

- There is a need to gain consistency in facility standards and minimum level of facility provision across the region;
- Upgrading existing facilities that do not meet the agreed minimum standard of provision will be a priority before developing new, high standard facilities;
- The benefits of artificial surfaces are recognised in providing all-weather, high intensity facilities;
- Providing for indoor soccer may alleviate demand for outdoor facilities as an alternative form of soccer participation is more readily provided for;
- A hierarchy of facilities should be provided within each municipality, to cater for a range of participation levels, thus supporting a soccer participation pathway;
- The development of high standard facilities relies on partnerships between FFV, State government, Councils and clubs;
- The sharing of facilities where appropriate is crucial to maximising resources; (Consideration has been given to the opportunity for different levels of competition (i.e. Premier League and State League 1) sharing facilities. Whilst this is a possibility in theory, the significant barriers of club cultures would make this reality a difficult proposition).

- Given the specialised use and high standard of development (and cost to provide and maintain) of Class A facilities, the opportunity of sharing through a centralised model of use should be pursued;
- Funding requires clarification in terms of the contributors to facilities of different standards.

The following preferred model of provision is developed giving consideration to the demands for participation in soccer with the limited capacity to provide additional sporting facilities:

- Councils will work towards bringing lower standard facilities to Class C level (according to the FFV Grounds and Facilities Criteria) as the minimum level of soccer facility provision by the Council on Council owned land, as finances allow and space is available;
- Any improvements to develop higher standard facilities (than Class C level) to be funded through partnerships with clubs and State government; with State government and FFV to contribute significantly to Class A facilities and regional facility developments.
- It is appropriate for Class D level facilities to be provided at schools;
- It is appropriate to consider undersized areas for soccer pitches where it means that additional playing surfaces can be achieved – to cater for junior participation and training;
- At least one synthetic pitch to be provided in each municipality; to be accessible to all clubs through a centralised management model to be rigorously planned and financially modelled through feasibility analysis.
- Futsal, indoor soccer and 5-a-side should be provided for through specific facilities / provision at existing facilities / conversion of disused facilities (such as tennis courts), and demand will be monitored for future planning and provision;
- Identify potential future site/s (existing or new) for a regional facility development – to ensure that the opportunity for provision is preserved in future planning, as it is considered that the demand demonstrated for soccer is adequate to support such facility development;
- Any new Class A facilities developed should be ‘neutral’, by not being occupied specifically by one club, to be managed through a centralised model;
- Any precinct / regional-type development should comprise multiple pitches, and should consider the inclusion of a Class A ground and an artificial pitch;

The ‘Future Facility Provision Guide by Municipality’ builds on the overall Preferred Facility Provision Model to guide future facility provision for soccer within each municipality. The Future Facility Provision Guide considers the social, demographic and soccer participation trends, and the standard and range of soccer facilities provided within each municipality, to determine future facility development directions. The facility directions from the Future Facility Provision Guide for each municipality include:

### ***City of Whitehorse***

- Increase capacity to provide for soccer through better use of existing facilities, i.e.; upgrading pavilions;
- Some demand for additional pitches;
- Requirement to provide high standard facilities to support competitive pathway (Class B in short term; consider Class A in longer term);
- Opportunity to provide better for females through dual change rooms, where appropriate;

### ***City of Knox***

- Additional pitches required;
- Requirement to provide high standard facilities to support competitive pathway (Class A in short term and Class B in mid term);
- Opportunity to provide better for females through dual change rooms, where appropriate;

### ***City of Maroondah***

- Strong potential for growth in participation;
- Increase capacity to provide for soccer through better use of existing facilities, i.e.;
  - Providing infrastructure at pitches (i.e. drainage, irrigation, floodlighting),
  - Provide basic building infrastructure with pitches, e.g. toilets and storage;
- Requirement to provide high standard facilities to support competitive pathway in mid (Class B) to long (Class A) term;
- Opportunity to provide better for females through dual change rooms, where appropriate;
- Pursue the opportunity of reconfiguring Manson & Dorset Reserves for additional soccer provision;

### ***City of Manningham***

- Additional pitches required;
- Provide buildings with pitches where possible;
- Pursue opportunities for additional facilities (pitches);
- Requirement to provide high standard facilities to support competitive pathway (Class B in mid term, with additional Class A (in addition to privately owned facility) in mid term);
- Opportunity to provide better for females through dual change rooms, where appropriate;

### ***City of Boroondara***

- Improve useability of existing facilities through drainage of pitches;
- Pursue the opportunity for providing additional pitches;
- Requirement to provide high standard facilities to support competitive pathway (Class B);
- Opportunity to provide better for females through dual change rooms, where appropriate;

### ***City of Monash***

- Provision is reasonable, although some additional pitches are required;
- Pursue the use of school facilities to achieve increased provision;
- Opportunity to provide better for females through dual change rooms, where appropriate;
- Requirement to provide high standard facilities to support competitive pathway (Class A in short term with additional Class B in long term).

The Study nominates recommendations to achieve the Facility Provision Model and Future Facility Provision Guide. The recommendations include those facilities required to meet Class C level and above as required, suggested sites for the provision of a synthetic pitch, opportunities to enhance soccer facility use and development at schools, and the provision and use of indoor facilities where appropriate. A relative balance in provision for Class A and B facilities is achieved both across the region (geographically) and within each municipality. Class C and school level facilities continue to be provided locally. The predominant gaps in provision exist where open space provision is poor.

A key requirement of the Study was to explore the concept of a regional soccer facility in terms of demand and willingness amongst stakeholder organisations for a joint development. There is considered to be sufficient demand to warrant further consideration of a 'regional facility' and further, the concept is deemed to have merit by the stakeholder organisations. However, factors such as geographic catchment, and the logistics of managing relationships between multiple partner organisations in addition to the operational management of a facility must be able to be overcome before the concept of a regional facility is considered further.

It is preferable for any regional facility development to occur at a Greenfield site, to combat any culture of individual club 'ownership', and to more easily change the structure of use to a centralised model. However, as the constraints of land availability and capital cost are significant, it is anticipated that a centralised model will need to be introduced at existing Class A and B standard facilities, to enable the shared use by clubs that play at the appropriate level (that may use other facilities) and thus require access to the higher standard facilities.

The facility development directions and recommendations made will result in the following soccer facility hubs that, depending on the quality and breadth of development, will achieve the provision of multiple municipal catchment facilities across the six Council areas, that may also present options for regional facility development in the future (potential regional facility opportunities are highlighted in *italics* below). These include:

Mahoney's Reserve – Whitehorse	<i>Manson Reserve - Maroondah</i>
Knox Park - Knox	Dorset Reserve – Maroondah
RD Egan Lee - Knox	<i>Petty's Reserve - Manningham</i>
<i>Lewis Park precinct - Knox</i>	Gardiners Reserve - Monash
<i>(Knox Central Urban Design Framework)</i>	<i>Jack Edwards Reserve – Monash</i>

Few additional open space Reserves were identified as potential new sites to provide for soccer. Those that were included Yarra Bend Park, Fairfield and Dandenong Valley Parklands, Wantirna South. Both of these sites fall under the management of Parks Victoria. The opportunity to contribute to the master planning of these parklands should be pursued by the regional Councils to investigate the willingness, capacity and potential for a multi-pitch soccer facility development in the least, or a regional soccer facility.

***Refer Section 5.2 of this report for further detail.***

## **Recommendations & Actions for Soccer in the Eastern Region**

The recommendations of the Eastern Region Soccer Strategy are presented in the form of an action plan, with an indication of priority and timing (to 2015), and resource implications. Partnerships between the six Councils, and between clubs, peak soccer bodies, and State government are crucial and underpin the success of the Strategy. Football Federation Victoria will take the leadership role in driving the implementation of the Strategy, and the role of the Bayside League, Victorian Churches Soccer Association and VicSoccer is equally recognised in the action plan.

The major actions (either in anticipated impact or volume of work) as presented under the categories of Planning, Participation, People, Provision, Facilities, Perception and Profile include:

### ***Planning***

- Establish an Eastern Region Soccer Working Group with committed attendance from Football Federation Victoria, Sport and Recreation Victoria and each Council in the region, to maintain the regional partnerships and coordinate implementation of the regional recommendations of the Strategy.

- Establish municipal Soccer Forums within each Council area, including representation from each soccer club, with the objective of conducting municipal level planning for the coordinated development of soccer.
- Research and prepare a Facility Provision Strategy that clarifies FFV's role in the planning, development, management and funding of each class of facility for soccer, and those of other stakeholders; and quantifies the desired level of provision and model for use in the long term. In particular, the Strategy should nominate greater involvement of Football Federation Victoria in the provision of Class A facilities.
- Sport and Recreation Victoria to investigate the willingness, appropriateness and viability of establishing a State level grant program to support the installation of synthetic sports surfaces.
- Prepare a policy of guiding the provision and use of floodlighting within each Council.
- Sport and Recreation Victoria to prepare soccer facility design guidelines that address best practice sustainable planning for soccer facilities and distribute as a resource for Local Government.
- Sport and Recreation Victoria to convene a working group to consider the issues identified in this Study that inhibit councils' ability to provide for soccer and strategically address at a metropolitan Melbourne level (e.g. through advocacy).
- Conduct a mid-term review (2012) of the Eastern Region Soccer Strategy, in particular;
  - Participation trends,
  - Facility provision, capacities and needs,
  - Appropriateness and priority of mid to long term actions, and
  - Consider appropriateness and timing of a detailed investigation into a regional facility.

### **Participation**

- Consolidate, and if appropriate, expand the FFV service mix to incorporate the needs of social soccer, through partnerships with Bayside League, VicSoccer and Victorian Churches Soccer Association.
- Improve accessibility to lower levels of participation through reviewing fees and charging concession fees, particularly to enhance access to socially based clubs and junior clubs; in partnership with the Bayside League, VicSoccer and Victorian Churches Soccer Association.

## **People**

- Coordinate training and development opportunities for clubs across the region, in partnership with Football Federation Victoria.
- Actively work with local clubs through the municipal Soccer Forums to identify club development needs and strategies for improvement, including provision of information, strategic planning, and assistance with funding.
- Develop a Recognition Program that offers incentives and rewards to clubs that demonstrate positive governance, management and inclusive practices.
- Develop a volunteer recruitment program through strategies such as waiving fees, splitting responsibilities into manageable tasks, and offering incentives (e.g. uniforms, equipment) / rewards.

## **Provision**

- Re-establish the Facility and Project Officer position within FFV, with the portfolio of local government relations, driving the implementation of this Strategy, and coordinate FFV's responsibilities in the action plan.

## **Facilities**

- Implement the facility improvements to achieve the Model of Provision according to the following:

### **Whitehorse**

Terrara precinct (assessed as one facility complex) – team benches, first aid, disabled toilet

Mahoney's (south east & south west) - team benches

Bill Sewart - team benches

Mirrabooka - team benches

Koonung - team benches (west oval)

Ballyshanassy (new venue for soccer) - team benches, disabled toilet

Synthetic pitch – site TBD (consider Wembley or Mahoney's)

### **Knox**

Schultz - first aid, team benches, ref change

Sasses Ave – first aid, team benches, disabled toilet, ref change

Knox Park – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change

HV Jones – first aid, team benches, ref change

RD Egan Lee (outer) - team benches, ref change, 2 x players change

Guy Turner - first aid, team benches, ref change, ramp for disabled toilet

Milpera Reserve – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet

Synthetic pitch – site TBD (consider RD Egan Lee or Knox Park)

### **Maroondah**

Ainslie - first aid, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change  
Silcock – first aid, team benches, ref change  
Springfield – first aid, team benches, 2 x players change  
Town Park – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet  
Fred Geale – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change  
Dorset (outer) – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change, public toilets  
Belmont – first aid, team benches, ref change, 2 x players change  
Gracedale – new pavilion  
Manson (1&2) - first aid, team benches  
Dorset Reserve – synthetic pitch

### **Manningham**

Donvale - team benches, first aid  
Boronia Grove – team benches, first aid, ref change, 2 x players change  
Wilson's Reserve – first aid, enlarge ref change, disabled, 2 x players change  
Bulleen Park (outer) - first aid, team benches, player change x 2, ref change  
Timber Ridge - team benches, ref change, first aid  
Park Avenue - first aid, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change  
Petty's Reserve – new soccer development to be master planned (incl. pitches, pavilion, synthetic pitch)

### **Boroondara**

Willsmere – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, kiosk  
Hays Paddock – team bench, ref change, first aid  
Stradbroke – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet  
Hislop – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, kiosk  
Frog Hollow – team bench, first aid, public toilets, disabled toilet, 2 x players change  
Highfield – first aid, team benches, ref change, public toilets, disabled toilet, kiosk  
Hartwell – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change  
Warner – first aid, team benches, ref change, public toilets, disabled toilet, 2 x players change  
Markham – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet  
Watson - first aid, team benches  
HA Smith – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet  
Howard Dawson - first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet  
Synthetic pitch – site TBD



## **Monash**

Glen Waverley North – first aid, team benches

Lapent – first aid, ref change

Lum – first aid, team benches, disabled toilet, 2 x players change

Argyle – first aid, team benches, disabled toilet

Caloola – first aid, team benches, disabled toilet, 2 x players change

Batesford – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change

Ashwood – first aid, team benches, ref change, public toilets, disabled toilet, 2 x players change

Jack Edwards (outer) – first aid, ref change, team benches, disabled toilet

Gardiners Creek – first aid, ref change

Ashwood College (school) - first aid, team benches, disabled toilets, ref change

Synthetic pitch – site TBD

- Revisit the Grounds & Facilities Criteria to review the associated fencing requirements for Class B facilities (to incorporate temporary measures), and add the minimum level of provision to support junior levels of competition and social facility requirements, and incorporate infrastructure requirements appropriate to school facilities.
- Prepare minimum facility development standards for the provision of soccer grounds and pavilions and incorporate Class C requirements as the minimum level of provision for Council owned / managed facilities. Where such standards exist, review to incorporate four change rooms as the minimum level of provision for soccer.
- Conduct an audit of the actual use of soccer and other seasonal sporting facilities within each municipality. Establish variations from the 'reported' level of use to identify opportunities for more efficient use of facilities through sharing, reconfiguration or consolidation of use to allow for the generation of additional sports fields.
- Establish a Facilities sub-committee within Football Federation Victoria to proactively address the planning and use of facilities across each Classification (i.e. grassroots to elite).
- Sport and Recreation Victoria to investigate the willingness, appropriateness and viability of establishing a grant program to fund new / upgraded grounds at school sites.
- Develop pathways for Women's Premier League teams to have access to higher standard facilities.
- Coordinate the consistent management of local government owned / managed facilities across the region, through establishing consistency in the conditions of use of facilities and consider offering long term tenure for club funded facility improvements.

- A representation from the eastern region lobby the Department of Education for the continuation of the Community Facilities Funding program, and to seek involvement in the planning of new school developments (or facility developments at existing schools) with a view to identifying opportunities to provide soccer facilities where appropriate.
- Prepare (or review where these exist) a policy for the provision of floodlighting on Council reserves, that considers provision of competition level floodlighting where appropriate.
- Explore opportunities and partnerships for the installation of floodlighting on school facilities to enhance use.
- Prepare a feasibility study for regional soccer facility provision in the eastern region (that considers frequency of provision; management model; activity mix, standard and facility components; funding options (including private sector partnerships); determines life cycle costings; partnerships and develops a business plan).

### ***Perception & Profile***

- Conduct a regional wide promotion of soccer participation initiatives through schools.
- Generate role models to encourage participation in soccer by juniors, women and people from disadvantaged population groups.
- Establish a clear pathway from schools to club based participation, and involve clubs in facilitating the link from schools. Promote broadly as a Football Federation Victoria program to schools.

<p><b><i>Refer Section 5.3 of this report for further detail.</i></b></p>
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# EASTERN REGION SOCCER STRATEGY

## PART 2. THE STRATEGY





# Section 1. Introduction

Scope of the Study  
Methodology





## 1.1 The Eastern Region Soccer Strategy

The Eastern Region Soccer Strategy is an initiative of the Cities of Whitehorse, Manningham, Maroondah, Knox, Monash and Boroondara supported by Sport and Recreation Victoria and Football Federation Victoria. The Study represents an innovative approach to planning for a sport within local government, through seeking a collaborative effort for the planning, provision and management of soccer with local clubs, peak bodies and across different levels of government.

Participation in soccer has grown in each of the six municipalities within the study area over recent years, and continues to rise. With limited space available for the development of additional sports facilities and existing facilities steadily used by other sports, the Councils have experienced difficulty in meeting the demands for soccer. Additionally, it is anticipated that soccer will continue to grow thus placing further demand on facilities that are already at capacity in many cases. As a result, the need to take a strategic approach to the way in which soccer is catered for to ensure its growth and development across the eastern region was identified.

The Eastern Region Soccer Strategy was initiated in response to the six Local Government Authorities (LGA's) experiencing similar issues in providing for soccer, namely an undersupply of facilities to cater for demand (some Councils were exploring potential strategies for the appropriate support of soccer within their respective municipalities concurrently, but not collaboratively); and a desire to strengthen Councils position to better understand, and respond to the needs of soccer from a more strategic and proactive foundation. Given the similar climate for soccer participation and provision across the eastern region, the opportunity for collaborative planning was identified, and the Eastern Region Soccer Strategy resulted with commitment from the:

- Whitehorse City Council
- Knox City Council
- Maroondah City Council
- Manningham City Council
- Boroondara City Council
- Monash City Council
- Football Federation Victoria, and
- Sport and Recreation Victoria



Smart Connection Company, a sport and leisure planning consultancy was engaged to conduct the research and prepare the strategy as per the methodology outlined below, with guidance from a Project Steering Group comprising representatives from the stakeholder organisations listed previously.

The Strategy conducts a situational assessment of soccer participation and provision within each of the municipalities; which includes investigation into the needs of players, barriers to participation, and constraints on the utilisation of facilities. A long-term, strategic plan that identifies future opportunities to support provision for soccer for each organisation is achieved with a focus on an integrated approach across the region.

The situational assessment has a strong focus on facilities, as this is an aspect of provision that strongly affects participation and capacity to cater for demand. Specifically, the Strategy aims to develop a strategic approach for the future provision of facilities including recommendations for the location, enhancement and development of soccer facilities to maximise training and match play opportunities for the sport within a regional context; achieve integrated planning; identify the role of partnerships between relevant associations and authorities in facility provision and support; and management of facilities.

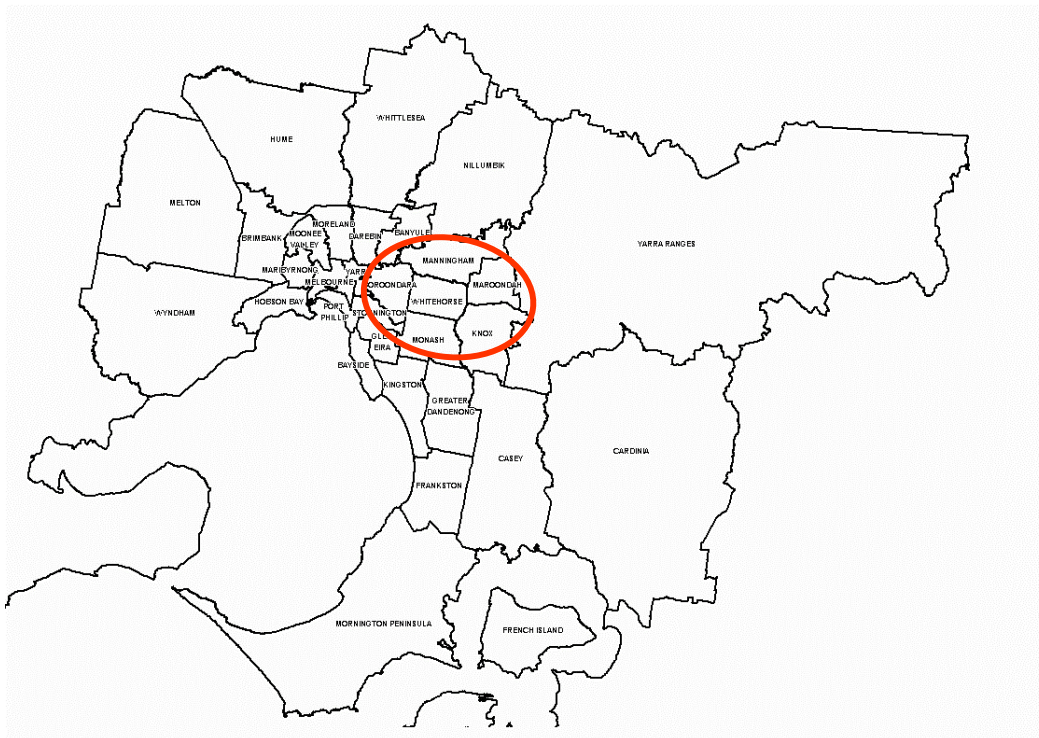
This will be achieved through:

- Joint decision making by the eight custodian organisations
- Establishing participation levels in soccer within the region, and anticipating the impact of future trends on provision;
- Identifying barriers and restrictions to participation and the limitations on provision within each organisation, with regard to policies and strategic directions;
- Identifying the existing level of provision for soccer and opportunities to maximise existing resources in catering for future demand;
- Mapping the soccer facilities provided by local government across the region;
- Preparing a facility provision plan that outlines the facility infrastructure requirements according to the needs of the peak soccer bodies, including identifies of facility improvements within each municipality;
- Determining the opportunity and need for a regional level facility, and investigating opportunities for provision;
- Establishing the roles and responsibilities of the various Local Government Authorities and other stakeholders in providing for soccer; and,
- Examining partnership opportunities for facility provision between stakeholders.

### 1.1.1 Study Area

The eastern region represents a substantial portion of metropolitan Melbourne as shown on the following map. The region comprises some of the more densely populated and developed municipalities; combined, the region including the six municipalities of Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Knox, Whitehorse and Boroondara represents some 23% of the metropolitan Melbourne population, or 788,090 people (2001 Census data).

**Figure 1. Geographic Area of Eastern Metropolitan Melbourne Region**





### 1.1.2 Methodology

To achieve the nominated outcomes, the following process was conducted to ensure a detailed situational assessment of soccer within the eastern region, to enable the development of appropriate and achievable recommendations:

- A review of literature related to soccer, and policies and planning relevant to sport, recreation and open space provision and management;
- A demographic analysis of each municipality, including the future population trends, and anticipated implications for soccer participation and provision;
- Review of soccer participation rates in Victoria and Australia;
- Preparation of visual maps depicting;
  - Inventory detail of all soccer facilities owned / managed by the six Councils, including pavilions and pitches,
  - Sporting facilities owned by the Education Department, including those currently used for soccer,
  - Indoor facilities that provide for soccer participation opportunities;
  - Private outdoor soccer facilities used by local clubs (e.g. Veneto Club, Knox Italian Club);

*Note: facilities used for other sports (e.g. Australian Rules football) were not included in the mapping or inventory*

- Benchmarking (nationally and internationally) to explore regional soccer facility developments;
- Stakeholder consultation across the six Council areas which included the following;
  - A survey with residents on participation and interest in soccer and sport broadly,
  - Interviews with key providers of soccer, namely peak bodies and leagues,
  - A survey of soccer clubs that use Council owned / managed facilities which investigated participation trends, facility constraints and club development issues,
  - Forums within each municipality to which representatives from all soccer clubs were invited,
  - Interviews with key Managers and Directors from each municipality, and key policy makers and strategic planners of sport,
  - Interviews with non council land owners that provide for soccer, and a survey of casual users of council owned and managed soccer facilities,
  - Workshops with officers from across each council,
  - Surveys with students from a range of levels at a selection of primary and secondary schools across the region,





- A forum with community agencies that represent disadvantaged population groups within the region.

The Project Steering Group has actively guided the development of the Strategy through participating in a number of working sessions to:

- Establish the stakeholders involved in providing for soccer, and their roles;
- Review the data and research findings to establish the strategic directions; and,
- Reviewing and guiding facility development opportunities.

From the research and consultation, this Study is structured as two reports;

**Volume 1. the Strategy Report** is presented in two parts: Part One, the Synopsis is a summary of the key findings, directions and recommendations of the Strategy; Part Two, the Strategy discusses and presents the situational assessment of soccer in the eastern region and establishes the strategic directions, the model of facility provision and recommendations based on the key findings, opportunities, directions as determined throughout the report. Reference is made to Volume 2 where the information in Volume 1 is supported by more detailed research data.

**Volume 2. Research Findings** presents the compiled detailed data from the research and consultation phases in a format that is useable by each organisation.

## Section 2. Background

Provision for soccer

Strategic context

Population trends & community profile

Sports Development Pathway

Stakeholders in providing for soccer & their roles

Participation rates & trends

Soccer management & governance



## 2.1 Provision for Soccer in the Eastern Region

Football Federation Victoria is the State Sporting Association for soccer and provides a range of services, besides managing and administering junior, women's and senior competitions and junior development programs in Victoria. Other services offered include the training and development of club personnel, risk management guidance, coaching clinics, player development programs, school holiday programs, human resource management resources and information provision. The Amateur Soccer Federation of Victoria (known as VicSoccer), Victorian Churches Soccer Association and Bayside League also provide competitions in Victoria, and the Victorian Institute of Sport fulfils the development of elite level players to feed into National and International playing opportunities.

Of the clubs that responded to the local soccer club survey, the majority are affiliated with the FFV (65%), with a large proportion also affiliated with the Victorian Churches Soccer Association (21%), and Bayside League (12%) and just one club nominating affiliation of a team with VicSoccer.

Provision for soccer in the region is significant. An overview of the current level of provision within each of the Council areas is summarised in the following table:

**Table 1. Overview of Provision for Soccer by the Six Councils in the Eastern Region**

Level of Provision	Whitehorse	Knox	Maroondah	Manningham	Boroondara	Monash
Total # clubs (based at Council managed facilities)*	8	7	6	6	14	12
Total # members (playing)*	1174	1600	800	1200	1480	1400
<b>Ratio provision (players:clubs)</b>	<b>147:1</b>	<b>229:1</b>	<b>133:1</b>	<b>200:1</b>	<b>106:1</b>	<b>117:1</b>
Total # Council owned / managed facilities (grounds & pavilions)	7	8	10	7	15	13
Total # pitches <sup>^</sup>	17	18	14	11	23	25
<b>Ratio of provision (pitches:facilities)</b>	<b>2.4:1</b>	<b>2.3:1</b>	<b>1.4:1</b>	<b>1.6:1</b>	<b>1.5:1</b>	<b>1.9:1</b>
<b>Ratio of provision (players:pitches)</b>	<b>69:1</b>	<b>89:1</b>	<b>57:1</b>	<b>109:1</b>	<b>64:1</b>	<b>56:1</b>

\* Based on data provided in Project Brief for the Development of an Eastern Regional Soccer Strategy

<sup>^</sup> Includes undersized pitches, but excludes sub-junior size pitches

Level of Provision	
Other areas of provision by Councils:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Planning; strategic planning, needs analysis, policy</li> <li>– Management; facility allocation &amp; use, facility maintenance &amp; upgrade, grant applications, provision of community grant programs, introducing drought tolerant facility surfaces, access initiatives through subsidising facility rental</li> <li>– Development; provision of support for elite athletes (mainly through grant funding / funding for travel), recognition of excellent performance, training of sports club personnel, provision of awards, club development manual and newsletters</li> <li>– Programming; pilot programs, participation initiatives, events</li> <li>– Promotion; community guide / directory, website, sports club newsletter, signage at Reserves, highlighting local elite players as role models</li> </ul>

There is general consistency in the scope of provision for soccer across the six Councils, although not all have the same emphasis on provision in the areas of programming, club development, promotion, with the following exclusions noted:

- Club development is an area of varying emphasis by the Councils; with a club development manual only provided by the Monash City Council and no training opportunities for club personnel provided by the Cities of Knox or Maroondah.
- Direct programming was also an area with varying levels of involvement between the Councils; the Cities of Monash, Maroondah and Whitehorse in particular organising participation initiatives and pilot programs.
- Manningham, Whitehorse and Knox City Councils do not provide direct support to elite athletes unlike the Maroondah and Monash City Councils. The Whitehorse City Council provided the only Sports Awards (recognition) program.

Lack of funding and resources is a major factor that inhibits some councils from providing additional services and programs.

### 2.1.1 Programs & Services Provided for Soccer

There are four main organisations that provide opportunities to participate in competitive soccer in the eastern region. These include:

**Table 2. Opportunities Provided by the Main Soccer Providers in the Eastern Region**

Provider	Programs (playing)	Services (non-playing)
<p><b>Football Federation Victoria (FFV)</b></p> <p>FFV is the recognised peak body for soccer in Victoria, and is affiliated with the Football Federation Australia – the National representative body for the sport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Junior competition</li> <li>– Senior competition</li> <li>– Women’s competition</li> <li>– GoalKick – fun based physical activity program aimed at encouraging young children (5-10 yrs) to participate in the Rooball program</li> <li>– All Girl’s / Women’s GoalKick - social competition for females aged 5-60 to learn soccer</li> <li>– All Girl’s Soccer Tournament</li> <li>– Rooball – junior version of soccer for 7 to 10 year olds</li> <li>– School holiday programs</li> <li>– FFV Academy (elite player development program)</li> <li>– Coaching clinics</li> <li>– Out of school hours Sports Program</li> <li>– School based soccer programs (primary and secondary)</li> <li>– Girls talent search clinics (held in conjunction with the VIS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Access to the Australian Sports Commission’s Club Association Management and Volunteer Management Program Manuals</li> <li>– Risk management manual</li> <li>– Facility hierarchy and development standards</li> <li>– Coaching guidelines</li> <li>– Human resource management forms</li> <li>– Competition rules and policies</li> <li>– Referee training, development and coordination</li> <li>– Women’s only coaching</li> <li>– Information provision, eg. policy &amp; legislative changes, water restrictions etc</li> <li>– Coaching equipment and resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>VicSoccer (VS)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Men’s senior competition</li> <li>– Men’s senior social competition</li> <li>– Women’s competition</li> <li>– Pre-season Cup &amp; World Cup competitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Referee training</li> <li>– First aid training</li> </ul>
<p><b>Victorian Churches Soccer Association (VCSA)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Junior competition</li> <li>– Senior competition</li> <li>– Women’s competition</li> <li>– State Championships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Competition rules and policies</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bayside League (BL)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Junior competition</li> <li>– Senior competition</li> <li>– Women’s competition</li> <li>– Gala events &amp; Charity Day</li> <li>– Skill development clinics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Competition rules and policies</li> <li>– Juniors over aged of 10 feed in to FFV programs</li> </ul>

The Victorian Institute of Sport also plays a role in the provision for soccer, through implementing a high performance developmental training plan to assist elite Victorian junior players in their preparation for World Championships at U/17, U/20 and Olympic levels.



Combined, the opportunities provided by the FFV, VS, BL and VCSA cater to the broad demands of soccer participants. Table 2 does highlight the extensive non-playing opportunities provided by FFV in comparison to the other Leagues (this may be influenced by the FFV having paid staff and receiving operational support from the State Government as the State Sporting Association). Each organisation has been able to survive through catering to different target markets by offering participation opportunities of varying degrees of competitive focus, including:

**Football Federation Victoria** – administration of the majority of soccer clubs in Victoria. Recognised by Sport and Recreation Victoria as the peak body for the sport in the State. Provide participation opportunities across the spectrum of competition levels (outlined further in Section 2.4), with an equal focus on grassroots and elite. Offer a range of supplementary participation opportunities (e.g. clinics, academies, events) and off-field development opportunities (e.g. coaching clinics, guiding policies, risk management).

**VicSoccer** – social competition that caters for senior men (women’s and junior participation opportunities are not provided). Caters for clubs with ethnic specialisation, and does not actively encourage diversity within individual teams. Affiliation fees are kept low.

**Bayside League** – emphasis on competitive participation for social enjoyment with a geographic focus on the larger region surrounding Frankston (due to its geographic constraints, not every municipality in the eastern region includes clubs affiliated with the League). Offer a competitive structure for seniors, with junior programs feeding in to FFV structures. The organisation is run predominantly by volunteers, and thus fees are kept low.

**Victorian Churches Soccer Association** – has its roots in providing a soccer competition within the religious community, which has now broadened to include non-Church goers. The League provides differing levels of competition, and work to a promotion / relegation system at the highest level of participation. Elite participation opportunities are regarded as being sufficiently catered for by FFV. The organisation is run predominantly by volunteers, and thus fees are kept low.

### 2.1.2 Quantifying Support for Soccer in the Eastern Region

To further contextualise the commitment to soccer by the eastern regional councils, the cumulative financial contribution (capital) made to the sport over the past five years has been examined, as well as the current value of the assets made available for the provision of soccer. Whilst this is not the only contribution made to soccer, analysing provision in financial terms can be achieved equally across the six councils and establishes strongly the level of support provided to the sport, further enhanced by operating investment in terms of management and maintenance of facilities, planning, promotion, community development and information dissemination (discussed further in 2.4.2). These investments are summarised in the following table and are discussed further.

The level of financial contribution by local government establishes it as a significant provider and therefore key partner in provision for soccer.

**Table 3. Average Capital Investment per Facility used for Soccer by Councils in the Eastern Region**

Council	# facilities	Total Capital Investment 2002/03 to 2006/07(facilities)*	Capital Investment per Facility	Building Value as at 2006/07^ (replacement)*	Average Insured Building Value
Whitehorse	7	\$2,496,960	\$356,709	\$6,775,000	\$967,857
Knox	8	\$483,000	\$60,375	\$6,400,000	\$800,000
Maroondah	10	\$293,000	\$29,300	\$3,850,000	\$385,000
Manningham	7	\$780,000	\$111,429	\$5,596,000	\$799,429
Boroondara	15	\$3,162,000	\$210,800	\$16,000,000	\$1,066,666
Monash	13	\$1,555,500	\$119,654	\$7,437,973	\$572,152
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>\$8,770,460</b>	<b>\$148,045</b>	<b>\$46,059,443</b>	<b>\$767,657</b>

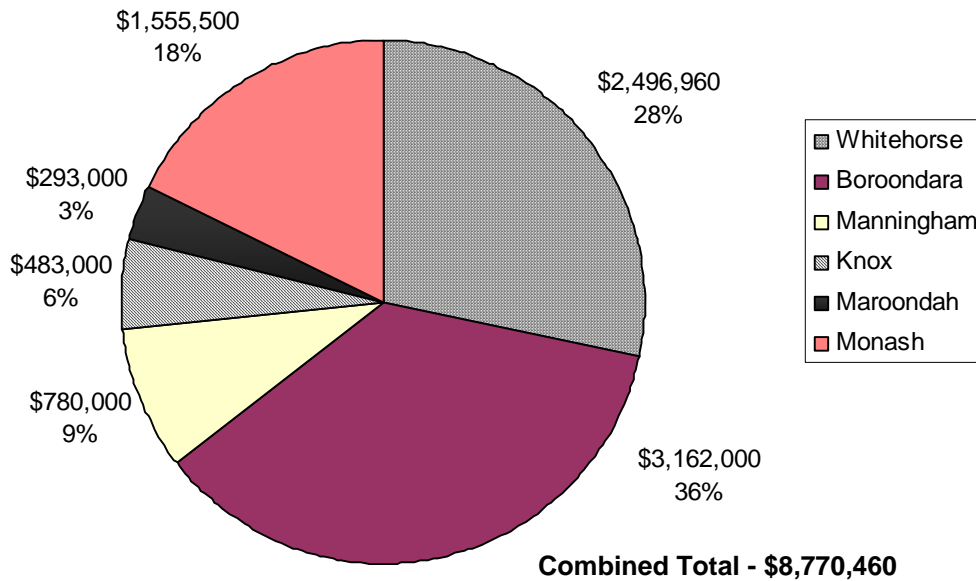
\* Includes whole of value / contribution of facilities that may be shared with other sports (i.e. seasonal use for soccer).

^ Excludes reinvestment in same facilities through insurance claims (e.g. rebuilding as pavilion as a result of fire).

The amount or proportion of investment in soccer infrastructure is merely a method of understanding and quantifying the commitment to soccer by the six councils in the region, from the perspective of one measure (financial). The level of investment is not a measure of performance or standard of provision, as there are many variables that may impact on the financial contributions made or not made, such as:

- Facility standards may be high in a municipality that has had a low investment in facilities, thus requiring little improvement over the period analysed;
- A high level of investment may represent a period of little investment prior to the five years analysed;
- The number and age of facilities will dictate the level of investment required (e.g. there would be more investment required where there are more facilities or facilities are older);
- Funding for sports infrastructure may not be a priority of a council; or,
- A council may not have gained grant support for projects which may have the effect of the council not being able to implement a project.

**Figure 2. Capital Investment in Soccer per LGA (2002/03 to 2006/07)**



Approximately \$8.7M has been allocated to provision for soccer through the development, improvement and upgrade of facilities (pavilions, pitches and supporting infrastructure - excluding recurrent maintenance and management costs). There is significant variation when comparing the investment over the past five years (2002/03 to 2006/07) from each Council; with three councils (Manningham, Knox and Maroondah) investing less than \$1M each (representing less than 20% combined) over a five year period. The Boroondara City Council has made the most significant investment in sports infrastructure used for soccer over recent years, representing over \$3M and over one third of the total investment from the region (this is likely to relate to the Council having the most soccer facilities). Whitehorse and Monash City Councils have also invested heavily in comparison to the six Councils.

When broken down further, to understand the level of investment per facility, a different picture emerges; with the Whitehorse City Council investing significantly more than the Council with the second highest level of investment (the Boroondara City Council), and twelve times more than the Council with the lowest level of capital investment per facility (the Maroondah City Council). On average \$148K was invested per facility by the six Councils over the five year period analysed.

Further, over \$46.5M in assets are allocated for the provision of soccer alone (based on current day insured replacement value of pavilions, pitches, floodlighting etc; these facilities may be shared with other sports such as cricket). The Boroondara City Council again represents the municipality with over one third of the value of the assets (insured value of \$16M, reflecting Council having the most sports facilities used for soccer of all Councils), with

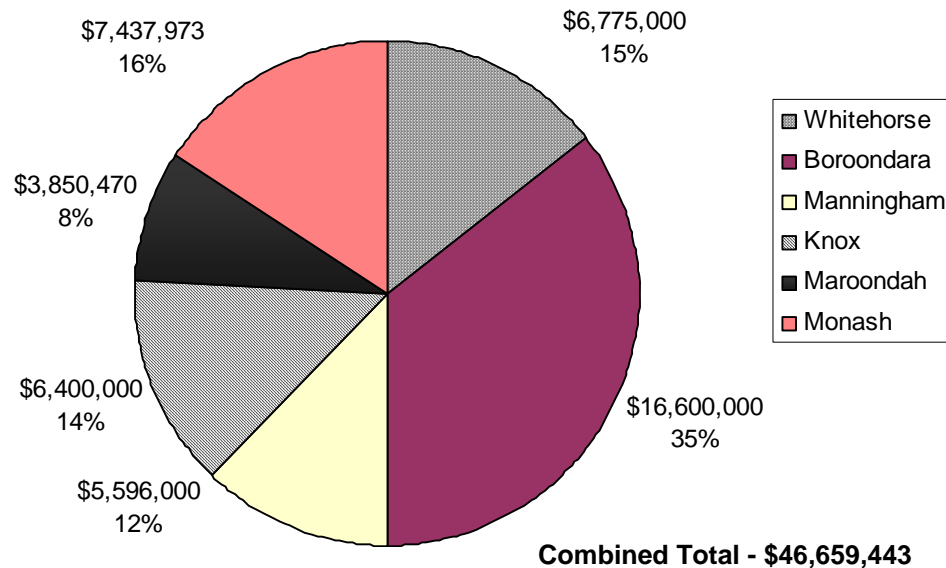


the Maroondah City Council having the lowest. The asset values of sporting infrastructure used for soccer within the municipalities of Monash, Whitehorse, Knox and Manningham are similar proportions (ranging from 12% to 16% of the combined regional total).

Analysis of the building replacement value per facility within each Council presents a different scenario; with the City of Boroondara having the highest value buildings, followed closely by the City of Whitehorse. The Cities of Knox and Manningham have similar values per facility which are also amongst the highest of the regional Councils.

The insured replacement value per facility gives an indication of building quality. The average value per facility across the six Councils is in the order of \$770K.

**Figure 3. Building (Used for Soccer) Replacement Value per LGA (as at 2006/07)**



When analysing the two data sets together, it can be interpreted that:

- The City of Whitehorse is characterised by high building replacement value and high capital contribution, indicating that there may be a large number or larger sized facilities, that improvement / development is a priority, that Council has access to funds for investing in soccer or that facilities are ageing and require ongoing investment.
- The Cities of Boroondara, Manningham and Monash are similarly characterised in terms of relatively high building replacement value (except in Monash, where building replacement value is amongst the lowest) and capital investment. This could suggest that there may be a greater number of facilities or facilities of a larger size that are a poorer quality or older, or that developing facilities is a priority of the Councils, or the Councils have sufficient funding available for sports facility development. This information may also indicate that investment

in sporting infrastructure for soccer is a priority, or significant facility developments have occurred.

- The City of Maroondah has the smallest capital investment in facilities and lowest building values of the six councils. Combined with the number of facilities in Maroondah, this indicates a significantly lower contribution to soccer than the other regional Councils, and may be a result of funding not being available or not being a priority for sports facility developments.

## 2.2 Strategic Context

The policies, commitments and strategic decisions relating to open space, recreation planning and sports development have been reviewed from each organisation to understand the parameters on provision for soccer. A summary of the key strategic directions relevant to the Study are summarised below:

### 2.2.1 Strategic Directions of Soccer

A study conducted by Football Federation Victoria (formerly the Victorian Soccer Federation) and a network of Local Government Authorities (LGA's) in 1999 was prepared to address issues facing local government in providing for soccer. The study (Local Government & Victorian Soccer Resource Study, 1999) established two principles to guide the future development and growth of soccer, including; people of both genders and all ability levels should be encouraged and able to participate in soccer activities, and both genders have the opportunity to achieve excellence in soccer participation. In summary, the key findings of the Study were:

- Smaller clubs are not as viable as larger clubs;
- Individual clubs do not provide full competition pathways;
- The capability of clubs should be measured before entering high level competitions to ensure the standard of administration and governance can meet the expectations of a club playing at the highest FFV competition level (e.g. financial performance, facility availability, administration and management performance, on and off-field behaviour of players, officials and spectators);
- There is a need to improve communication between LGA's, soccer clubs and Associations;
- Facility standards should reflect the level of play and the core facility requirements to participate;
- Consider using alternative sporting facilities (with synthetic surfaces) as training options for soccer;
- Facility needs include flat, even ground surface and female change facilities;



- Issues were raised with cricket wickets impacting on playing areas, and the management of shared facilities.

Importantly, the Study proposed a classification of grounds through a minimum standards facility hierarchy that was based around the different levels of participation within the competition (the facility standards are still applied by FFV today, and are outlined in Appendix 1), with a recommendation that LGA's:

- Adopt the recommended pitch maintenance guidelines;
- Share the cost of floodlighting between facility providers and facility users;
- Confirm dates of the Winter and Summer sporting seasons;
- Have regular meetings between the State bodies of different sporting codes and SRV to manage the sharing of facilities; and,
- Consider soccer clubs participating within larger community based sporting organisations (eg. multi-sport clubs - with soccer as just one activity).

The Study also identified a model of provision that involved junior competitions (u/12) being locally based, with matches played at regional venues (meaning that 90% of juniors should not have to travel further than 10km to their local venue). Regionalised competitions for the over 12 age group were also recommended as part of the model of provision – with an estimate of four to six regions in metro Melbourne. It was considered appropriate for veterans, junior and women's leagues to be played on multi-pitch complexes (with 5 pitches).

The FFV vision indicates a desire to provide quality support to stakeholders to enable maximum community participation that will lead to success at an International level. This is supported by a mission to increase participation, meet the needs of participants at a competition and development level, offer support in the skill development of officials, coaches, players, volunteers, referees and staff. The FFV Strategic Plan (2004) also states a commitment to club and facility development. At a more detailed level, the Plan indicates a desire to increase participant numbers in the GoalKick program, increase the number of coaching courses and coach education workshops, the number of referees, female participation, and thirds and masters teams; and deliver holiday clinics and school clinics. The provision of participation opportunities for primary and secondary aged students, and teachers, is also a focus.



FFV has a risk management manual that provides a policy on sporting equipment and facility safety, which includes maintenance and inspection reports, and recommends a range of precautions relating to facilities (e.g. size, inspections, maintenance of grounds and equipment, protective screening behind goal nets), for change rooms and surrounds of playing areas. It also recommends training of key personnel in risk management.

At a State level, Sport and Recreation Victoria, through the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) aims to increase opportunities for participation by all Victorians in a diverse range of sporting, recreational and physical activities, and in particular for those members of the community that experience higher levels of disadvantage. This is achieved through the provision grant programs that provide funds for; the enhancement of facilities and encourage the development of new facilities, the introduction and trial of new program initiatives, and through conducting research and mass promotional campaigns. State level facility development is also a key responsibility.

## **2.2.2 Summary of Each Council Area**

It is evident from the literature review that each of the Councils is striving to improve the health and wellbeing of their communities, and increase the levels of participation, and access to, sport and recreation. The particular strategic influence of each Council on provision for soccer is summarised following:

### *2.2.2-1 Whitehorse City Council*

- As outlined in the Recreation Strategy Implementation Plan (2004-09), the Whitehorse City Council will give priority to sports initiatives that are safe and address municipal and local level needs and support opportunities for young people and CALD communities, and people with disabilities. There is a desire for the equitable distribution of recreation services and facilities (based on location, age, gender, cultural background and ability).
- The Recreation Strategy Plan (2004-2009) identifies there are insufficient opportunities for specific population groups and a drop out of participation in sport and recreation by young people aged 15 to 18 years.
- There is a direction of assisting and supporting clubs to make facilities available to those not involved in club base sport, and to encourage the involvement of youth in non-playing roles. Additionally, the opportunity to support clubs to better market themselves is identified.
- The need to maximise use of facilities is identified (through shared use, better lighting, use of school sites and flexibility in use). To this end, Council has a program of renewing well-used sporting facilities, and balancing the need to provide more facilities for new / emerging sports.

- There is a strong emphasis on environmental sustainability (and water conservation in particular as highlighted by the Water Action Plan, 2004), and synthetic sports surfaces are identified as an alternative method of provision.
- There is a particular need identified to cater for soccer, and indoor soccer is considered to be a key growth sport (Indoor Sports Feasibility Study, 2005).

#### *2.2.2-2 Knox City Council*

- The Knox City Council has an emphasis on safety, partnerships, building health, and protecting the environment; with an emphasis on provision for young people, and achieving affordable and inclusive activities that suit all ages, interests and abilities.
- The Recreation Plan acknowledges the need to support clubs and provide opportunities for young people, older people and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, encourage volunteering and improve facilities. However, financial (grant) support is only considered for clubs that are planned, well organised and managed.
- Opportunities for recreation that suits people of all ages, interests and abilities will be provided through a strategy of refurbishing facilities in open space and responding to community need for facilities.
- Council identifies that it will take a lead role in the maintenance of sports grounds, and will pursue the opportunity for more diverse use of pavilions for other community functions.
- The Council has a policy that stipulates where regional level facilities will be considered. The criteria include; areas not used for public open space; facilities that have the capacity to accommodate specialist training facilities and large scale social facilities, off-street parking and vehicular access to support volumes of traffic, pavilions that have the capacity to be expanded and provide large sized facility components, a regional standard playing surface, enclosed fencing and floodlighting.
- The opportunity to pursue options of using Crown owned open space within the Dandenong Valley Parklands (along High Street Road) for sport is identified.

#### *2.2.2-3 Maroondah City Council*

- The Maroondah City Council has a focus on providing accessible, flexible and integrated multi-purpose facilities and services that are well used and attended, and wishes to provide programs for under-represented population groups with a particular emphasis on provision for young people, but also particular attention to provision for older adults, children, people with disabilities and women. There is a desire to maximise opportunities for choice, involvement and access to quality experiences, and acknowledgement that high quality, low maintenance facilities will be in demand.

- A trend is identified where membership in organised clubs is declining due to a preference that participants have for more flexible-style participation in non-sporting pursuits.
- There is a desire to enhance volunteer involvement.
- The Open Space Strategy (2005) identifies that there are no obvious opportunities to acquire additional sporting reserves in Maroondah, and recommends the provision of multiple playing field complexes where possible and the opportunities presented by school facilities.
- There is acknowledgement that artificial surface facilities will be in demand and a desire to develop all weather facilities where viable (in partnership with other Councils and State government).
- There is an emphasis on environmental sustainability.
- The Gracedale Master Plan suggests that senior soccer be played at Manson or Dorset Reserves, as a reconfiguration would allow for juniors and seniors to play without overlap.
- Where possible, multiple playing field sports complexes will be a priority; and the development of specialised sports surfaces and partnerships on a regional planning basis will be encouraged.

#### *2.2.2-4 Manningham City Council*

- The Manningham City Council strives to achieve a liveable City that is healthy, safe and attractive and where recreation is a feature of the community's lifestyle. Council wants to achieve a range of recreation activities that reflect the diversity of the community, provide a range of quality facilities that are well used (and is prepared to investigate commercial and community partnerships to achieve this), encourage and support community sporting groups, protect Councils assets through environmental sustainability and provide multi-use facilities to maximise the opportunity for use.
- Council planning nominates a direction of pursuing commercial contributions for facilities, (e.g. through exploring corporate sponsorships and partnerships in the development of open space, and charging accordingly those groups that benefit from using open space for commercial benefit).
- There is a desire to pursue Environmental Sensitive Development options with facilities, e.g. through reducing water consumption.
- Council has confirmed its position of retaining responsibility for the maintenance of reserves.
- A feasibility study for an indoor multi-use hi-ball facility in Manningham identifies that, based on the membership of one soccer club alone, there could be enough demand to service a junior indoor soccer competition at an indoor facility, as there are few facilities that cater for this activity.



- Petty's Reserve is highlighted as a potential site for intensive future sporting development, as well as Tikalara Park (initial plans for the Park include a soccer pitch, and Council is considering a synthetic surface for this site), Mullum Mullum Reserve, Zerbes Reserve, Jenkins Park, Landscape Reserve, Aranga Reserve, Manningham DISC.
- Soccer training has been initiated on a synthetic tennis court at Koonara Park as an innovative way of catering for additional use and combating the impact of drought conditions.

#### 2.2.2-5 Boroondara City Council

- The Boroondara City Council outlines its role in facilitating and supporting the community in providing leisure, with a community development emphasis. More specifically, its role is in planning and advocacy, coordination, facilitation direct service provision and funding community groups and programs. Council wants to ensure access to programs, services and facilities by people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, people with disabilities and people from a range of age groups.
- The Boroondara Open Space Policy recommends the creation of recreational nodes to provide for a broader range of opportunities. The Policy also recommends more flexible use of existing open spaces by diversifying recreation opportunities within existing sporting and non-sporting reserves.
- Boroondara has a policy of containing the amount of alienated public open space at the current or below the current level, and to compensate the open space system of any unavoidable land loss by providing additional space or improvement / upgrade.
- The Boroondara Sports Audit identifies that fees charged by soccer clubs to members are amongst the highest charged by sporting clubs in the City. Soccer is one of the sports that receives the highest subsidy from Council, with a low contribution from club user fees to contribute to the cost of providing the facilities by Council. This suggests that the fees charged by Council do not strongly correlate to the membership fees charged by clubs and other factors may influence this.
- Priority will be given to sports facility development proposals that represent partnerships, provide for accessibility, allow for the provision of a greater range of opportunities, enable multi-use and address environmental sustainability.
- The Boroondara Soccer Strategy (2006) identifies a range of key actions to further support soccer in Boroondara including, but not limited to;
  - Identifying and addressing change room requirements that will appropriately cater for female participation,
  - Convening a Soccer Forum with all Boroondara soccer clubs to consider ongoing issues for the provision of soccer in the City,

- Conducting an audit of infrastructure, floodlighting and playing surface conditions on all sports grounds and preparing a plan that prioritises the incremental upgrade on a shared basis. The Strategy confirms Council's role in supporting sport at the grassroots level and encouraging mass participation in physical activity, and Council's expectation that the central role of providing facilities for higher level sports competition should be fulfilled by other providers such as FFV and State Government.

### 2.2.2-6 Monash City Council

- The Monash City Council seeks to facilitate greater levels of participation in sport through the provision of quality facilities, services and opportunities for the community. There is a desire to ensure that facilities accommodate community needs and future participation trends, with an emphasis on facilities being maximised through multi-purpose use.
- Soccer featured fifth highest in terms of the recreational activities undertaken by residents.
- In providing for soccer, strategies of reconfiguring grounds have been pursued to increase provision, but there is an identified need for facilities to be conducive to female use and to improve to floodlighting to cater for more use.
- Monash City Council has a policy not to fund sports ground floodlighting; instead this is the full responsibility of clubs.

### 2.2.3 Strategic Directions of Other Stakeholders

- The focus of Parks Victoria is connection to nature, i.e. providing recreational opportunities with the aim of getting people closer to nature rather than to participate in sport. The level of infrastructure required to support sport conflicts with this somewhat, i.e. built structures, car parking etc. However, the reconfiguration of existing sporting facilities to cater for soccer will be considered where possible (i.e. where the demand for the current sport provided for has decreased and the playing field is no longer required for that sport, or it can be shared with soccer). There is increasing pressure from Local Government to use State Government land for sport and recreation, as land within municipal areas is under increasing demand for use from a range of users (e.g. for growing interest in sports, recreational pursuits, environmental conservation).
- Department of Infrastructure / Department of Sustainability and Environment does not have a public policy / guide / framework for determining what areas / how soccer (sport) will be provided for – applications are taken on a case-by-case basis. Councils can request a change of land use of Crown Land and each application is considered on its own merit. When considering a change of land use the Department will consider existing use and the impact on Native title.



- All land that Melbourne Water owns is for operational purposes, e.g. flood plain, drainage, retarding basin, etc. Melbourne Water has internal policies on leasing and licensing of land, but no strategy or policies that stipulate the organisation's approach to provision for soccer (sport). Requests for the use of land for soccer (sport) are taken on a case-by-case basis. Melbourne Water does have 'spare' land available, but would need to determine whether it is appropriate for development for soccer, i.e. that it would not prohibit Melbourne Water from conducting its core duties.
- The example was given of the City of Casey using a number of Melbourne Water sites for recreational purposes – and having special maintenance agreements in place to manage this.
- The Department of Education is keen to investigate joint community-education partnerships. The document, 'Schools as Community Facilities – Policy Framework and Guidelines' is designed to help government schools and communities to develop innovative partnerships around sharing school facilities. The document recognises the following attributes to successful partnerships; strong relationships, benefit for both parties, clear understanding of financial, legal, management and maintenance aspects, long term planning and vision. Three types of agreements are highlighted in the framework; Hire Agreement, Licence Agreement and Development & Joint Use Agreement. The latter, Development & Joint Use Agreement provides the opportunity for the development of new / upgraded facilities - within a tight framework of Minister approval, 'contractual'-type agreement and committees of management.

## 2.3 Community Context

Understanding the characteristics of the population across the eastern region, particularly projected changes to size and composition, is crucial in appreciating the flow-on to participation in soccer, as soccer participants are characterised by particular population characteristics. Table 4 provides the key demographic data that enables analysis and interpretation for implications on participation in soccer. The analysis is conducted for each municipality and summarised across the region to allow comparisons and unique characteristics to be identified.

The data analysed is based on the ABS Census from 1996 and 2001 – this data is now somewhat outdated (a new Census was conducted in 2006), so more recent population trends (relating to recent migrating communities for example) may not be accurately reflected as a result. Additional data from Estimated Resident Population, Building Activity Australia and Victorian Multicultural Commission has been added to represent a range of demographic indicators. With this in mind, the data is interpreted as a guide only. The application of this



information to planning for soccer will be complemented by information gained through the consultation conducted with stakeholders (discussed in Section 3) to identify trends within population groups and soccer participation.

The Census data for each municipality has been compared to the average for metropolitan Melbourne (the Melbourne Statistical Division (MSD)) for the purposes of identifying strong or weak attributes according to a recognised benchmark.



**Table 4. Summary of Demographic Characteristics for Each Council & Comparison to Metropolitan Melbourne**

Demographic Characteristic	MSD comparison (metro Melb. avg)	Whitehorse	Knox	Maroondah	Manningham	Boroondara	Monash
Population profile	Total population (2001) – 3,366,542 Eastern region population- 788,090 (23% of metro Melbourne population) 11.6% growth 2001 to 2011 49.0% males 51.0% females	Total population (2001)139,549 3.5% growth from 1996 to 2001 2.7% growth 2001 to 2011 47% males 53% females Total area – 64.24km <sup>2</sup>	Total population (2001) 141,408 8.4% growth from 1996 to 2001 4.9% growth 2001 to 2011 48% males 52% females Total area – 113.8km <sup>2</sup>	Total population (2001) – 96,461 5.6% growth from 1996 to 2011 7.8% growth 2001 to 2011 49% males 51% females Total area – 61.4km <sup>2</sup>	Total population (2001) – 107,079 3.7% growth from 1996 to 2001 3.8% growth 2001 to 2011 49% males 51% females Total area – 113.5km <sup>2</sup>	Total population (2001) – 148,532 3.39% growth from 1996 to 2001 2.9% growth 2001 to 2011 47% males 53% females Total area – 60.19km <sup>2</sup>	Total population (2001) – 155,061 2.2% growth from 1996 to 2001 2.9% growth 2001 to 2011 49% males 51% females Total area – 81.68km <sup>2</sup>
Age (years)	0 to 4 – 6.4% 5 to 17 – 17.4% 18 to 64 – 64.1% 65 to 84 – 10.7% 85+ - 1.4%	0 to 4 – 6.2% 5 to 17 –14.9% 18 to 64 – 62.6% 65 to 84 – 14.2% 85 plus - 2.1%	0 to 4 – 7.0% 5 to 17 –20.5% 18 to 64 – 63.7% 65 to 84 – 7.6% 85 plus - 1.2%	0 to 4 –6.8% 5 to 17 –18.3% 18 to 64 – 62.5% 65 to 84 – 10.4% 85 plus - 1.6%	0 to 4 – 5.3% 5 to 17 –17.2% 18 to 64 – 64.7% 65 to 84 – 11.4% 85 plus - 1.3%	0 to 4 – 5.3% 5 to 17 –16.9% 18 to 64 – 63.0% 65 to 84 – 12.1% 85 plus - 2.7%	0 to 4 – 5.0% 5 to 17 –15.0% 18 to 64 – 65.1% 65 to 84 – 13.4% 85 plus - 1.5%
Cultural diversity	65.8% Australian born 86.7% Australian citizens 28.6% born overseas 21.3% born in non-English speaking countries	68.8% Australian born 27.2% born overseas 88.1% Australian Citizens 20.2% born in non-English speaking countries 'Very High' ranking by Victorian Multicultural Commission (2003) 3 top non-English speaking countries of birth; China – 2.5% Greece – 1.6% Italy – 1.6% Malaysia – 1.5%	71.2% Australian born 24.7% born overseas 89.3% Australian Citizens 15.6% born in non-English speaking countries 'High' ranking by Victorian Multicultural Commission (2003) 3 top non-English speaking countries of birth; Malaysia – 1.3% Sri Lanka – 1.1% Germany – 1.0%	76.6% Australian born 18.9% born overseas 89.7% Australian Citizens 9.2% born in non-English speaking countries 'High' ranking by Victorian Multicultural Commission (2003) 3 top non-English speaking countries of birth; Netherlands - 0.9% Germany - 0.8% Italy - 0.7%	62.2% Australian born 33.6% born overseas 88.5% Australian citizens 27.2% born in non-English speaking countries 'Very High' ranking by Victorian Multicultural Commission (2003) 3 top non-English speaking countries of birth; Italy – 4.0% Greece – 3.4% China – 3.2%	70.1% Australian born 24.5% born overseas 87.1% Australian Citizens 17.1% born in non-English speaking countries 'High' ranking by Victorian Multicultural Commission (2003) 3 top non-English speaking countries of birth; China – 1.7% Malaysia – 1.6% Greece – 1.4%	59.1% Australian born 36.2% born overseas 84.5% Australian citizens 29.7% born in non-English speaking countries 'Very High' ranking by Victorian Multicultural Commission (2003) 3 top non-English speaking countries of birth; Greece – 3.4% China – 3.0% Malaysia – 2.4%



**Table 4. Summary of Demographic Characteristics for Each Council & Comparison to Metropolitan Melbourne**

Demographic Characteristic	MSD comparison (metro Melb. avg)	Whitehorse	Knox	Maroondah	Manningham	Boroondara	Monash
Household income (weekly)	\$0-\$499 – 24.5% \$500-\$999 – 25% \$1000-\$1999 – 29% \$2000 plus - 10.0%	\$0-\$499 – 25% \$500-\$999 – 24% \$1000-\$1999 – 30% \$2000 plus - 11%	\$0-\$499 – 19% \$500-\$999 – 25% \$1000-\$1999 – 34% \$2000 plus - 10%	\$0-\$499 – 23% \$500-\$999 – 26% \$1000-\$1999 – 31% \$2000 plus - 9%	\$0-\$499 – 19% \$500-\$999 – 21% \$1000-\$1999 – 31% \$2000 plus - 17%	\$0-\$499 - 19% \$500-\$999 – 19% \$1000-\$1999 -30% \$2000 plus - 21%	\$0-\$499 – 23% \$500-\$999 – 23% \$1000-\$1999- 30% \$2000 plus - 12%
Household structure	22% lone person households 50% couples with children 33% couples without children 15% one parent families	25% lone person households 47% couples with children 37% couples without children 14% one parent families	17% lone person households 56% couples with children 29% couples without children 14% one parent families	23% lone person households 50% couples with children 33% couples without children 11% one parent families	15% lone person households 55% couples with children 32% couples without children 10% one parent families	25% lone person households 51% couples with children 34% couples without children 12% one parent families	19% lone person households 49% couples with children 36% couples without children 13% one parent families
Building approvals (total dwellings)*		2004/05 – 583 1996/97 – 875	2004/05 – 625 1996/97 – 852	2004/05 – 386	2004/05 – 484 1996/97 – 611	2004/05 – 796 1996/97 – 649	2004/05 – 919 1996/97 – 637

\* Residential building approvals are compiled from permits issued by; local government authorities and other principal certifying authorities



### **2.3.1 Summary of Community Characteristics & Soccer Participation Trends**

Combined, the region including the six Councils of Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Knox, Whitehorse and Boroondara comprises some 23% of the metropolitan Melbourne population, or 788,090 people. Of these Councils, the most populated is the City of Monash with 155,061 residents (2001 Census), followed by the Cities of Boroondara (148,532 residents) and Knox (141,408 residents). The City of Maroondah has a significantly smaller population than the other five Councils – less than 100,000.

The City of Boroondara however, is the most densely populated, with some 2,458 people per square kilometre. The City of Whitehorse is also densely populated, having 2,172 people per square kilometre, and the City of Manningham is the least densely populated, containing just 943 people per square kilometre.

Each municipality has experienced population growth since 1996; the most significant occurring in the Cities of Knox (8.4%) and Maroondah (5.6%). The rate of growth will slow in Knox to 2011, but will still remain significant at an estimated 4.9%, whereas Maroondah is expected to grow at an increased rate of 7.8% to 2011. The City of Monash experienced the slowest growth from 1996 to 2001 (just 2.2%), which is expected to remain relatively stable to 2011; at a level that is consistent with the Cities of Boroondara and Whitehorse.

Overall, the regional population across all six Councils is ageing (per Table 5), with the proportion of younger age groups (children, youth and young adults) across all Councils projected to continue to decline in the future and the proportions of the older age categories expected to increase. The Cities of Manningham, Knox and Maroondah are projected to experience the greatest change as a result of this ageing population trend; particularly Manningham, with the population of over 60 year olds set to more than double between 2001 and 2011 (these municipalities have higher or equal proportions of children and youth compared to the MSD). The Cities of Boroondara and Whitehorse (and Monash to a lesser extent) will experience significantly lower rates of growth of the older age groups, most likely a result of the larger proportions of older residents that are already characteristic to these municipalities.

**Table 5. Ageing Population Trend in Each Council Area**

Council Area	Projected Proportion of Total Population Aged 60+ Years (%)			Projected Rate of Change	
	2001	2011	2031	2001-2011	2001-2031
Whitehorse	21.4	22.4	27	105%	126%
Knox	12.6	18.6	33	148%	262%
Maroondah	16.3	21	30.5	129%	187%
Manningham	9.5	24.1	28.1	254%	296%
Boroondara	18.8	19.6	23.3	104%	124%
Monash	20.7	23	25.4	111%	123%

Source: *Victoria in Future 2004, Department of Sustainability*

Even considering this ageing trend, there are sectors of the region that have high proportions of children and youth (aged 5 to 17 years). This is important to note, as this population grouping represents the sector of the population that is the most active across the board. As at 2001, the City of Knox had the highest proportion of residents aged 5 to 17 years, followed by Maroondah, and this trend is expected to continue in the short term as these two municipalities also have slightly larger proportions of 0 to 4 year olds compared to the Melbourne average, and the other regional Councils.

The region is characterised by a high proportion of people born in Australia (particularly in the Cities of Maroondah, Knox and Boroondara). The City of Monash has the lowest proportion of Australian born residents; and conversely, the highest proportion of residents born overseas. Comparing the six Councils, the City of Manningham also has a higher proportion of people born outside of Australia, suggesting greater cultural diversity in these municipalities.

There is significant variation in the proportions of residents born in non-English speaking countries across the region; with the proportion in Maroondah being significantly lower than all other Councils (just 9.2%). The highest proportion of residents born in non-English speaking countries exists in the Cities of Monash (29.7%) and Manningham (27.2%) – significantly high proportions considering they represent close to 30% of the total population of these municipalities.

Residents born in China, Malaysia and Greece are common to the Cities of Boroondara, Monash and Whitehorse. Italians represent high proportions of residents born in non-English speaking countries in the Cities of Maroondah and Whitehorse. Manningham also features people from Greek and Chinese descent.



Compared to metropolitan Melbourne, the region has greater proportions of households earning in the higher income brackets. Monash and Whitehorse have the highest proportions of households earning the lower income levels of \$0 to \$499 per week, with Maroondah and Knox having the highest proportions of households earning medium income levels (\$500 to \$999 and \$1,000 to \$1,999 per week). The City of Boroondara has a high proportion of households that earn high weekly incomes (over \$2,000 per week).

Overall, the Cities of Knox and Manningham can be characterised as ‘family’ communities, with high proportions of households being couples with children (56% and 55% respectively – higher than the MSD), and lower proportions of lone person households. The City of Knox in particular has a smaller proportion of couple only households, whereas Manningham has a larger proportion of couple only households and smaller proportion of one parent families. Monash and Whitehorse on the other hand, have smaller proportions of couples with children (although this still comprises almost half of all households) and larger proportions of couple only households. The Cities of Boroondara and Whitehorse share the largest proportion of lone person households and Maroondah also has a high proportion of residents living on their own. The household structure across all categories in Maroondah is similar to the MSD.

Building development has slowed across the region; in fact the number of building approvals for new residential dwellings in 2004/05 is less than 1996/97 in the Cities of Whitehorse, Manningham and Knox. It is not anticipated that there will be a strong impact on the population through new people moving into the area and changing the population profile as a result of building development (this is reflected by the estimated population growth rates to 2011). However, the Cities of Boroondara and Monash have a greater number of building approvals in 2004/05 than 1996/97, with the number of approvals increasing by a significant 44% in the City of Monash which may result in some change to the population profile in these areas over time. The City of Maroondah has the smallest number of building approvals which are not anticipated to impact significantly on changing the profile of the population in the short term.

Following is a highlight of the key characteristics of each municipality that sets it apart from other Councils in the region:

### 2.3.1-1 City of Whitehorse

- Population size has increased marginally – projected to continue to grow at a slower rate. In terms of soccer playing age groups, a recent increase in 0-4 year olds (indicators of potential players in not-too-distant future) and decline in 18-24 year olds;

- Considered to have very high cultural diversity (Access Services Support Respect – Local Government Response to Cultural Diversity in Victoria, Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2003) – meaning that there are comparably higher proportions of residents born in non-English speaking countries and those that speak a language other than English at home;
- Proportion of residents born overseas has increased since 1996 as has the size of residents born in non-English speaking countries;
- Highest proportions of residents born in non-English speaking countries include China, Greece, Italy, Malaysia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka (some – not all large soccer playing Nations);
- The proportions of Greeks, Italians & Vietnamese is declining;
- Households of couples with children over 15 years has declined;
- High proportion of couples without children.

#### 2.3.1-2 City of Knox

- 0-14 age group set to declined by 47% over next 10 years;
- Knox has large population 0-17 year olds and 35-59 year olds (characteristic of mature families);
- Little cultural diversity – although the proportion of people born in non-English speaking countries is increasing;
- Relatively high income – fewer households earning lower income levels compared to the Melbourne average.

#### 2.3.1-3 City of Maroondah

- Most significant population growth in the region;
- The younger age groups are declining, except young adults – will increase slightly
- Children aged 5-17 represent 18% population;
- There is a notable population of people from the Netherlands, Germany and Italy, and the proportion of people born in other non-English speaking countries (particularly immigrants entering under the humanitarian stream) is increasing;
- Higher proportion of family households than the Melbourne average;

#### 2.3.1-4 City of Manningham

- Population likely to continue to grow over the next 10 years at a similar rate to 1996;
- Unlike other Councils in the region, Manningham has experienced an increase in 0-4 year olds (although this is likely to decline in the future);





- Rated as having ‘very high’ cultural diversity (Access Services Support Respect – Local Government Response to Cultural Diversity in Victoria, Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2003) – meaning that there are comparably higher proportions of residents born in non-English speaking countries and those that speak a language other than English at home;
- Has the second highest rating in cultural diversity amongst the six Councils in the eastern region;
- Largest proportions of people are born in Italy, Greece, China, Hong Kong, Malaysia (representing 15% population);
- High levels of income;
- Declining number of households with children aged over 15 years and increase in couple without children households.

### 2.3.1-5 City of Boroondara

- Marginal population growth, set to slow further to 2011;
- The population groups experiencing strongest growth include mature families (ie older parents and children) and older adults;
- The proportion of households comprising ‘couples with child(ren) aged 15 years or under’ is declining
- There are lower proportions of children (aged 0-4 and 5-11 years) than the Melbourne average;
- The proportions of young adults (18-24 and 25-39 years) is declining – although is higher in Boroondara than the Melbourne average;
- Characterised by residents earning high income levels;
- High proportion of lone person households.

### 2.3.1-6 City of Monash

- Highest rating in cultural diversity amongst the six Councils in the Eastern region (Access Services Support Respect – Local Government Response to Cultural Diversity in Victoria, Victorian Multicultural Commission, 2003) – meaning that there are comparably higher proportions of residents born in non-English speaking countries and those that speak a language other than English at home;
- Almost 30% residents born in non-English speaking countries;
- Largest proportions of people from non-English speaking backgrounds are born in Greece, China, Malaysia, Italy, Sri Lanka, India;
- Relatively high levels of income;



- Numbers of 'family' households (couples with children aged over 15 years) has decreased, whilst couple only households has increased;
- Building activity has slowed, but is still occurring – more people moving in.

### **2.3.2 Implications for Soccer in the Eastern Region**

The major implications of the demographic characteristics and population profile of the eastern region for involvement in, and provision for soccer are:

- Due to the highly developed and populated nature of the Council's in the eastern region there is very little undeveloped open space for the provision of new sports facilities, the impact being little opportunity to cater for participation growth; to be largely contained to current facilities (soccer and other sports)
- The slightly greater proportion of females indicates a potentially significant market for increasing participation in the sport;
- The ageing trend of the population remains conducive to participation in soccer, as it is a sport that people can play into their mid-adult years;
- The trend of declining proportions of the population segments that are physically active and more likely to be involved in community sport (i.e. children and youth) will impact on participation in the region at some point. However, the ability of participants to play soccer well into their adult years, and the high proportions of children and youth in some municipalities means that demand is likely to be sustained.
- The relatively high proportion of Australian born residents and low level of cultural diversity across the region as a whole would relate to preferences for sports traditionally favoured by Australians (e.g. cricket, football, netball, tennis). As a result of this, it can be anticipated that participation in soccer is not likely to increase above average levels (i.e. across the region, the demographic conditions are not likely to influence higher or lower participation rates compared to State levels). As participation in soccer increases, it will compete for sports participants, facilities and resources from sports that have large participation base – in addition to attracting new sports participants.
- Combined, the regional community profile indicates that soccer clubs are in the midst of a peak in the proportion of children (the age sector with the highest participation rates in sport). Trends indicate that in the short term, the changes within the population will mean that, based on community change alone, there is not likely to be a significantly strong influence on increasing participation in sport. Instead, any such change will result from a change in the structure of sports participation and competition to cater to new markets, housing development encouraging new residents to the area, or mass marketing campaigns aimed at changing sports participation behaviour.



## 2.4 Understanding Sport ~ the Sports Development Pathway

The sports development pathway is a widely used framework for organising sport to cater to the different needs of participants. The framework recognises that a pathway is sought by participants from local, grassroots physical activity and ‘play’ to elite level participation, and that throughout, various roles are undertaken by different stakeholders.

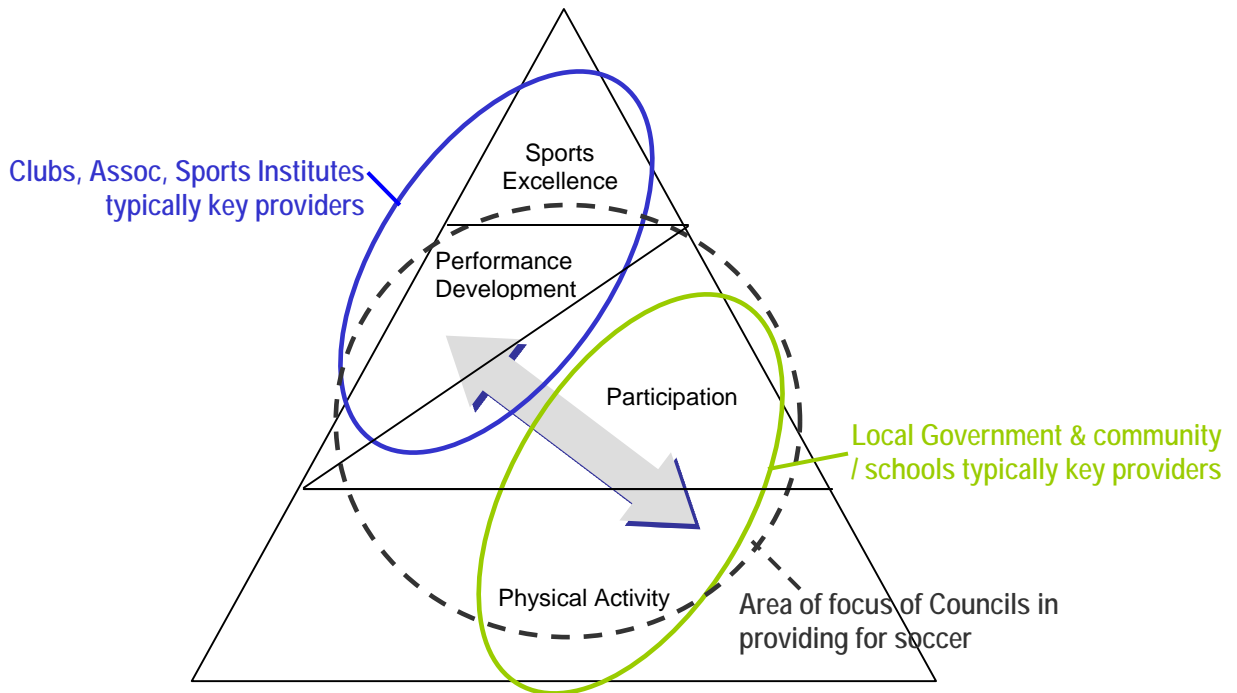
Each of the four tiers of the pathway caters for different needs and provides different outcomes for participants. The framework is fluid, in that individuals can start and settle at different levels of participation (tiers), which may be dependent upon their motivation, ability, opportunities or other constraints.

Based on this framework, local government is considered to be a key facilitator (and possibly provider) of the ‘physical activity’ and ‘participation’ tiers of active recreation and sport development; and other stakeholders such as Associations (State and National) and Institutes of Sport have a focus and are key providers of the higher two tiers of sports participation, being ‘performance development’ and ‘sports excellence’ (although may be involved in other tiers). As key providers, sporting clubs cross through several tiers of the pathway, depending upon their status and the aspirations of players to play at different levels, and the markets targeted by each club.

In addition to the support provided by Local Government at the ‘physical activity’ and ‘participation’ levels, councils can also be a conduit to facilitate opportunities for participation at the ‘development’ and ‘excellence’ levels (although provision of opportunities at these levels is not a key focus of Local Government) thus providing support across multiple levels.

The framework is depicted in the diagram below indicating these inter-connections and relationships, with a definition of each tier following:

**Figure 4. Sports Development Pathway**



**Physical Activity** – Play and skill development; learning the structure of sport, basic rules of engagement (i.e. behaviours), and rules of the game. Motor skills and social skills are developed and self esteem is built.

Opportunities for participation are largely available.

*E.g. sports development programs such as GoalKick*

**Participation** – Partaking in competition with an emphasis on participation for enjoyment, fitness and social reasons. Build an understanding of sport; rules of competition. Refine motor skills and build confidence in one’s ability.

Opportunities are largely available.

*E.g. social competitions at indoor centres, casual games in parks, club-based competitions*

**Performance Development** – Strive to enhance competitive ability. Competition is a more important motivator for participation. Build a comprehensive knowledge of the sport. Test one’s ability and enhance skill in the activity.

Opportunities are frequently available.

*E.g. higher grades of local sport, Association / League development squads such as Premier League, SuperLeague*



**Sports Excellence** – Reaching high standard participation. Players are highly motivated and passionate about achieving the best of their ability and playing at an elite level. Opportunity combined with talent and motivation is required to reach this level. Playing at a high level can bring prestige. Most difficult level to achieve without special support.

Opportunities are more scarcely available.

*E.g. A-League; State, National, International representation*

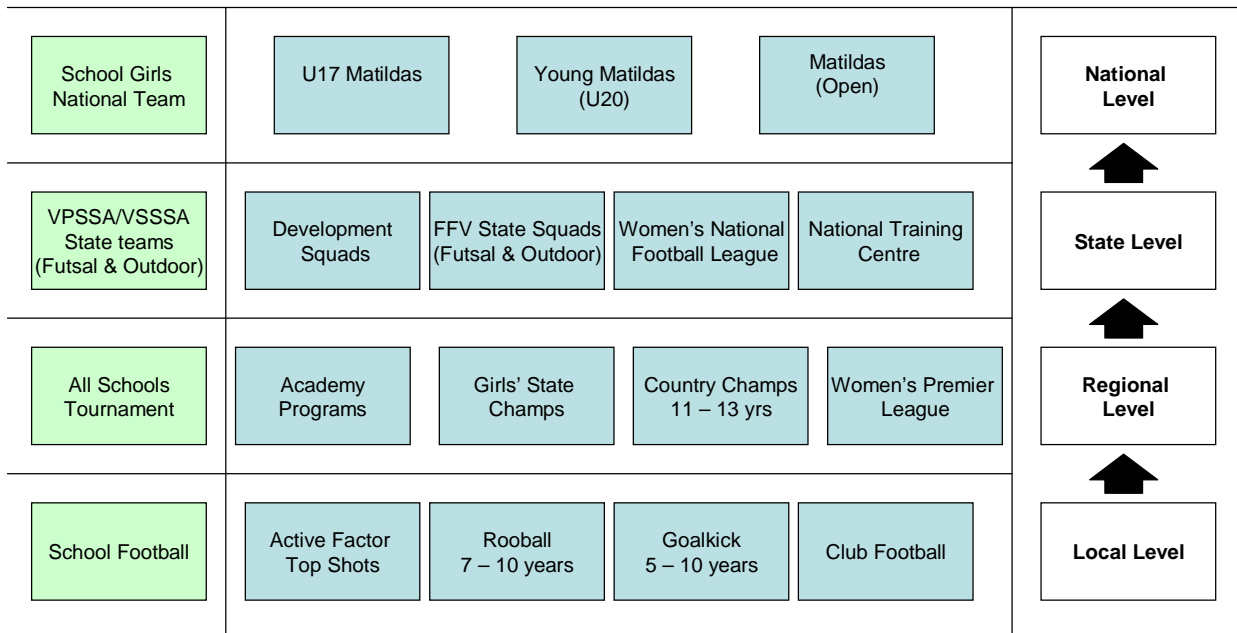
## **2.4.1 The Soccer Development Pathway**

### *2.4.1-1 Football Federation Victoria*

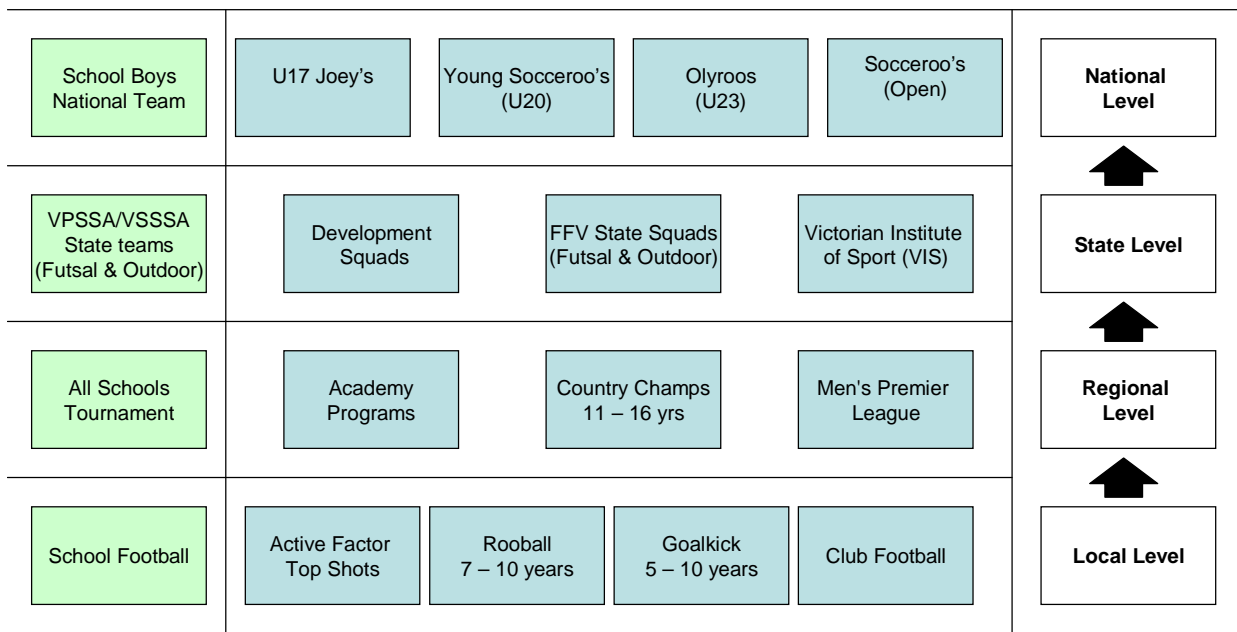
The following diagram represents the player development pathway for soccer in Victoria based on the various FFV programs and competitions.

*Note. The pathway excludes participation opportunities provided by the VicSoccer, Victorian Churches Soccer Association and Bayside League; these are discussed further.*

**Figure 5. 2006 Women's Soccer Participation Pathway (Football Federation Victoria)**



**Figure 6. 2006 Men's Soccer Participation Pathway (Football Federation Victoria)**





The pathway demonstrates participation opportunities for males and females across a number of competition standards in a structure consistent with the sports development pathway. The introduction of the A League in 2005 was considered significant in the pathway, in filling a gap that had existed in providing a complete player development progression within Australia (this gap was attributed to players leaving the domestic competition to seek opportunities overseas), before players consider overseas playing opportunities, although there does appear to be a gap for elite level participation feeding into the Premier League / A League for younger players (i.e. u/18, Reserves type competition).

FFV clearly provides an extensive player participation pathway across different levels of competition, including school based sport. The levels of participation in the FFV pathway however, differ slightly from the definitions applied to the sports development pathway – reflecting the increased emphasis on elite level participation and progression by the sporting body. This diversion of FFV programming from the sports participation pathway presented translates into a gap in the provision of social competitive participation (particularly for adults), by FFV. Futsal does not appear to be comprehensively incorporated into the program pathway.

#### *2.4.1-2 VicSoccer*

VicSoccer (VS) focuses on social participation for seniors. Most clubs involved in the Amateur competition are smaller, comprising two teams. The competition is structured with two levels of participation – club based competition played within regions of metropolitan Melbourne, and a Premier League competition for higher level participants, played within a centralised model of competition. The League attempted to start a junior competition and women’s senior competition which was not successful due to insufficient demand.

#### *2.4.1-3 Bayside League*

The Bayside League (BL) focuses on the geographic region of Frankston and surrounds (i.e. Bayside areas). Given this geographic definition, some municipalities in the eastern region may not host many clubs in the Bayside League (e.g. Maroondah, Manningham), due to their distance from the Bayside region. The Bayside League has a junior and senior level competition, with some limitations; juniors focus on U/7’s to U/10 year olds - once children exceed this age group, they feed into the FFV junior competition. There are four senior men’s leagues (Premier League and Premier League Reserve, Division 1, Division 2, Division 3) and one women’s league (commenced in 2006). The League is looking to expand the women’s competition in 2007 as well as offer a veterans / masters competition.

#### 2.4.1-4 Victoria Churches Soccer Association

The Victorian Churches Soccer Association (VCSA) caters for all ages of participants of both genders. A competition to cater for all levels is provided, catering for U/8's to U/17's in the junior competition, and a Seniors structure providing competitions across Division levels 1 to 4, plus Ladies Division 1.

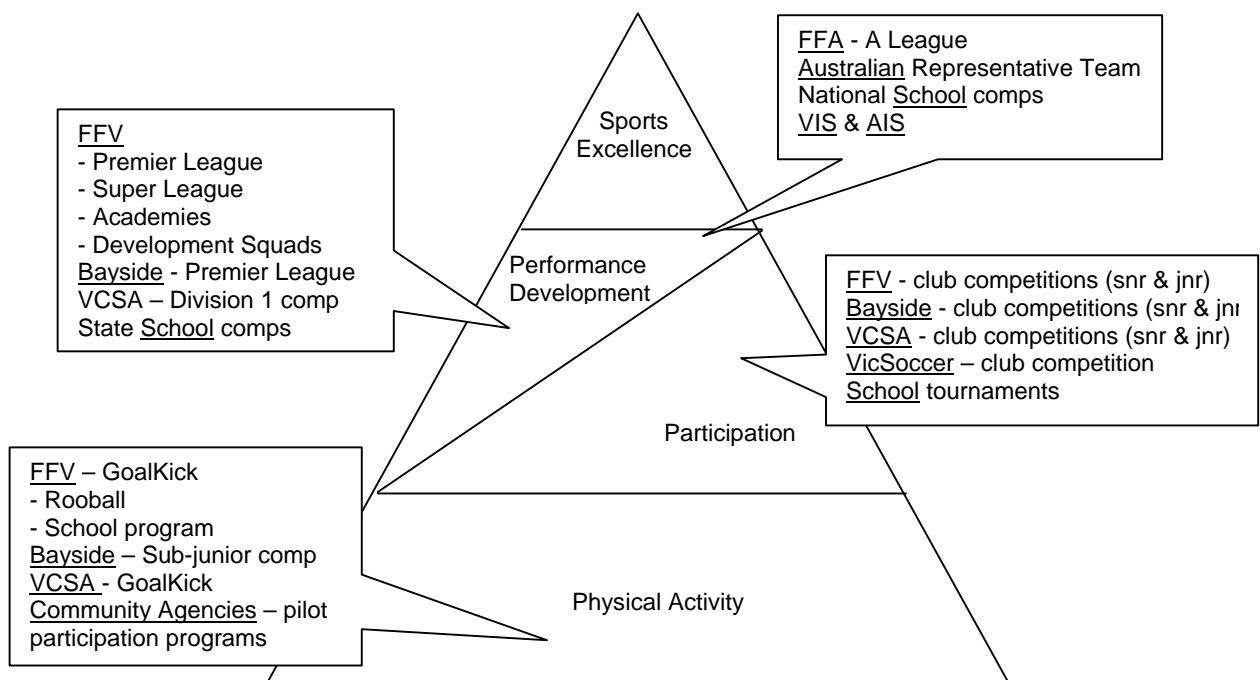
#### 2.4.1-5 Other Soccer Providers

As identified in the following section, there are a number of non-soccer specific stakeholders that provide soccer participation opportunities. These predominantly include Institutes of Sport (State and National levels) which provide elite player development opportunities. Others include smaller, locally based competitions

Whilst local government has some involvement in facilitating participation in sport across each level of the pathway, its main emphasis is on the three base layers leading toward elite participation and excellence in achievement. The following key providers were identified in terms of their emphasis and contribution across the spectrum of participation in soccer; from base level physical activity to elite.

#### 2.4.1-6 Summary

Between the stakeholders that provide soccer participation opportunities, a range of options are available for participants (both males and females) to partake in soccer at various levels of competitive participation. The following diagram illustrates this range across all major providers; at the different levels of competitive participation per the sports development pathway:





## 2.4.2 Stakeholders in Providing for Soccer & Their Roles

In addition to these core providers (the Leagues and their affiliated clubs), a number of other stakeholders are involved in providing for soccer. These, and their roles are summarised in the following table which recognises the emphasis of each stakeholder according to the level of participation on the sports development pathway. The purpose of this matrix is to clarify the roles and responsibilities, and identification of partnerships amongst providers, (further detail of the roles of each stakeholder for each tier of the pathway is provided in Volume 2). In all, numerous stakeholders are identified in providing for soccer, with varying degrees of involvement:

**Table 6. Stakeholders that Provide for Each Level of Soccer Participation & Their Roles**

Stakeholders	Physical Activity	Participation	Performance Development	Sports Excellence	Roles
Local government	✓	✓	✓	✓	Strategic planning, facilitate, plan & provide facilities, manage & maintain facilities, providing programs & physical activity opportunities, advocacy, support to other providers, funding programs & facilities, information provision, promotion & supporting & role modelling elite players, risk management, club capacity building.
Local soccer clubs	✓	✓	✓	✓	Providing playing opportunities for people of all abilities, developing programs, administering competitions, managing clubs, seeking funding, promotion, strategic planning, providing non-playing opportunities, minor facility maintenance, funding floodlighting, risk management, developing (training) officials, recruiting players & volunteers, linking players to other participation opportunities, linking school students to club participation.
Associations (peak bodies; FFA, FFV, VCSA, VS, BL)	✓	✓	✓	✓	Providing physical activity & playing opportunities for people of all abilities, developing programs including schools, regulating & scheduling competitions, supporting & developing clubs, funding elite players, promotion, strategic planning & policy development, setting facility standards, risk management, developing (training) officials, contribute funding to facility development, manage semi-professional sport, linking players to other participation opportunities.
State Government (eg. Sport & Recreation Victoria, Victorian Institute of Sport, Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD))	✓	✓	✓	✓	Strategic planning, advocacy for integration of community through sport, funding programs, funding & provision of facilities, physical activity initiatives, advocating for accessibility, promotion of participation, supporting peak bodies, developing capacity of club managers, education & support in governance, elite player development.

Stakeholders	Physical Activity	Participation	Performance Development	Sports Excellence	Roles
Federal Government (e.g. Australian Sports Commission, Australian Institute of Sport)	✓		✓	✓	Set policy for physical activity, develop officiators, support with club / sport governance, provide elite facilities, support & develop elite players, research technical performance.
Education sector (e.g. universities, TAFE, schools)	✓	✓	✓	✓	Education on the benefits of participation in physical activity, achieving 'non-physical' outcomes from sport (e.g. leadership, team work, problem solving), provision of physical activity & competitive opportunities, links into club sport, provision of land, provision of funding & equipment, planning & providing facilities & infrastructure, elite player development.
Other land owners; Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Churches, Vic Roads	✓				Provision of open space & facilities, management of land & facility use.
Private sector	✓	✓	✓	✓	Provision of facilities & land, provision of health & wellbeing initiatives, administrator of casual / social competitions, sponsorship.
Members of the community	✓				Participation in physical activity and organised sport, encouraging participation.

The shaded ✓ indicates some involvement in the participation tier, but not full involvement / emphasis directed at that level

## 2.5 Soccer Participation

There are two recognised seasons around which many sports operate, including soccer; the Winter season (1 April to 30 September), and the Summer season (1 October to 31 March). These seasonal dates are formally recognised under a Determination for the Division of Seasons and Occupation of Crown Lands (for Australian Rules Football and Cricket competition) which has been in place since the 1930's. Although this determination relates to Crown Land and does not include soccer, the application of the seasons has become standard practice across most seasonal sports and seasonal sports facility providers.

Soccer is one such sport that is considered to be seasonal. As such, soccer clubs are allocated the use of facilities over the winter season, often in the form of a shared arrangement with a summer sport (e.g. cricket). Given the need of landowners to maximise the use of facilities, sharing often occurs, and to enable this, it is expected that the seasonal sports comply with the standard practice of the seasonal divisions.

## 2.5.1 Participation Rates & Trends

Anecdotally, participation in soccer in Victoria has grown markedly over recent years; reinforced in the eastern region with the six local government areas experiencing ongoing demand for soccer from either existing soccer clubs for the increased use of facilities, or the emergence of new clubs.

### 2.5.1-1 Participation in Soccer by Children, Amongst Other Sports

Quantifiable participation rates in sport by children is difficult to obtain, with even less data available on Victorian based statistics. To capture participation trends by children, a study commissioned by the Australian Sports Commission has been analysed, 'Children in Sport' (University of South Australia, 2004). The report draws on a recent survey of upper primary and lower secondary school students to understand sports participation preferences by Australian children:

- The popularity of sports were identified in the following order (most to least preferred);
  - Soccer (21% respondents)
  - Basketball (15% respondents)
  - AFL (11% respondents)
  - Cricket (9% respondents)
  - Netball (6% respondents)
- Sports that children would like to do but are not currently undertaking include;
  - Soccer (8% respondents)
  - Basketball (7% respondents)
- Sports dominated by boys include (listed by the greatest gap in participation between genders) AFL, cricket and soccer, whereas netball is dominated by girls.

Further research by the Australian Sports Commission (Children's Participation in Cultural & Leisure Activities – Australia, April 2006) has been examined to build an understanding of participation in soccer by children aged 5 to 14 years. The Study estimates that some 63% children across Australia played sport outside of school hours (organised by a school, club or association) over the 12 month period preceding the survey, representing an increase from 59% in 2000. The same rate was recorded for sports participation in Victoria. Over the same period girls' involvement increased at twice the rate of boys (6% increase by girls and 3% by boys), but still remains a smaller proportion compared to the number of boys that play sport.

Table 7 shows soccer has remained the sport undertaken by the second largest proportion of Australian children over three survey periods (2000, 2003, 2006), with a participation rate of 13.2% in 2006 (an increase of 1.8% since 2000, but stable since 2003). Swimming has the greatest participation rate (17.4% in 2006). Netball follows soccer as the next most popular sport undertaken by children in Australia (8.5%) representing a large gap and highlighting the strong interest in swimming and soccer.

A breakdown between boys' and girls' participation in soccer shows significantly high participation rates by boys (19.6% - a rate that has remained stable since 2000); rated the sport undertaken by the largest proportion of participants (followed by swimming, Australian Rules football and cricket). Participation in soccer by girls has increased markedly at each survey, representing an overall increase of 3.5% from 2000 to 2006, moving from the seventh highest rated sport to fourth (behind swimming, netball and tennis).

**Table 7. Participation in Ten Highest Rated Sports by Australian Children Aged 5-14 Yrs**  
(*Children's Participation in Cultural & Leisure Activities - Australia, 2006; Australian Bureau of Statistics*)

Sport	Partic Rate (%)	Partic Rate (%)	Partic Rate (%)	Top 10 Ranking (2006)	Change ('00-'06)
	2000	2003	2006		
Swimming	14.4	16.6	17.4	1	↑ 3.0%
Soccer	11.4	13.4	13.2	2	↑ 1.8%
Netball	9.1	9.1	8.5	3	↓ 0.6%
Australian Rules football	6.6	7.3	7.5	4	↑ 0.9%
Tennis	8.5	8.6	7.3	5	↓ 1.2%
Basketball	7.6	7.7	6.6	6	↓ 1.0%
Cricket (outdoor)	5.3	5.0	5.4	7	↑ 0.1%
Martial arts	4.0	4.9	4.5	8	↑ 0.5%
Rugby league	3.6	2.9	4.2	9	↑ 0.6%
Gymnastics	2.6	3.5	3.5	10	↑ 0.9%

The 2006 survey results indicate a participation rate of 2.2% in indoor soccer (3.3% participation by boys and 1.1% by girls). The longitudinal data was not provided to allow for trends in participation in indoor soccer to be identified.

### 2.5.1-2 Participation in Soccer Broadly

Sports participation data indicating trends at a State and National level does not currently reflect the growth occurring in soccer leagues and clubs within the eastern region. As reflected in Table 8, research by the Australian Sports Commission indicates stable participation rates nationally and in Victoria. Overall, the proportion of soccer players in Victoria is marginally lower than Australia (3.1% compared to 3.8%) this may be attributed to the popularity of Australian Rules football in Victoria.

Table 8 compares participation between the Australian Sports Commission research to enable trends to be identified according to the studies, 'Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport' (2001, 2003 and 2005), to establish a context for soccer amongst other sports over time. Sports with the highest participation rates in Victoria include tennis, golf, football, basketball, netball and cricket. Of notice, between 2001 and 2005, participation in Australian Rules football and cricket have increased (by 1.6% and 1.4% respectively) whilst participation in netball has remained stable.

**Table 8. Comparison of Participation in Soccer between Australia & Victoria**

*(Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport 2001 & 2005; Australian Sports Commission)*

*The numbers associated with the sports listed represent the ranking of each in order of greatest participation (recreational activities have been excluded – see Note below)*

Highest Participated Organised Sporting Activities – Victoria (2001)		Highest Participated Organised Sporting Activities – Victoria (2005)		Highest Participated Organised Sporting Activities – Australia (2001)		Highest Participated Organised Sporting Activities – Australia (2005)	
Sport	%	Sport	%	Sport	%	Sport	%
5. Golf	9.3	6. Tennis	8.2	5. Tennis	9.2	5. Tennis	7.8
6. Tennis	9.2	7. Golf	7.6	6. Golf	8.2	7. Golf	7.1
8. Basketball	5.4	8. AFL	6.7	9. Netball	4.1	9. Soccer	3.8
9. AFL	5.1	9. Basketball	5.1	10. Soccer	3.7	10. Netball	3.6
10. Netball	4.4	10. Netball	4.4	11. Basketball	3.5	11. Basketball	3.5
12. Soccer	3.1	11. Cricket	4.0	13. Cricket & Touch football	2.7	12. AFL	3.4
13. Cricket	2.6	13. Soccer	3.1	17. AFL	2.3	14. Cricket	2.9
19. Indoor socce	1.6	14. Indoor soccer	2.0	27. Indoor socce	1.2	22. Indoor soccer	1.7

**Note:** Participation in this survey is measured for people aged 15 years and over only.

*The comparison is based on sporting activities only - recreation and physical activities (such as cycling, running, swimming and other activities where non-organised participation exceeds organised participation) have been excluded from this analysis.*

The specific trend for soccer can be seen more clearly in Table 9, highlighting Victorian participation rates and trends from the same research in more detail:

**Table 9. Victorian Sports Participation Rates Comparing 2001-2005**

*(Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport 2001 & 2005; Australian Sports Commission)*

Sport	Change ('01-'05)	Number ('000)	Partic Rate (%)	Number ('000)	Partic Rate (%)	Number ('000)	Partic Rate (%)	Top 10 Ranking (2005)
		2001	2001	2003	2003	2005	2005	
Tennis	↓ 1.0%	350	9.2	410	10.5	367	8.2	1
Golf	↓ 1.7%	354	9.3	357	9.1	342	7.6	2
Australian Rules Football	↑ 1.6%	194	5.1	200	5.1	205	6.7	3
Basketball	↓ 0.3%	203	5.4	190	4.9	171	5.1	4
Netball	=	168	4.4	193	4.9	160	4.4	5
Cricket (outdoor)	↑ 1.4%	100	2.6	181	4.6	141	4.0	6
Soccer (outdoor)	=	116	3.1	128	3.3	105	3.1	7
Lawn bowls	↑ 0.3%	76	2.0	80	2.1	86	2.3	8
Soccer (indoor)	↑ 1.4%	62	1.6	82	2.1	105	2.0	9
Martial arts	↓ 0.1%	64	1.7	99	2.5	86	1.6	10

**Note:** Participation in this survey is measured for people aged 15 years and over only.

Table 9 shows participation in indoor soccer increasing (by similar margins) as a State and National trend. Of interest is the higher participation rate in indoor soccer in Victoria than National levels.

Additionally, Australia participated in the 2006 World Cup Finals with relative success and intense mass media profile and strong spectator support. It is reasonable to suggest that this will have a huge positive impact on participation at the local level, with the increased profile and establishment of role models for young players.

### 2.5.1-3 Participation in Indoor Soccer

There are several variations of indoor soccer, with Futsal being the FIFA recognised form of indoor soccer. Futsal is played competitively, but has a strong social competition focus, and is played mainly on weekday evenings in competitions that are organised by venue management rather than through a club structure. Futsal is played on a rectangular area (between 25m and 42m long and 15m to 25m wide) of a flat, smooth, non-abrasive surface such as wooden boards or artificial material (but not concrete or bitumen). Associated basic change facilities would also be required at a venue to support a competition and a high roof is required in Futsal to allow for ball flight. The game is played with five players per team, played over two, twenty minute halves (i.e. a full game can be played within an hour).



Other, more 'localised' variations are often referred to as '5-a-side' (sometimes also referred to as indoor soccer but can be played outdoors) is a small side soccer game that can be played at a more social level than Futsal. 5-a-side is played on synthetic grass and can be played indoors or outdoors on a rectangular pitch with dimensions the same as Futsal. Many indoor sports centres offer indoor soccer competitions. Indoor soccer is appealing to male and female participants of all ages.

At the National level, Futsal is part of Football Federation Australia's portfolio, as well as beach soccer. The indoor and outdoor forms of the sport are considered to cater for different markets; Futsal and indoor soccer attract their own players, but are also used as cross training for outdoor players, and for maintaining fitness as the times of play complement the outdoor form (i.e. Summer months, and weekdays). The indoor forms are also a popular starting point for women playing the sport.

At present, the provision of Futsal competitions is limited by the availability of court space in indoor venues. Like the outdoor form, participation has increased by women and growth is occurring at the junior levels.

Many Council's have indoor sports facilities which are not achieving maximum utilisation (e.g. basketball stadia) which may be able to accommodate Futsal or 5-a-side soccer. This could both assist Futsal to grow as well as introduce a new income stream for the basketball stadium.

#### *2.5.1-4 Soccer Participation in Victoria*

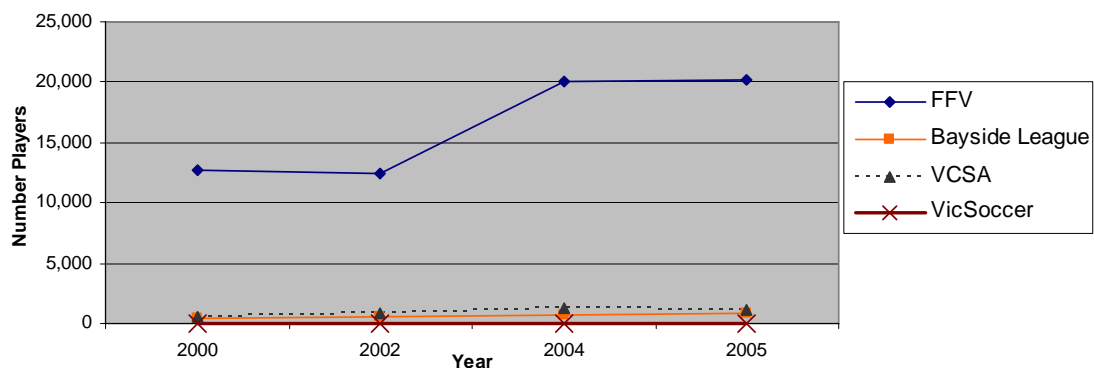
Within Victoria, registration data from the main Leagues that provide competitions in metropolitan Melbourne provide a reasonably accurate indication of participation, although do not account for casual, unstructured participation. The following statistics from the Leagues allow for more specific analysis of competitive participation (FFV also estimates that more than 100,000 children participate in soccer at school but does not have detailed data on school based participation):

**Table 10. Player Registration Numbers in Victoria**

Player Category	2000	2002	Change '00-'02	2004	Change '02-'04	2005	Change '04-'05	Change '00-'05
<b>Football Federation Victoria</b>								
GoalKick (5-12 yrs)	1,744	3,500	↑ 100%	5,250	↑ 50%	2,935	↓ 44%	↑ 68%
Sub-Juniors (6-9 yrs)	5,325	5,318	= (-0.13%)	4,785	↓ 10%	5,556	↑ 16%	↑ 4%
Juniors (10-17 yrs)	7,455	8,902	↑ 19%	15,216	↑ 71%	14,641	↓ 4%	↑ 96%
Seniors (18+ yrs)	7,537	7,415	↓ 2%	6,779	↓ 9%	7,217	↑ 6%	↓ 4%
<b>Bayside League</b>								
Sub-Juniors (5-9 yrs)	426	559	↑ 31%	696	↑ 25%	820	↑ 18%	↑ 93%
Seniors Men	512	620	↑ 22%	783	↑ 26%	921	↑ 18%	↑ 80%
Seniors Women	0	0	N/A	0	N/A	106	↑ 106%	↑ 106%
<b>Victorian Churches Soccer Association</b> (excludes figures for GoalKick which are not recorded)								
Juniors (7-16 yrs)	563	860	↑ 53%	1241	↑ 44%	1115	↓ 10%	↑ 98%
Seniors Women	0	0	N/A	150	↑ 150%	160	↑ 7%	↑ 160%
Seniors Men	330	374	↑ 13%	734	↑ 96%	704	↓ 4%	↑ 113%
<b>Vic Soccer</b>								
Senior Men	2517	2388	↓ 5%	2046	↓ 14%	1987	↓ 3%	↓ 21%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,409</b>	<b>29,936</b>	<b>↑ 13%</b>	<b>37,680</b>	<b>↑ 26%</b>	<b>36,162</b>	<b>↓ 4%</b>	<b>↑ 37%</b>

Player registration data shows an overall increase in participation by over a third from 2000 to 2005. The data indicates the areas of greatest growth within the FFV are by juniors; the combined junior categories (up to 17 years of age) has become the largest component of FFV and also represents the largest proportion of members in the VCSA. Figure 7 illustrates this further.

**Figure 7. Comparison of Junior (6-17 Yrs) Player Registrations Across Leagues in Victoria**



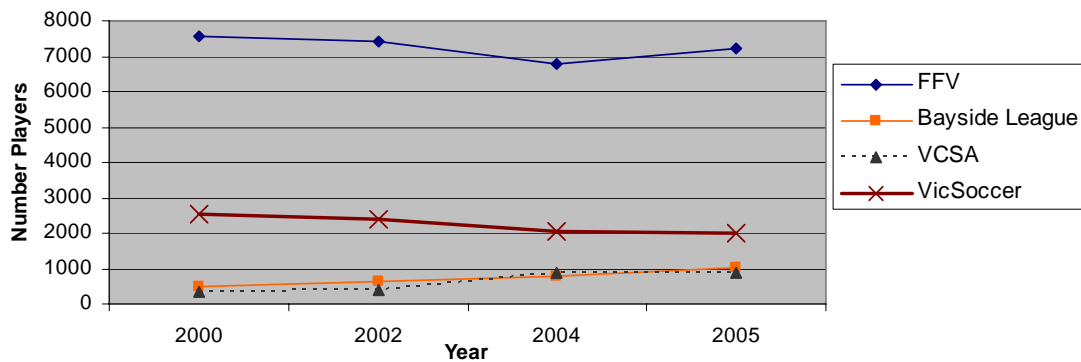


The Bayside League has experienced ongoing growth of the period reviewed, with total membership almost doubling since 2000.

Women’s competitions have been introduced by the Bayside League and VCSA – demonstrating the demand for soccer within this market.

Participation by seniors shows a common trend across the Leagues, including FFV senior men’s competition, but most particularly within VicSoccer which targets itself entirely to senior men’s competition (attributes this decline to clubs moving to the FFV competition). This is shown in Figure 8 following.

**Figure 8. Comparison of Senior (18+ Yrs) Player Registrations Across Leagues in Victoria**



The positioning of VicSoccer in allowing for ethnically based clubs may also be a factor that is impacting on declining participation; particularly given the strong emphasis of the soccer fraternity on removing this element from the sport.

The lack of growth demonstrated at the senior level, despite the strong growth at the junior levels, may highlight the need for an improvement in the pathway between junior and senior competition. Within the sport, it is anticipated that the introduction of the A-League will encourage players to continue through to senior level.

The strong social emphasis of the Bayside League, VCSA and VicSoccer may be a factor that attracts players, although some of these Leagues still have a focus on high standard competition, not unlike FFV.

FFV also runs a wheelchair soccer program for people with disabilities – this has been around for 12 years but has not experienced much growth in membership. The program is played indoors.

## 2.5.2 Participation in Soccer by Gender

The Australian Sports Commission research also breaks down participation by gender. There are notable differences in the level of participation and type of sporting activities undertaken by males and females generally. Barriers to participation by women as identified by Womensport and Recreation Victoria include balancing competing needs, lack of affordable and accessible childcare, poor body image, low self esteem, few role models and misconceptions surrounding elite level participation by women. Participation in indoor soccer is considered to be part of the solution for women's participation as it is seen as being easier, less rough, not impacted on by weather etc.

As shown in the following table, participation in soccer by males is significantly higher than females. Whilst this is the case, the rate of participation by females has increased significantly from an estimate of only 0.6% in 2001 to 1.2% in 2005.

**Table 11. Participation in Soccer & Indoor Soccer in Victoria for Males & Females**

*(Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport; Australian Sports Commission, 2001 & 2005)*

	Male 2001 (‘000’s)	Male 2005 (‘000’s)	% Change	Female 2001 (‘000’s)	Female 2005 (‘000’s)	% Change
Soccer	104.4	102.5	↓ 2%	12.1	23.9	↑ 98%
Indoor Soccer	54.8	63.6	↑ 16%	7.1	18.0	↑ 154%

**Note:** Participation in this survey is measured for people aged 15 years and over only.

These figures clearly show that the growth in female participation is significant in both the indoor and outdoor forms of soccer. For males, the indoor version is experiencing growth while participation in outdoor soccer has remained stable (consistent with the Victorian trend). The limitation of this data is that it does not include children aged under 15 years.

**Table 12. FFV Registration – Male / Female Participation\***

	Male (%)			Female (%)		
	2003	2005	Change	2003	2005	Change
Seniors	86.8	86.7	↓ 0.1	13.2	13.3	↑ 0.1
18 YO	82.7	83.6	↑ 0.9	17.3	16.4	↓ 0.9
Juniors	85.2	78.9	↓ 6.3	14.8	21.1	↑ 6.3
Rooball	94.1	90.8	↓ 3.3	5.9	9.2	↑ 3.3

\*Data provided by FFV – figures are indicative only; figures for GoalKick were not available separating male and female participation

The FFV registration data in Table 12 addresses male and female players of all ages. When looking at the split of registration data based on gender registrations with FFV, the dominance of men in the formal competitive version of the game is apparent, representing around 80% of each participant category.

Participation by boys has increased within the FFV only marginally (2%), but participation by girls has increased significantly (10%-12%). This reinforces the emphasis on females to drive further increases in participation in the future. FFV estimates that the number of girl participants could rival boys in as little as five years.

Participation by girls across all junior ages (Junior and Rooball combined) shows an increase by more than 9% from 2004 to 2005 – whereas participation by males in the same age groups has declined by the same amount for the same period. The proportion of female participants is lowest in the Rooball category and largest in the junior level. There is encouraging growth for girls in the Rooball (7 to 10 years) and Junior categories, which may have an effect on the senior ranks in years to come. The decline in female participation from junior to senior age reflects a general sporting trend that coincides with leaving school.

The trend in participation between boys and girls reflects the two genders playing alongside equally to the around the age of U/11 – where they begin to play separately (and correspondingly, require access to separate change rooms).

### **2.5.3 Regional Participation Trends in Soccer**

The following analysis on local participation trends and demand across the six Council areas is based on the survey conducted with local soccer clubs. The information should be considered with caution and used as a guide only, as it is not representative of the views of all clubs (43% return). In particular, there is little information provided by the Boroondara based soccer clubs and data from the Boroondara Soccer Strategy has been used to supplement this survey.

- Research conducted for the Manningham City Council's Open Space Strategy resulted in soccer being the 12th highest rated activity undertaken by residents – and the most participated in sport by 18 to 24 year olds.
- Soccer was not listed amongst the six highest rated activities that are currently undertaken, or would like to be undertaken by residents in the City of Boroondara.
- Soccer was not rated amongst the ten highest rated activities that are currently undertaken by City of Whitehorse residents as identified in the Recreation Strategy Plan (2004-2009). However, it is an activity rated within the top ten that residents would consider in the future, and is also considered to be one of the highest development priorities in the City.

- Of the soccer clubs that returned surveys, a 73% increase in participation was noted from 2003 to 2006 across the eastern region, from a total of 3,334 to 5,784 members. In particular, the following trends were identified:
  - Only two clubs reported a decline in membership from 2003 to 2006 (in the Cities of Knox and Whitehorse), with a number also experiencing stable membership or marginal growth (in the Cities of Manningham and Whitehorse),
  - The largest increase in membership of clubs from 2003 to 2006 occurred in the Cities of Knox (increase of 188%) and Manningham (increased by 152%),
  - The Cities of Whitehorse, Boroondara and Maroondah experienced the smallest increases in club membership over the two year period, being 28%, 35% and 37% respectively,
  - The most players are located within the City of Manningham (1,632), followed by the Cities of Boroondara (1,253 in 2005), Knox (1,002) and Whitehorse (970 players),
  - The City of Maroondah hosts fewest soccer players as members of clubs, at 472.
- 63% of clubs are targeting juniors specifically, with 60% of these targeting females; only two clubs in the City of Boroondara cater for juniors, and as a result, these have very large memberships (both clubs had in excess of 300 junior members in 2005). 21% of clubs are targeting senior players and only one club nominated people with disabilities as a particular target market.
- Participation in the sub-junior categories (under 8, 9, 10) has also increased significantly since 2003 (by 80%), to represent 22% of total players in the region;
  - The number of sub-junior players in Whitehorse has more than doubled, from 113 in 2003 to 238 in 2006,
  - The largest number of sub-junior players (332) are in the City of Manningham, followed by the City of Monash (279),
  - Maroondah has the fewest of sub-junior participants at 60, which has increased by 67% from 2003 (and would be anticipated to increase further based on the population projections of the City),
  - Of the six Councils, the highest proportions of sub-juniors are in the Cities of Boroondara and Monash, being around 30% of total membership. The smallest proportions of sub-juniors as a total of all members occurs within the Cities of Knox and Maroondah, being 14% and 13% respectively.
- Overall juniors (under 11 to under 18 years of age) represented the category of the largest growth in members from 2003 to 2006 (increased by 116%) and juniors also represented over half of the total members of clubs (almost 3,000 members of clubs are juniors representing 51%);

- Manningham hosts the largest number of junior participants (966),
- Juniors comprise the largest proportion of total members in the Cities of Maroondah and Boroondara, being 69% and 56%, and equating to 282 and 700 members respectively,
- Junior members represent almost half of total members in Knox, and participation has increased since 2003. The number of junior members is high compared to other councils. The number of junior members is also high in the City of Boroondara (700).
- Growth in juniors at the City of Whitehorse was 17%, and junior participants represent the lowest proportion of total members of Whitehorse clubs being 41%;
- Some clubs have difficulty retaining older junior players (u/15, 16, 17) and it was noted that younger senior players can find it difficult to enter senior ranks.
- Senior men represent some 18% of total members of clubs in the eastern region (1,040 people). Participation by senior members across the region has increased significantly, with the proportion of senior men increasing by 47%, masters by 44% and senior women by 37%;
  - The largest numbers of senior men players are in the Cities of Boroondara (393), Knox (275), Manningham and Whitehorse (220 players each). As a proportion of total participants, the membership of senior men at the Cities of Boroondara and Knox represent the greatest proportion of all players in each municipality (i.e. senior men represent 31% of all members in Boroondara, and 27% in Knox). However, the rate of growth of senior men in these Councils is amongst the lowest, being just 17% in Boroondara and 26% in the City of Knox.
  - The highest rate of growth amongst senior men occurred in the City of Manningham, with an increase of 168%. The proportion of senior men members as a proportion of all members in Manningham is one of the lowest at 13%. Given the large number of senior men participants in Manningham, these figures indicate that participation by senior men is likely to continue.
  - Participation by senior men has also increased (in fact, doubled) in the City of Monash since 2003;
- Participation by masters players has increased across most municipalities except the City of Whitehorse where membership has remained stable. As a proportion of total members, the size of masters participants is very small (just 3%) and therefore relates to a relatively small number of people. The largest number of masters players falls in the City of Manningham (99 people), which represents 6% of total players in that municipality – the largest proportion for masters participants of the six Councils.

- The proportion of senior women members is very low, being just 5% of all club members (297 people). There are no senior women members in the City of Maroondah. Participation by women is highest at the City of Boroondara, representing 13% of all players in the municipality, and 160 people (followed by 103 players in the City of Whitehorse, representing 11%). The greatest increase in participation occurred in the Cities of Manningham and Boroondara, whereby Manningham clubs reported no women participants in 2003. As the municipality with the greatest number of soccer members, women participants represent just 1% of all members in the City of Manningham. There is a number of clubs (4) in the City of Boroondara that cater for senior women.
- The average number of senior women members per club has decreased by 12%, despite the total membership across the Region increasing. This could indicate that there are more clubs catering for women in 2006 than in 2003.
- Reasons provided by clubs for the change in participation included a greater emphasis on children's participation in sport, Australia's qualification for the World Cup, the increased popularity of soccer (and interest by females) and greater promotion of, and participation in soccer amongst schools, and increased profile of soccer in the media.
- The number of players has increased per team in each municipality from 2003, except in the City of Monash, where the player to team ratio has halved to a more reasonable ratio (from an average of 32 players per team, to 16 players per team); eleven players are on the field per team in a game of soccer).

The Cities of Monash and Maroondah have the lowest number of players per team. A high number of players per team could indicate that not all players can be accommodated at one time, or that there are insufficient players in one age level to field a full team.

The highest ratio of players per team exists in the City of Knox, followed by the Cities of Boroondara and Whitehorse. This indicates that the availability of facilities in these municipalities may not be sufficiently servicing demand from players. Interestingly, the number of teams has increased only marginally in the Cities of Knox and Whitehorse (2% and 9% respectively), which would likely be caused by a number of factors including facility constraints, or that demand for participation can be incorporated within the existing number of teams.

- The figures suggest that not one municipality is over servicing soccer (i.e. that there are too few players using facilities), although the use of average figures does not allow for under servicing within individual clubs to be identified.
- Manningham caters for the greatest number of teams (89) representing 28% of all teams in the region. This proportion has increased by a significant 39% since 2003.

- The greatest increase in the proportion of teams within a municipality has occurred at the City of Monash. The number of teams in Monash represents 19% of all teams in the Region.
- The City of Maroondah has the lowest proportion of teams from within the region. However, the numbers of teams has increased significantly since 2003; by around 40%.
- Soccer was the sport that the second highest proportion of respondents to primary and secondary students survey undertake after school (basketball was rated the highest and football and tennis followed soccer).
- Secondary school students participated in soccer mainly in clubs and at school. Soccer was the sport played at school by the largest proportion of secondary school students, indicating the importance of this environment to soccer participation. The results also reinforce the importance of clubs in providing sporting opportunities.
- Soccer was the sport nominated by the largest proportion of secondary school children as an activity that they would like to participate in but don't at present, followed by basketball and football. 'Not having time', 'no clubs nearby' and 'cost' were the main factors that prevent uptake of the sport. The results show that the cost to participate in soccer is a barrier to participation as are poor standard facilities.
- Over 30% respondents to the general survey currently participate in soccer (indoor and outdoor). Swimming and football were the sports undertaken by the largest proportions of respondents.
- The results to the general survey indicate a range of venues are used for indoor soccer, including Ashburton, Oakleigh, Box Hill, Bayswater, Huntingdale, Knox and are organised by both clubs and indoor sports centres.
- Soccer was also the sport nominated by the largest proportion of primary school students that would like to be undertaken but is not. Lack of time was nominated by over 50% respondents as the reason that prevented their participation in the sport; and was also the reason rated by the largest proportion of respondents for not participating in other sports. The risk of injury was a barrier to participation by a larger proportion of primary school students than secondary school students.
- The reason provided by most to the general survey for no longer playing soccer was 'not having access to quality facilities'. Time, work commitments and clashing with other spots (ie. all time related factors) were also factors that prevented participation in soccer.
- Injury was a factor that prevented a large proportion of respondents to the general survey from continuing to play soccer.
- 17% respondents to the general survey wanted to play soccer (amongst other sports) but currently did not, with 4% wanting to play indoor soccer. When specifically asked about soccer, some 22% of respondents had never played. A 'lack of time' and clashes with other

sports accounted for almost half of the respondents' reasons for not playing soccer – a trend that is impacting on all sports.

- Larger proportions of secondary school students have played soccer than primary school students, perhaps indicating the influence of parental permission and consideration of injury on younger participants.

Lack of time (including clashes with other sports), being bored, not liking the game, risk of injury, a preference for other sports and having moved were all reasons provided by primary school students which prevented them from playing soccer.

Similarly, the reasons provided by secondary school students for having stopped playing soccer include other sporting commitments, being bored, lack of time, difficulty accessing the sport, school commitments and risk of injury. Access seems to be a more significant issue for secondary school students compared to primary school students, perhaps reflecting a higher level of independent travel by secondary school age participants.

- Not being able to find a club (lack of information) and a lack of time were the main reasons nominated by respondents to the general survey for not currently playing soccer (even though they would like to).

#### 2.5.4 The Cost to Participate in Soccer in the Eastern Region

The cost to participate in soccer across the different Leagues operating in the eastern region varies, as outlined in Table 13:

**Table 13. Comparison of Fees Charged by Each League Operating in the Eastern Region**

Leagues	FEE CATEGORIES				
	Player Reg includes insurance (p/team)	Insurance	Team Reg	Affiliation Fee	Referee's Fees (p/game)
FFV	\$55 (jnr) \$157 (men) \$145 (women) \$220 (professional players)	N/a	\$50 Rooball \$210 Jnr boys / girls (discounted rate is \$200) \$240 Men's (Masters & Thirds) \$240 Women's (metro - State)	<i>Per team:</i> \$260 Jnr club \$260 Women's club - State \$1,250 Men's club \$115 Men's (Masters & Thirds) \$3,575-\$4,094 Men's Provisional \$4,874-\$7,130 Men's State \$11,391 Men's Premier	Paid on the day and prices vary according to age groups as per FFV Referees Fee Schedule (Appendix 2)





Leagues	FEE CATEGORIES				
	Player Reg includes insurance (p/team)	Insurance	Team Reg	Affiliation Fee	Referee's Fees (p/game)
				\$1,250 Women's Premier	
Bayside League	\$20	\$360	\$180	\$50	\$80
VCSA	N/A	\$71.50 (snr) \$9 (jnr)	\$1,130 (Men) \$470 (Ladies) \$200-\$470 (jnr)	N/A	N/A
VicSoccer			N/A	\$58	

What is immediately evident in the comparison of fees provided in Table 13 is the degree of variation in the methodology, and amount of fees charged by the various leagues. In particular, the cost to participate in higher standards of competition within the FFV stand out. The dearer charges of the FFV have been highlighted by clubs and participants as a barrier to participation in the League, and a notable motivator for participating in the lower cost leagues.

There is less of a variation in the cost to participate amongst the junior levels of competition, although the FFV competition is still more expensive. The FFV fees differentiate between the Masters and Thirds competition (being a lower standard of play and more socially oriented competition), which become more comparable with the Bayside League and Victorian Churches Soccer Association which both offer strong social competitions. Of interest, the Bayside League does not differentiate between fees for women or men which FFV and VCSA does. FFV fees also increase with the standard of competition played. The fees charged by VicSoccer are very affordable (even despite this, participation is still declining).

The high level of volunteerism within the Bayside League, VCSA and VicSoccer are likely to aid in the ability to offer competition at lower fees, unlike FFV which offers more extensive program support, and is highly resourced with a large team of staff.

## 2.6 Soccer Management & Governance ~ the Current State of Play

Soccer in Australia has undergone significant change over recent years. In August 2002, the Federal Government indicated an independent review into the governance, management and structure of soccer at the national level as a result of Soccer Australia (now FFA); having experienced financial difficulties over a number of years, lacking a national focus and losing senior level players and thus participating poorly at an international level. The review, completed in April 2003, incorporated all soccer affiliated bodies and recommended the implementation of major reforms to the structure of the National governing body and competition by a new Board. Another key recommendation was for the creation of a stand alone National Soccer League (the A-League).

Now, some years following the review and restructure, a new identity has been created for soccer, a new constitution has been enforced by a new look National governing body and the A-League has been implemented with all new teams. In particular, there is a strong direction of encouraging clubs to be culturally diverse - some have identified this as being a key strategy that markedly increased the mainstream popularity of the sport.

A consistent administrative and governance model for soccer is now emerging across Australia, with a positive vote for constitutional reform of Football Federation Victoria occurring in April 2006. The new Constitution of FFV will be based on the FFA model, with the implications being a closer integration between the National and State bodies at a structural, managerial and governance level. It is considered that the new governance structure of FFV will provide more equitable representation for all clubs, including locally based clubs. The model enables clubs to vote for representatives from within their defined 'zone' (electorate) onto various Standing Committees. Standing Committee members then elect the FFV Commission, and the Commission elects the FFV President. The Standing Committees are:

- Futsal Standing Committee
- Referees Standing Committee
- Coaches Standing Committee
- Women's Standing Committee
- Men's Standing Committee
- Juniors Standing Committee



There is a strong desire by FFV and FFA to include representation of all soccer bodies in Victoria including the affiliation of centres that run indoor competitions, with the intent of providing a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated voice for the sport. To achieve this, there is acknowledgement of the different needs of these organisations, and the demands of the market niches that they cater for and a desire for these to continue to be provided in a more coordinated format. This consolidation may benefit those organisations that haven't been performing as strongly which may assist with their survival.

As a result of the high degree of change within soccer administration at a managerial and administrative level both Nationally and in Victoria, and the new management structure being new and therefore relatively 'young', FFV is still developing its culture and policies and refining its structure to operate to its maximum potential and efficacy. The limitation of this is that a strong managerial focus is required to soundly establish these elements in order for the organisation to be developed and settled enough to adequately address the issues impacting on the growth of the sports – which takes time; whilst the demands of the growth of the sport need addressing now, thus presenting a difficult 'growing pain' for FFV in terms of not being sufficiently ready and settled to respond to such demands.

The A-League is developing positively in Victoria with strong on field success by the Victorian representative team, Melbourne Victory, and off-field support by spectators. The high profile and media exposure the A-League and Melbourne Victory are gaining, combined with the generic and non-ethnically biased positioning of the League and its teams, will only increase the popularity of soccer in Victoria with an anticipated impact of a further increasing demand from new participants and desire from players to progress up a competitive pathway.

## Section 3. Demand Analysis

Summary of stakeholder engagement /  
Consultation with peak bodies, clubs,  
community



### 3.1 Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

A number of stakeholders were engaged to identify issues, constraints and opportunities affecting the development and growth of soccer in the eastern region. Volume 2 provides further detail on the consultation findings. This Section provides a summary of the key directions that have arisen from the consultation and represents the views of stakeholders, which included:

- **Community survey** – random survey with people that live, work, attend school or visit the Council areas. The survey was distributed throughout the six Councils, and was also available on FFV's website. 167 people responded to the community survey.
- **Soccer club surveys** – surveys with all soccer clubs across the six Councils were implemented, to gain membership data and understand membership trends, barriers to participation, club development needs and facility constraints. All soccer clubs from each of the six Councils were sent surveys to complete. A total of 26 surveys were returned (representing 43% of all clubs in the eastern region – as a result of only approximately half of the clubs contributing, assumptions made from the information should be taken as a guide only).
- **Soccer club forums** – forums with representatives from soccer clubs were held in each Council area, where issues facing the deliverers of soccer at the local level were investigated including the demands of the community, regional opportunities, and strategies for addressing facility constraints including consideration of a regional facility;
- **Soccer peak bodies** – interviews were conducted with the peak bodies for soccer, including Football Federation Victoria (FFV), VicSoccer (VS), Bayside League, Victorian Churches Soccer Association and Football Federation Australia (FFA) to understand participation trends, changes to competition structure and strategic directions;
- **School student surveys** – 1,159 surveys were conducted with students of primary (489) and secondary (670) schools (private and public) from across the region to ascertain their interest and participation in soccer (amongst other sports), facilities that are used for sport (not just soccer), demand for sport broadly and barriers to participation in soccer;
- **Community agencies** – a forum was held with community agencies that represent disadvantaged population groups from across the region. Attendees represented people with disabilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) and youth, and contributed to identifying how access to soccer for disadvantaged population sectors can be better achieved and barriers that prevent participation;

- **Sport stakeholders** – interviews were conducted with Sport and Recreation Victoria and Womensport and Recreation Victoria to ascertain policy and social trends that may impact on participation in sport and opportunities for the development of soccer and views on the concept of a regional soccer facility;
- **Non-Council land owners** – interviews were conducted with organisations that own land which is used for soccer (VicRoads, Melbourne Water, Parks Victoria, Department of Sustainability and Environment, Department of Education) to determine opportunities for use of additional sites, future development plans or policies that may inhibit future use;
- **Council staff** – interviews and forums were conducted with staff from across each of the six Councils to investigate the situation for soccer in each locality, with a particular emphasis on facility constraints, opportunities to develop and support the development of soccer further, partnerships and potential facility provision models (including consideration of a regional soccer facility).
- **Casual providers' survey** – a survey of the twenty hirers that have used Council soccer facilities on a one-off basis over the past 12 months, to identify reasons for use of the facilities (including whether the school user groups have school based facilities) and methods of access, the appropriateness of the facilities to the user groups' needs, potential for community use of school facilities, facility development plans of schools, and potential interest in the use of a regional soccer facility including preparedness to pay. Users included schools, FFV and School Sports Associations.

To enable easy analysis of the key findings from the stakeholder consultation, the information has been combined and collated under themes that, together, address all roles related to the provision of soccer. These categories and the associated key findings from the consultation include (*note, the following represents the views of the stakeholders and does not necessarily reflect objective analysis*):

1. **Planning** (including policy, partnerships and consultation)
2. **Participation**
3. **People** (disadvantaged population groups, club development and management)
4. **Provision** (programs, services and pathways)
5. **Facilities** (existing facilities, future facilities - including a regional facility, and management)
6. **Perception & Profile** (information, education, promotion)

### 3.1.1 Planning

Stakeholder opinions commented on the following elements that are relevant to planning for soccer:

- The FFV should give more emphasis to juniors and women.
- The opportunity was identified to strengthen ties / relationships between schools and clubs to better integrate participants and encourage a pathway into community sport.
- Cost is a barrier to participation for some, especially when the cost of uniform, registration, playing fees, transport etc is combined. Rule changes for uniforms by some associations / competitions has enabled clubs to relax rules relating to uniform and thus be accessible to players.
- FFV affiliation fees are considered to be very expensive and prohibitive compared to the other leagues.
- Transport is a significant factor that impacts on people's ability to access sport.
- There is an identified need for better liaison between Councils and FFV, Councils and clubs, clubs and clubs (i.e. summer tenants) in planning and providing for soccer generally. Council assistance is required for facilitating partnerships (between clubs and schools, between sports etc), and the support of FFV in working with clubs is requested as much as possible.
- FFV needs to focus on developing relationships with local government.

### 3.1.2 Participation

The consultative process indicated the following relevant to servicing participants requirements in the eastern region:

- Research conducted for a feasibility study for an indoor multi-use hi-ball facility in Manningham identifies that, based on the membership of one club alone, there could be enough demand to service a junior indoor soccer competition as there are few facilities that cater for this activity.
- Opportunities for growth in soccer are considered to be in juniors, social competitions, females.
- There is an issue of participants being restricted from playing – caused by clubs having to cap members as a result of facility constraints. Clubs can get selective when forced to cap members, i.e. prioritising participation for higher standard players – as a result, lower standard players can miss out and people with disabilities often fall into this category.
- Some school staff have limited knowledge of soccer which can limit opportunities for students.

### 3.1.3 People

Information from stakeholders relevant to the development of club administrators and management practices at clubs, and the needs of disadvantaged population groups in participating in soccer include:

#### 3.1.3-1 Club Personnel & Club Development

- Volunteer recruitment, retention and development are significant issues for local clubs.
- The supply of accredited referees is an issue.
- Particularly difficult to fill committee roles within senior clubs.
- Council assistance is requested with the strategic planning of clubs.

#### 3.1.3-2 Club Management

- Governance, risk management, insurance, strategic planning, media profile are management issues impacting on soccer.
- Clubs identified they would gain benefit from resources to assist with management. In particular, a newsletter and provision of information were considered of value. Assistance with promotion was also desired. FFV provides some templates which clubs may not be aware of.
- There is a need to change some club cultures – Council and FFV may need to help do this. More clubs are becoming all inclusive.
- There is a recognised conflict between junior soccer clubs / teams propping-up senior teams / clubs (financially), and yet facilities being senior oriented.

#### 3.1.3-3 Disadvantaged Population Groups

- Soccer is a favoured activity of new communities – and is considered a good activity to link migrant youth to their ‘homeland’, by undertaking a familiar activity. There is a program called ‘On Side Soccer’ which is aimed at building a bridge between new arrivals and existing communities.
- Cost, lack of trust and provision of transport are significant barriers to participation by people from disadvantaged population groups. Participants need to feel confident to take the first step to participate in a club.
- There is a need for people with disabilities, people from CALD backgrounds and young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds to be catered for by clubs in an inclusive manner. Direct support (e.g. education and information) is required from FFV / councils to assist with the development of inclusive practices.
- Any programs need to be carefully planned to be appropriate to the target market (eg. use CALD coaches for a CALD program).



- Players from disadvantaged population groups also want opportunities to participate in competition pathways, i.e. play at a high level.
- There is a desire for both integrated and specialised activities; e.g. for people with disabilities, CALD.
- There is a need to provide more female friendly environments through; facilities, coaching, uniforms, welcoming environments; and to provide for female representation in administration, governance.

### **3.1.4 Provision**

Through the consultation, stakeholders nominated the following considerations relevant to participation in soccer (in terms of competitive participation and programs, participation pathways and scheduling, and the non-competitive opportunities for participation):

#### **3.1.4-1 Participation Through Competition & Programming**

- Opportunities for players that are not focussed on competition need to be provided for.
- Rooball (competition for younger age groups of under 8, 9, 10) is offered by a large proportion of clubs (46%). Clubs that did not participate in the Rooball program did not have junior participants or were not affiliated with FFV.
- 27% of clubs indicated that they provide soccer for all abilities (i.e. to cater for people with disabilities), even though the proportion of clubs that expressly targeted players with a disability was minimal at just 5%. Clubs within the Cities of Manningham, Knox, Boroondara, Whitehorse and Monash catered for players of all abilities. Being unaware of the Soccer for All Abilities program, a lack of interest amongst participants, not being affiliated with FFV and not having appropriate facilities or resources (volunteers) were reasons given for clubs not partaking in the program.
- 23% of clubs were involved in the FFV Academy (to support high level players). Half of these were in the City of Manningham, with others being in the Cities of Boroondara, Maroondah and Monash. Reasons provided by clubs for not participating in the FFV Football Academy included insufficient interest amongst members, not having access to facilities and not being part of FFV.
- There is not a lot of opportunity for social soccer at present and this is desired by women, although FFV is focussing on this through a Women in Sport program.
- There are examples of clubs reducing training for u/17, 18 players to accommodate heavier schooling workload.

- In addition to participating in standard home and away competition, over half of all clubs in the region offered the GoalKick (junior skills development) program. GoalKick is provided within each of the Councils. Reasons provided by clubs for not offering GoalKick included not wanting the responsibility of causing potential injury to young children because of poor ground condition, not offering the program because the club is not affiliated with FFV and not having adequate facilities to accommodate the program.
- Of the special programs that clubs offered, fewest organised holiday programs (just 15% respondents across the region). Clubs in the Cities of Manningham, Whitehorse, Boroondara and Monash offered holiday programs. A number of reasons were provided by clubs for not offering holiday programs, including; wanting to give children a break from soccer and administrators a rest, experiencing a high absentee rate due to families going away, not having sufficient volunteer support, and the inappropriateness of facilities.
- Schools often don't have the equipment required to provide for a sport, including soccer.

#### *3.1.4-2 Pathways & Scheduling*

- There is an identified opportunity to promote pathways from schools into clubs.
- Leagues have become more localised from a competition management perspective where possible. This is particularly more favourable to junior leagues as parents do not like to travel too far for away games.
- There is a view that pathways across clubs tend to work themselves out (i.e. market forces - each club caters for its niche).
- The timing of competition games for women is not conducive to the times that women can participate (due to other commitments).
- FFV does not plan to shorten the season length, thus affecting the containment of competitions within the nominated seasons (i.e. Summer / Winter).
- Seasonal creep is an issue, with clubs running pre-season competitions, summer competitions and academies. There is demand from players for extra-curricula soccer, e.g. to run after school soccer program, pre-season cups, summer soccer program. There is also pressure to run some GoalKick programs 12 months.

#### *3.1.4-3 Non-Competitive Opportunities for Participation*

- 46% of clubs that indicated in the club survey they offer special programs provided education courses (e.g. FFV courses). Some clubs ran their own education courses, some planned to conduct courses in the future, and others did not have required equipment to conduct courses.

- Clubs not affiliated with FFV did not partake in FFV programs and therefore rely on their own programs. The lack of facilities or inappropriateness of facilities was a significant factor that inhibited involvement in special programs. The availability of volunteers was also a factor. Clubs nominated FFV as being predominantly responsible for the delivery of special programs.
- There is demand for casual soccer programs (including by the corporate sector).
- Masters / veterans have more of an emphasis on social competition.
- Women represent a high proportion of spectators.
- Currently Womensport and Recreation Victoria is working with FFV to look at the appropriateness of the coaching module to women.

### **3.1.5 Facilities**

When asked about issues of relevance to the planning and management of facilities, development of new facilities and the concept of regional facilities, the stakeholders nominated the following:

#### **3.1.5-1 Facility Planning**

- Facility constraints are a significant factor that impact on clubs' ability to cater for demand. Specifically this includes the need to upgrade facilities to meet basic expectations, achieve maximum use, cater for females or meet FFV standards; the need for more facilities, the need for facilities to be available for pre-season use and to cater for women players.
- Across the region, the average ratio of players per team has increased from 1 team per 15 players in 2003, to 1 per 19 players in 2006, reflecting the growing number of total players to grounds available. The implication is that not all players within one team can be comfortably accommodated in one game (with 11 players per senior team). Clearly, if more grounds were available, more players could be accommodated at one time.
- There is a focus by Parks Victoria on promoting parks with low visitation (e.g. Police Paddocks – just beyond the City of Knox's boundary), and a commitment to developing recreational opportunities at sandbelt parks (close to, but outside of the regional boundary).
- It is considered to be important to make soccer facilities available for casual participation as well as club-based competition (to ensure that casual participants are also catered for – this may also occur at non-specific open spaces).
- There is an opportunity to contribute to the design of new schools to ensure that facilities are provided to meet the needs of the broader community (i.e. constructed to full size).
- Larger facilities are more efficient and sustainable to manage / operate than smaller facilities as they can cater for more users and uses, thus making them appealing to use and making supplementary services more viable due to larger customer base.

- Councils seek advice and guidance from FFV relating to individual soccer facility developments to ensure their most appropriate application to soccer.
- Only 25% of clubs indicated that the FFV minimum facility standards presented an issue for them. The elements of impact included not having two sets of change rooms, using square goal posts instead of round ones, uncovered benches and ground fencing below standard. Overall, the majority of clubs were either not affected by the standards, or they were not relevant (ie. due to a club participating in a different league). 15% of clubs considered the facility standards to be beneficial in ensuring that all facilities are developed to a consistent standard.

To address the identified facility constraints, respondents nominated solutions that include gaining funding from State and Local Government, better quality facilities with infrastructure to enable greater use (e.g. floodlighting), the provision of new facilities, partnerships for the use of grounds (e.g. with schools, other clubs / sports), and enhancement of sponsorship and planning of facilities.

- It is recognised that facilities need to cater for females (i.e. predominantly through dual change rooms for male and female players).
- Synthetic surfaces are considered to be an efficient use of space as synthetic can tolerate higher levels, on a per pitch comparison, of use than natural grass.
- There is a need to build stronger relationships between co-tenants to assist with addressing facility issues. Council assistance is required to facilitate this.
- There is demand for year-round use of facilities (for pre-season training, summer competitions and tournaments, to accommodate FFV Premier League competition games).

### 3.1.5-2 Management of Facilities

- Councils could liaise more with Leagues prior to allocating grounds to ensure that facilities are matched against standard of participation and provide assistance to gain funding and develop facilities.
- Feedback from clubs is that the fees charged by some schools to use soccer facilities are too expensive (this may occur due to schools aiming to recoup all ground maintenance costs through fees and charges, whereas Council fees are subsidised).
- The season by season allocation of facilities limits clubs' investment in facilities due to not having guaranteed future use, and presents an issue for clubs in not being able to plan for the future, but offers benefits for some clubs who's finances are too unstable to take on long term tenure.
- The scheduling of Women's Premier League competition outside of the stipulated winter season presents a conflict for facility use (particularly with summer sports).

- Sole use / tenancy of a facility is considered by clubs to be important in building stability and 'ownership' of a ground, allows for major investment in facilities, and is more conducive to attracting sponsorship. Clubs would be more willing to contribute capital for facility development where they have longer tenure.
- Ground management techniques that have been implemented as a result of the drought (e.g. drought tolerant grass, irrigation practices etc) have extended the useability of grounds and should be considered where not implemented.
- The shared use of grounds with cricket (i.e. a cricket wicket in the middle of a soccer ground) restricts the use and functionality of facilities for soccer. Covering of cricket wickets to enable winter sport use results in an uneven surface – it is preferable for wickets to be covered with turf or synthetic grass mats to improve surface evenness.

### 3.1.5-3 New Facility Development

- It is felt that FFV has a key role in addressing the provision of high standard facilities which should be considered on a regional basis with involvement from State Government.
- The Maroondah Open Space Strategy 2025 identifies no obvious opportunities to acquire additional sporting reserves and encourages the provision of multiple playing field complexes where possible.
- Opinion from Whitehorse City Council staff is that there is little undeveloped open space available in Whitehorse to develop new facilities; instead, a strategy of improving and building upon existing facilities is considered to be more realistic and achievable.
- The Department of Education has the Community Facilities Fund which concluded its third year of funding in mid 2006 (of a commitment of \$30M over 3 years). The grant scheme aimed to facilitate community arrangements and partnerships, and extend community access to school facilities. The program funded up to 50% of community projects based at a school, on Education land or adjacent to council land. Past applications for soccer have tended to focus on upgrading pitches, drainage, correct setback, additional car parking, fencing. There is a requirement for school facilities that have shared community use need to be constructed of a higher standard to allow for higher level competition use. No announcement has been made to continue the program beyond this term.
- The concept of a synthetic pitch is considered to have merit on the basis that it can tolerate more use than natural grass and is not water dependant, although a feasibility assessment would be required to ascertain viability from a whole-of-life perspective, and public access and sharing with other sports would need to be resolved.
- The Manningham City Council has installed a synthetic cover on an existing tennis court marked with 5-a-side soccer for training use by local soccer clubs.
- A casual use soccer goal has been installed in a park as play equipment which has been very well received by residents.

- The use of portable goals is a potential method of increasing the use of grassed areas not nominated for soccer. (There are FIFA recommendations to guide the use of portable goals by clubs. To manage potential risks, new portable structures should also comply with Consumer Affairs Victoria's factsheet on Moveable Soccer Goals.)
- Greater contributions from clubs are required to enhance facilities beyond a minimum standard of provision.

#### 3.1.5-4 Consideration of a Regional Soccer Facility

- Some 88% of all clubs surveyed showed interest in using a regional facility, with most (69% of those indicating use) nominated a preference to use natural grass pitches, followed by artificial pitches (58%) and social rooms (54%). The greatest anticipated use of an artificial pitch was for training. Respondent clubs anticipated use of natural pitches at a regional facility for training and competition, followed by smaller proportions suggesting use of natural pitches for pre-season use and tournaments. Most respondent clubs indicated that they would not use social rooms at a regional facility; of those clubs that would use social rooms, most would for functions.
- Clubs, peak bodies and councils have strongly indicated that a regional facility should not be developed to the detriment of local facilities. That is, that priority should be given to upgrading local level facilities to a minimum standard and maximise utilisation before any resources are potentially redirected to the development of a regional facility.
- The availability of sufficient land to support a regional soccer facility development was questioned (i.e. there are few large area sites).
- Foreseeable challenges to a regional facility include gaining agreement between multiple organisations, and ensuring equity of access.
- The views towards the provision, management and use of a regional facility varied amongst the councils. Overall though, the concept was considered as having merit and worth investigating. Factors such as the centrality of sites available within each municipality and accessibility (i.e. via road networks, public transport) were significant considerations that may determine the ultimate location of such a facility.
- Whilst there was a willingness amongst the councils to explore regional partnerships for the development of a regional facility (i.e. potentially outside of municipal boundaries), the preference was for a facility located within their respective cities. Some councils however (the Cities of Monash, Knox and Manningham), indicated little likelihood of contributing to a facility outside of their municipalities, on the basis of prioritising resources to the immediate needs of residents.

In all cases, the willingness to consider supporting a regional facility development outside of their municipal boundaries would be dependent on a sound business case investigation, and proof that the development would ease the burden for soccer within each respective municipality.

- The business philosophy for a regional facility varied, with some organisations expecting that a regional facility would be managed in a semi-commercial capacity, e.g. through contracting out of the management function, and others preferring to retain full control through in-house management. The expectations of financial return varied, from a return on investment to a break even or subsidy position.
- Some councils (the Cities of Whitehorse, Monash and Manningham) suggested that a regional facility should be managed to a business philosophy (i.e. soundly planned to achieve financial viability). The Maroondah City Council indicated a willingness to explore Private Public Sector Partnerships and Joint Ventures for a regional facility, whilst others prefer to fully control such developments. All councils indicated a need to seek external funding for a major development (i.e. State Government).
- There is a strong view held that the responsibilities of State Government and FFV would need to be determined (especially regarding funding) regarding a regional facility.
- There was a view that large catchment facilities can be sustained from within municipal populations regardless of broadening to a regional catchment; therefore, question whether one regional facility would be enough to service the demand across six Councils.
- The views of stakeholders varied regarding the type and structure of use of a potential regional facility, to include;
  - A centralised competition, i.e. all competition games of a particular level played at the same venue each week, regardless of home team. There is a concern that this model may impact negatively on club revenue raising.
  - There was a view by some that a regional facility should cater for higher standard participation (i.e. senior teams and other elite teams such as Premier League, Super League), show matches and major events, and therefore be developed to cater for large spectator crowds,
  - Off-season training, representative squad training / playing, a training base for squads, host academies, coaching and referee courses, and corporate events were other nominated uses of a regional soccer specific facility,
  - Some clubs suggested that a regional facility should not cater for grass roots level participation, as parents prefer less travel and home and away competition would require less travel, yet others felt that it would aid travel through competition being conducted regularly at the same, centralised venue.

- Another view was that a regional facility could cater just for juniors or sub-juniors (and thus not require a high standard of development, e.g. grandstands) to take the pressure off juniors using senior level facilities,
- A suggestion was made for a regional facility to be a home for women's soccer;
- It was considered critical that a regional facility development has ownership amongst local clubs to ensure that it is willingly used.
- A regional facility is considered to have merit on the basis that there are too few facilities in the east to service demand.
- Opinions on the management of a regional facility varied, and included;
  - FFV and soccer leagues were nominated by large proportions of clubs.
  - FFV regional offices could be based at such a facility and take on the management. There was also a view that a regional facility should not be controlled by the FFV.
  - A number of stakeholders commented that a regional facility should not be allocated to one club, but be a playing base for clubs (i.e. not a home base).
  - A number of stakeholders suggested a management committee involving the sports and Councils. FFV and Local Government would need to be involved in the management of a facility.
- State Government is considered by clubs to be the main financial contributor to a regional facility, as well as the construction manager of such a facility (with FFV and Local Government also considered as having a key role in funding such a facility).
- User pays and sponsorship are other considerations for funding a development.
- In the event that a regional soccer specific facility is not financially viable, the idea was presented for a multi-sport regional facility (i.e. cater for sports with similar requirements and complementary uses). Including elements that can be run commercially such as an indoor venue for indoor soccer / Futsal, corporate competitions and social competitions, is felt to be necessary as part of any regional facility consideration.
- Regardless of the provision of a regional facility, the need for a high quality pitch to provide for Premier League teams in the region is considered to be necessary.





### **3.1.6 Perception & Profile**

The consultation identified issues around perception of the profile associated with soccer, in particular the need to be appealing to target markets and the requirement for information and education per the following:

#### **3.1.6-1 Appealing to Target Markets**

- Positive role models are considered to be essential in encouraging participation by different target markets. Role models should be relevant to the market being targeted, e.g. females for women soccer programs. The opportunity exists with the World Cup to present role models for the sport in Australia.
- Schools are important in promoting sport and in identifying participants that experience barriers to participation and thus may require additional support.
- The opportunity exists to coordinate the promotion of soccer across the region – although there is an argument that promoting soccer will only enhance the facility congestion issues, and thus clubs will be limited in catering for additional demand.

#### **3.1.6-2 Information & Education**

- Clubs need to be educated on the needs of people from disadvantaged population groups and understand the benefits of inclusion.
- Cultural differences inhibit people from playing soccer and the perception that the sport has cultural conflicts.
- There is a need for new communities to understand how sport 'works' (i.e. is structured); education is required on how clubs operate, the rules and expectations of members etc.



## Section 4 Facility Review & Options for Provision

Facility options

Facility standards

Analysis of provision



## 4.1 Facility Provision Options / Models

A number of facility 'solutions' have been considered to assist alleviate the sustained demand for increasing provision for soccer. This Section explores the alternatives, with a particular emphasis on regional level provision:

### 4.1.1 District / Regional Level Provision

Consideration of a regional level facility in the eastern region is a key requirement of this Study. Such a model has been raised previously; the Local Government & Victorian Soccer Resource Study (1999) proposed a structure of provision that represented a mixture of both local and district or regional level facilities. In particular, it identified that junior competitions should be locally based (i.e. within 10 kilometres) at appropriate, local level facilities (i.e. low level infrastructure). Further, it proposed that higher levels of competition be provided at district or regional level facilities (the idea being that a district level facility can accommodate the higher level competition needs of a larger geographic area, and as such there may be only one or two such facilities within a municipality, and similarly, a regional facility can accommodate the needs of a region – being approximately three municipal areas).

Regional level provision is normally considered in the case of two instances; for an activity that has a lower degree of participation and therefore requires a specialised facility, and caters to a larger catchment for viability and to support demand (e.g. hockey, lacrosse, athletics). Alternatively, in the case of soccer, a regional facility would occur to assist in the efficient delivery of the competition, e.g. to provide facilities that require development to higher standards, or attract more players or large numbers of spectators. The various elements that may be included in a regional level soccer facility are provided in the following discussion.

Implied within the larger catchment of a regional facility is an increased level of development in order to accommodate use by a large number of participants that such facilities would attract (i.e. large car park, several pitches, pavilion with a number of change rooms, large social space etc). Strategic and financial considerations also need to be carefully worked through, plus determining the availability of sufficient space required for any such sizeable development.

Given the more sparse provision of regional facilities, travel is often an implication that needs consideration and careful planning.



#### 4.1.1-1 Benchmarking of Regional Soccer Facility Developments

A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken to understand and learn from the benefits, constraints, managerial and operational considerations of provision for soccer at a regional level. A number of examples were identified internationally and within Australia of varying levels of development and models of provision. An overview of the information gained from each example is provided in Volume 2, with the following provided as a summary:

**Facility Development Strategy, English Football Association** – The Strategy stipulates that all League clubs in England have to have a Centre of Excellence or Academy, meaning that there is a commitment to player development and provision of pathways to elite performance.

The Facility Development Strategy includes standards for Centres of Excellence and Academies. The standards prescribe the number of each of two types of facilities for each competition division and minimum standards (dimensions) for each component of the facilities per age category. The Academies are a higher level of development than Centres of Excellence which include an outdoor grassed area, either a synthetic outdoor area or indoor area and change facilities. Requirements of an Academy include outdoor pitches (specified per number players), an indoor area, treatment and examination areas, a homework and study area and parents lounge.

The Strategy prescribes options for facility provision according to facility and programming needs, and the level and hierarchy of club required to ensure it is sustainable. These include:

- Community clubs; minimum of ten teams with four different age breaks with male and female representation; require social and playing facilities. Provision ratio of one community club to 100,000 population. A focus on facilities, with security of tenure considered key to future planning. FA aims for 500 such facilities by the end of 2006.
- Local Football Development Centres; Centres based around community clubs or colleges. These facilities require training rooms to enable the delivery of courses. The centres are most successful under a centralised model (i.e. accessed by a number of users).
- Football at Education Establishments; sports colleges and other certified schools must meet minimum requirements of facility and program delivery set out by the FA. Education establishments are a priority for grassroots development (see example of Callington Community College below).

Further, the Strategy emphasises consideration of 5-a-side in planning facility developments (given the growth in the sport) as this form also provides commercial opportunities, as well as facilities needing to reflect increasing participation by women.



**Sunderland Amateur Football Club Academy (UK)** – The Centre includes 12 to 18 pitches, indoor training, artificial pitches, medical and rehabilitation facilities, media lounge, canteen, library, games room, gym, hydrotherapy, treatment areas and amenities. The facility is the training base of the Sunderland Football Club and also provides young player development to elite level. Programs at the Centre include the academy, training for the Football Club and National Squad. Some community use is permitted, but no casual use.

**Callington Community College (UK)** – A soccer development centre developed in partnership with the Callington Secondary College which has ‘sports college’ status. Facilities include 6 junior pitches, 5-a-side pitches, gym, sports hall and classrooms, a floodlit artificial pitch, a full sized pitch and pavilion – which are available for community use. The Centre, managed by the school, is used as a base for training and competition coach education and a development centre and is regularly used by 1,000 players. The Centre was funded through a grant from the Football Foundation (provided by the Football Association, Premier League, Government, Sport England and the New Opportunities Fund – with grants availability up to £1M) which included the employment of a development officer.

**Valentine Sports Park (NSW)** – A multi-purpose sports complex including five pitches, lecture rooms, an indoor sports hall, lap pool, sports medicine centre, dining room and accommodation to cater for up to 180 people. The Centre caters for a mix of corporate, school, church and sporting group use, and can cater for conferences, multi-sport events (including touch football, basketball, Ultimate Frisbee, Futsal) and includes a soccer coaching centre. The Centre is used by the NSW Institute of Sport, International soccer teams and is a base for Soccer NSW’ Coaching and Development Department.

**Casey Fields (Cranbourne East)** – soccer facilities form part of a 70 hectare development proposed to include four soccer pitches with potential to develop four more, including a State level pitch and stadium. It is possible that a regional office of FFV will be based at, and may manage the venue.

**State Soccer Centre (Darebin International Sports Centre, Thornbury)** – comprises five International standard pitches; three artificial grass and two natural turf, a central pavilion with six change rooms, administrative offices and indoor recreation area. The State Soccer Centre was co-funded by the State Government, Darebin City Council and FFV, and is home to FFV operations (under a lease) and is co-located with high standard facilities for cycling and lawn bowls, with the aim of accommodating and providing elite level competition in those sports.



The FFV has managerial and operational control of the Centre under its lease. Combined the sports bodies must achieve Key Result Areas that relate to participation, access and inclusion, sports development, programming and events, maintenance, human resource management, and hospitality and merchandising. FFV conducts a number of its programs at the Centre including clinics, coaches' courses, Academies, school holiday programs, Cup events and visiting team training. The pitches are publicly accessible and available for use by clubs.

Learnings from the above regional facility provision examples that are applicable to the Study include:

- The benefits of the regional facility developments have included regeneration of sites and communities, including the provision of local employment;
- Environmental sustainable and efficient resource use have been key principles, in particular water recycling;
- Most developments have included the provision of an artificial surface pitch (although this is common practice in the United Kingdom);
- UK based clubs are forced to adopt broader community development practices, and support participation pathways by the peak body, to this end, a range of facilities are provided to support different activities, programs and events;
- Some developments have a multi-sport focus and include commercial elements, administrative headquarters;
- Some developments include planning for a facility manager;
- It is considered beneficial, and important to involve stakeholders in the planning of facilities, and in allowing for flexibility where possible.
- Partnerships are crucial in the planning and development phases, and ongoing management and use. Partners included schools, commercial sector, other levels of government, other community organisations.
- The UK Football Association takes an active role in leading the planned development of facilities, by not only setting development standards, but levels of provision.

#### **4.1.2 Facility Provision by the Education Sector & Others**

Public and private primary and secondary schools and universities are regarded as key providers of sporting facilities, as the scope of provision at these facilities often include sports fields, and sometimes indoor facilities. The level of development of these facilities however, varies significantly and is greatly inhibited by financial constraints, and the priorities of individual schools.



Regardless of this, the provision of the open space is an extremely valuable community resource, and the demand for use between community sport and schools at complementary times presents these facilities as great potential for aiding the undersupply issue experienced by the Councils. However, partnerships with education organisations needs to be treated on a case-by-case basis, as some education organisations choose not to make facilities available for community use, some facilities are of an extremely poor standard, and some schools have very limited ability to enter into an equitable partnership with local government.

The Department of Education is supportive of community use of school facilities, and to this end, has its policy framework to guide the establishment and development of partnerships to achieve the shared use and / or development of facilities. However, there is a view that the policy requires improvement, as implementation is considered to be onerous, time consuming and bureaucratic; to the point where some organisations will not pursue such partnerships due to the complexity of the process. As a result, councils view the Department's joint use agreement process as a major barrier to utilising sports facility sites for community sport and recreation use.

Instead, some councils agree to basic access agreements with schools which often take the form of the Council undertaking basic maintenance (i.e. mowing) of facilities in return for community access. In most cases, these facilities are undersized, of poor quality and not supported with amenities, and as a result, are normally only appropriate for summer use (winter sports can't train as the fields are not lit), and junior sport. In many cases these 'agreements' are not formalised to secure long term community use, with the risk being that the community could lose access to the facilities in the event of school closure or change of management.

In the event of a council entering into a formal partnership with a school for the shared use / development of facilities, a long-term occupancy agreement should be negotiated that secures Council's investment and community access of the facility.

#### **4.1.3 Artificial Surfaces**

Soccer has been played on synthetic grass for decades, with varying degrees of success as the technology and products have changed and developed. Whilst synthetic grass has been a relatively common surface for soccer (particularly in the UK and Europe), the product continues to evolve to overcome player burning and discomfort, essentially becoming a 'new' product with every redevelopment.



The current form of synthetic grass, the third generation of its type, is back-filled with granulated rubber, and according to testing performs closely to natural grass surfaces. As a result, some synthetic grass products have been endorsed by FIFA (International governing body for soccer) and the English Football Association recommends the use of third generation artificial pitches (with a rubber and sand mix) as the surface results in very similar laying characteristics to grass (Football Development Strategy). There are now a number of such facilities in Asia and Europe, with some lower level World Cup qualifying games played on these surfaces. However, this product is also continually being improved to reach exact natural grass performance.

In Victoria, there are two third generation synthetic soccer facilities; St. Monica's College in Epping (one pitch) and the Darebin International Soccer Centre at the FFV headquarters in Thornbury (three pitches). The peak soccer bodies identify synthetic grass as the future for facility provision, and recognise the significant benefit of the increased carrying capacity of the surface compared to a natural grass pitch, and all-year, all-weather durability. Amongst the soccer community, there are differing views on synthetic grass, largely based on the discomfort of the abrasive surfaces installed in the 1980's. However, the benefits of synthetic surfaces are widely recognised, and such facilities are certainly considered beneficial for training and lower levels of competition. There is still some reticence to play high level competition (i.e. Premier League or A-League) on a third generation synthetic grass surface until further advancements can prove natural grass-like performance and no burning.

Discussion with FFV has ascertained that Premier League competition is not likely to move to synthetic surfaces in the foreseeable future, but that synthetic surfaces are realistic options for training and lower levels of competition.

As with past synthetic grass surfaces, the capital cost for initial provision and then surface replacement is substantial (estimated at around \$750,000 for a full size soccer pitch with a medium quality surface). A considerable advantage however, is the requirement for minimal interim maintenance throughout the life of the surface, estimated at around 10 years. In particular, synthetic surfaces require no water, and as Victoria experiences stringent restrictions on water use, this characteristic is considered a significant advantage. The consideration of any synthetic surface development should be subject to a detailed feasibility assessment to ensure that capital and operational costs and site requirements are identified and understood.



## 4.2 Soccer Facility Standards

Football Federation Victoria has criteria that specifies the minimum standard for facilities to meet different levels of participation. The standards were developed based on the Local Government & Victorian Soccer Resource Study (1999) which identified the need for the facility requirements of the emerging sport to be clearly prescribed. The criteria are frequently reviewed according to participation trends and the changing demands of the game.

FFV stringently administers the facility minimum standards by prohibiting clubs' from progressing in level of competition unless facilities similarly match the level of competition played according to the minimum standards. This places pressure on clubs to improve facilities and, as most don't have sufficient funds to do so, local councils are lobbied by the clubs to undertake the improvements. To this end, there is a desire amongst the councils for a more flexible approach to the application of the standards in terms of methods of providing facilities to achieve different classification ratings (e.g. use of temporary fencing). On this note, FFV has demonstrated flexibility by allowing high level competitions to be played on facilities that do not fully meet the associated classification level.

Whilst the facility standards exist, they are largely not adhered to or applied by councils as part of policy or process because they are either not aware of the standards or cannot meet the stipulated level of provision. A misunderstanding therefore exists between FFV, soccer clubs and local councils, further strained by many councils having independent minimum sports facility standards that don't always reach the same level of development required of FFV (particularly for higher standard facilities), and policies of not developing exclusive use facilities that do not provide for public access.

The FFV minimum facility standards provision criteria are provided as Appendix 1. The level of competition catered for through the facility standards is:

**Class A** – Men's Premier League;

**Class B** – Men's State League Division One;

**Class C** – Men's State League Division Two / Three, Men's Provisional League Division One, Women's Premier League;

**Class D** – Men's Provisional League, Division Two / Three and all other Women's State League divisions.

The standards for Class A and Class B level facilities are those on which the abovementioned conflict predominantly centres, as Class C level is generally consistent with the minimum level of sports facility provision of the councils in the eastern region (those that have minimum facility standards). The elements of Class A and B level facilities that differ from the Councils'



philosophy and objectives for sports facility provision include player races, media rooms, gymnasias, signage controls, full enclosures (i.e. exclusivity), and provision of dual change rooms (some councils have increased minimum level of provision to four change rooms to enhance accessibility). The basis for this conflict is the strong emphasis of local government on provision for grass roots sport, and desire to facilitate participation in physical activity broadly – this is evident in the strategic context outlined in Section 2.2, and the emphasis, roles and responsibilities of local government in the sports development pathway and in providing for soccer discussed in Section 2.4 of this report.

Whilst the standards are a source of some conjecture, local government also seeks guidance from FFV in the development of facilities, e.g. specific service levels for the provision of various facility components.

A review of the criteria for 2008 reveals the following:

- The different levels of participation are acknowledged, by not expecting a high standard of facility development for lower levels of competition;
- A desire to achieve facilities to a standard comparable with other similar levels of participation for other sports (e.g. the Victorian Football League; Box Hill Hawks' home ground at Box Hill City Oval - this is commensurate with the Premier League being the second highest level in the domestic competition hierarchy (with the highest level being the A-League (comparable with the Australian Football League)).
- Whilst provision for women is made, there is an inequity – with Class C being the recommended level of provision for Women's Premier League teams;
- There is no acknowledgement of facility standards for junior or social competition;
- No acknowledgement of local government's position regarding sports facility provision, or the funding responsibilities for facility development to achieve high standard facilities (i.e. Classes B and A);

Further, many sports pavilions in the eastern region are old buildings constructed to the standards from 50 years ago, and therefore would require significant redevelopment to upgrade to current-day expectations and provision trends. As a result there is a significant cost to upgrade, which results in a long-term planning, design and funding process due to the capital cost involved. Whilst it is intent on achieving the minimum levels of facility development, the FFV has demonstrated some flexibility in the application of the standards, (e.g. a Class B pitch can include a fenced oval – this complies with the standards, providing that spectators are kept outside of the playing arena – the intent of the fencing requirement) in acknowledgement of the duration of council processes.



The lack of facilities and availability of land for further facility development has meant that councils have created soccer pitches that don't comply with the minimum dimensions set by FFV, but still support use (particularly by juniors). There is a desire for the criteria to demonstrate flexibility to continue to allow the provision of facilities that are not fully compliant, through recognising the role they can play in supporting some levels of participation. The alternative may be a further reduction in pitches if those that don't comply and can't be upgraded (i.e. due to land limitations) are decommissioned.

The recently released 'AFL Preferred Facility Requirements' (2006) provides minimum facility requirements and dimension for football facilities of varying standards based on the level of participation they support. Comparison between the football and soccer requirements is somewhat difficult due to the inconsistent information between the two documents, however where comparison is possible, the room size requirements (e.g. for change rooms) are similar between the standards, but made greater with soccer requiring four change rooms to ensure appropriate provision for female use. The football standards do not address provision for females. Further, the football standards are provided as a guide only; with facility providers encouraged to adopt the standards for new developments or major refurbishments.

There are no prescribed facility standards by the Bayside League, VicSoccer or Victorian Churches Soccer Association. This is partially a result of the different philosophies of some of these leagues, being focussed on less competitive and more socially based competition, and providing feeder competitions to higher standard FFV competitions which are supported by the facility standards.

There are 18 teams in the Men's Premier League. This could equate to a need for nine Premier League standard facilities in metropolitan Melbourne to support this level of competition (presuming all games conducted concurrently, without the possibility of multiple games at one venue or the scheduling of competition games on different days). Currently there are fifteen soccer venues used for Premier League Men's competition (the standard required is Class A level), all of which are located in metropolitan Melbourne. There are twelve facilities used for women's Premier League (equivalent Class C level); ten of these are based in metropolitan Melbourne.

### 4.3 Facility Provision in the Eastern Region

As outlined in Section 2.1, there are 60 facilities (grounds and pavilions) provided and / or managed by the six councils in the eastern region, representing over 100 pitches. These facilities vary in quality and level of provision standard. The following plan provides an outline of the facilities across the region.

To ascertain the utilisation and level of use of the facilities, their level of development, facility components and supporting infrastructure, siting and management, an audit of each facility was undertaken to prepare a detailed inventory of use, level of development and potential.

The detailed inventory is provided in Volume 2, with the following observations provided on the level and standard of provision in the eastern region:

- The majority of the facilities are single pitch developments;
- The majority of the facilities include only one set of change rooms (i.e. 2 rooms);
- Very few facilities have been recently constructed, resulting in old buildings constructed to outdated design and use trends;
- The majority of the facilities are shared with a summer tenant, resulting in few year-round use opportunities for soccer;
- Some facilities do not include the provision of a pavilion, or basic toilet / change facilities to support use. Pavilions that are provided tend to include social rooms, change rooms, kiosk / canteen and public toilets; additional items to these (such as bar, gym, separate referee's room, first aid room, media room, players race and disabled toilets) are provided on a more ad hoc basis, with some of these elements not provided.
- There are few facilities that have scope for expansion; instead, alternative strategies for achieving increased provision on constrained sites need to be explored (e.g. reconfiguration);
- Most facilities are located in sporting Reserves and surrounded by other sports infrastructure;
- Most, but not all pitch surfaces are supported by some level of infrastructure such as drainage and irrigation, and floodlighting that is provided to allow for training only.
- Some soccer pitches are provided on disused / reconfigured football / cricket ovals. In these cases, the delineation between the playing field and spectating area is less than ideal for soccer due to the larger dimension of ovals, meaning that the spectators are a further distance from the play (providing that there is some fencing, the distance does not affect the ground rating under the FFV Grounds and Facilities Criteria).



Football Federation Victoria has contributed to the facilities analysis through conducting the detailed inspections for assessment to the FFV facility standards. Table 14 following nominates the classification of each facility used for soccer provided by the councils in the eastern region according to the 2008 Grounds and Facilities Criteria, and identifies the facilities currently used for State and Premier League level participation, as these are the facilities that require use of higher standard of development according to the Criteria (to enable a mismatch of use to be identified). Further, Figure 7 provides a map identifying the distribution of the different types of facilities within each municipality in the context of the region.



**Table 14. Soccer Facility Ratings According to FFV Grounds & Facilities Criteria, 2008**

Class	Whitehorse		Knox		Maroondah		Manningham		Boroondara		Monash	
	Facility	Club	Facility	Club	Facility	Club	Facility	Club	Facility	Club	Facility	Club
<b>A</b>												
<b>B</b>	Mahoney's Reserve – (No.1)	Nunawading City			Dorset Recreational Reserve	Croydon City Arrows	Anderson Park	Doncaster Rovers (State League)			Gardiners Creek Reserve	Eastern Lions (State League 2, Women's Prem League)
<b>C</b>	Wembley Park / Sparks	Box Hill Jnr / Women's (Women's Prem League, State League 4)	Park Ridge Reserve	Rowville Eagles	Jubilee Park	Ringwood City	Veneto Club (PRIVATE)	Bulleen Jnr Soccer Club	Ashburton Park	Ashburton Snr / Women's (Premier League)	Jack Edwards Reserve*	Oakleigh Cannons (Prem League)
			RD Egan Lee Reserve	Knox City					Macleay Park	Boroondara Lions	Carlson Reserve	Waverley Wanderers (State League 2)
									Deepdene Park	Old Camberwell Grammarian:	Freeway Reserve	Brandon Park
											Brandon Park	Clayton
										Princes Hwy Reserve East (Victory Park)	Caulfield United	



**Table 14. Soccer Facility Ratings According to FFV Grounds & Facilities Criteria, 2008**

Class	Whitehorse		Knox		Maroondah		Manningham		Boroondara		Monash											
	Facility	Club	Facility	Club	Facility	Club	Facility	Club	Facility	Club	Facility	Club										
<b>D</b>	Bill Sewart	Whitehorse Jnr	HV Jones Reserve	Boronia Jnr Boronia Snr	Manson 1 & 2	Ringwood City Jnr	Park Avenue Reserve	Juventus Old Boys Snr	Hays Paddock	Old Xaverians / Kew Deaf	Gardiners Creek Reserve (outside pitches)	Scotch Old Boys										
							Bulleen Park	Bulleen Jnr Soccer Club					Highfield Park	St. Kevin's Old Boys / Camberwell Baptist / Canterbury Presbyterian	Argyle Reserve	Monash City Junior						
							Timber Ridge Reserve	Manningham Jnr							Caloola Reserve	Monash City Junior						
							Donvale Reserve	Doncaster Rovers Jnr							Batesford Reserve	Ashburton Jnr / Women's						
<b>No Class</b>	Koonung Reserve – West Oval	Crossway Vermont	Milpera	New for 2007 (to be allocated to Boronia Jnr)	Gracedale Park	Eastern Utd	Boronia Grove	Chinese Youth Society of Melb	Willsmere Reserve	East Kew Utd / Old Xaverians / Olympiakos	Ashwood Reserve	Victorian Sikh Assoc										
							Mahoney's Reserve – (south east & south west)	Mitcham Baptist					Knox Italian Soccer Club (PRIVATE)	Knox Utd	Silcock Res	Croydon Ranges	Wilson's Reserve	Templestowe Eagles	Stradbroke Reserve (North)	Carringbush	Glen Waverley North Reserve**	Glen Waverley Jnr
							Mirrabooka Reserve	Blackburn North Baptist					Knox Park	Knox Churches	Springfield Park	Croydon City Jnr			Hislop Park	Boroondara Lions	Lum Reserve	Glen Waverley Jnr Iandy Casual

**Table 14. Soccer Facility Ratings According to FFV Grounds & Facilities Criteria, 2008**

Class	Whitehorse		Knox		Maroondah		Manningham		Boroondara		Monash	
	Facility	Club	Facility	Club	Facility	Club	Facility	Club	Facility	Club	Facility	Club
	Terrara precinct	Mitcham Utd Whitehorse Jnr	RD Egan Lee Reserve (outer pitches)	Knox City	Fred Geale	Croydon City Jnr			Hartwell Reserve	Riversdale	Lapent Reserve	Glen Waverley Jnr
	allyshanassy	Potential new venue – yet to be allocated	Schultz Reserve	Knox City	Ainslie	Croydon City Jnr			Warner Reserve	Ashburton	Jack Edwards (outer pitches)	Oakleigh Cannons
			Sasses Reserve	Bayswater Strikers	Town Park	Croydon City Jnr			Markham Reserve	Ashburton	Ashwood College*** (SCHOOL)	Ashburton
			Windermere Reserve	Boronia Jnr Soccer club	Belmont Park	Eastern Utd			Watson Park	Ashburton		
			Guy Turner Reserve	Bayswater Strikers	Dorset Recreational Reserve (outer pitches)	Croydon City			Frog Hollow	Riversdale		
									HA Smith	Old Scotch		
							Howard Dawson	Swinburne Uni / St. Kevin's Old Boys				

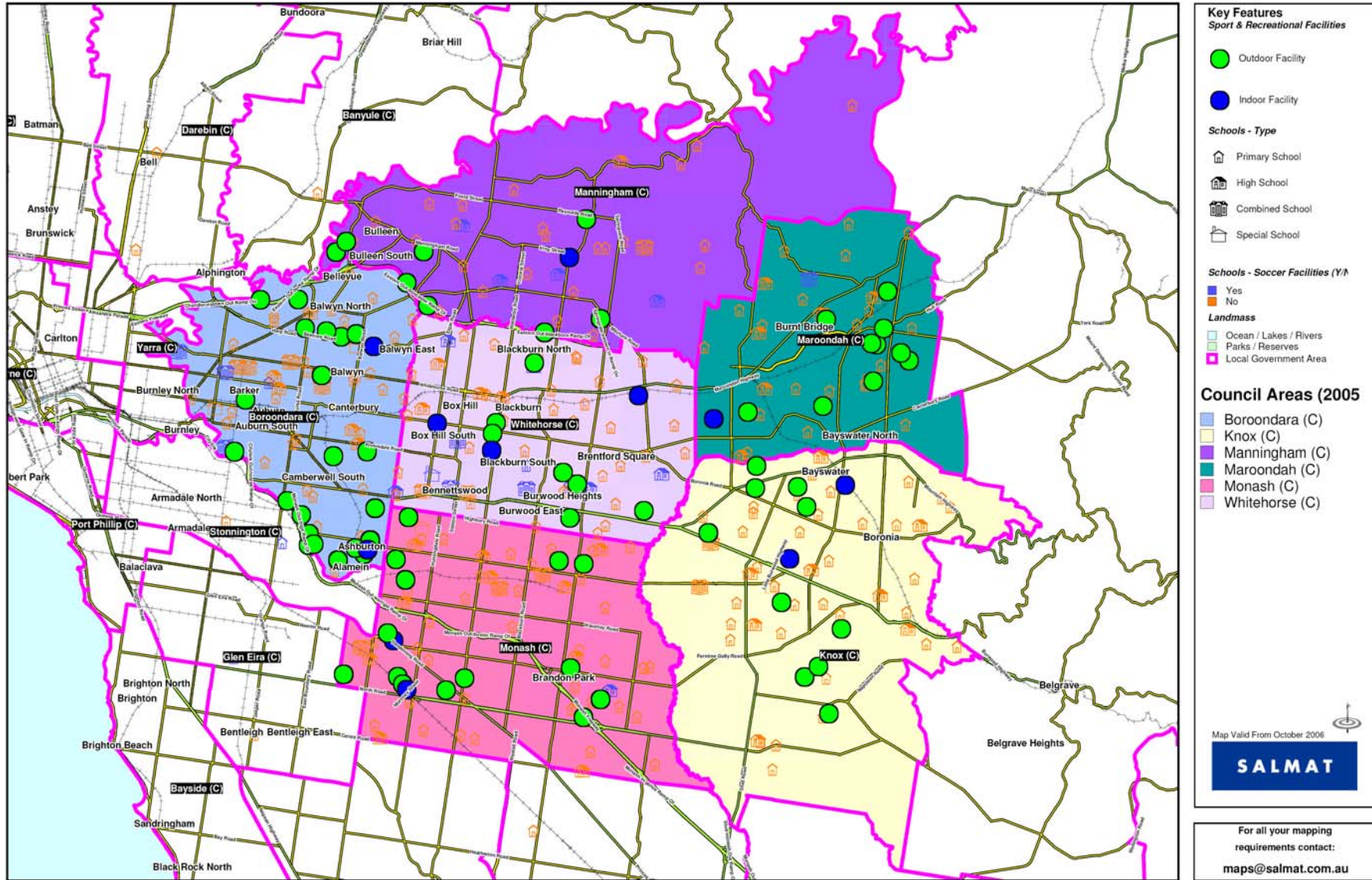
\* Plans for construction of a 1,000 seat grandstand & competition floodlighting at Jack Edwards Reserve

\*\* Plans to upgrade pavilion and ground to Class C level

\*\*\* Proposal to upgrade to Class C level as a Women's Premier League venue



Figure 9. Location & Type of Soccer Facilities in the Eastern Region





Analysis of the facility ratings in Table 14 clearly indicates either the low priority of Councils in providing Class A standard facilities, and / or the excessive requirements of the Class A criteria, as there are no facilities across six Council areas that will achieve a Class A rating according to the 2008 criteria. Many of the facilities that could not be classified have a certain level of infrastructure and development, but, due to some elements of the Grounds and Facilities Criteria not being provided at all, renders the facilities non-rateable. In most cases, the additional infrastructure elements required for compliance with the FFV standards to achieve Class C level include the provision of covered team benches, disabled toilets or a referee's room. The achievement of higher level classifications (i.e. Class A and B) is often hindered by the absence of player races and scoreboards that meet FFV specifications.

## Section 5 Recommendations

Key drivers of recommendations  
Strategy implementation & monitoring  
Future facility provision model  
Facility Provision Guide by municipality  
Regional facility provision  
Key directions for the future development of soccer



## 5.1 Summary of Key Themes Informing Recommendations

### 5.1.1 Key Drivers of Recommendations

Each of the research and consultation components have been undertaken to identify issues, opportunities and barriers to provision for soccer as relevant to players, spectators, administrators, officials, facility providers and managers, sports developers and advocates, and policy makers. Due to the comprehensive methodology of the Study, a wealth of information has been obtained from these sources. The following key findings have been collated from the information (these have been nominated where they have been repeated from different sources, or are anticipated to have a significant impact on participation in, or provision for soccer), and include:

- Participation growth is strongest by juniors and females;
- Greater provision for females is required in terms of facilities (i.e. both male and female change rooms), and club cultures / social environments;
- There are not enough facilities to service demand for participation in soccer, and there are few opportunities to develop new facilities (i.e. available open space);
- Consensus does not exist between local government and FFV regarding the FFV Grounds and Facilities Criteria which creates conjecture between the standards of facilities developed;
- School facilities present an opportunity to achieve the use of additional sports facilities, on the basis that occupancy agreements (including management and maintenance responsibilities) can reasonably be negotiated;
- General sports participation trends have an impact on soccer; a range of competitive opportunities is important and should respond to sports participation trends, namely demand for casual and social participation;
- Cost is a determinant of participation and membership in clubs / Associations;
- Indoor soccer is growing in participation and is emerging as a more dominant form of the sport;
- Partnerships between providers of soccer are crucial and require improvement, particularly in relation to communication; especially across clubs from other sports (i.e. cricket), councils, schools, Associations and FFV;
- FFV needs to be adequately resourced to facilitate stronger relationships with local government, and provide more developmental support to club administrators;
- FFV must address the planning of facilities for soccer more proactively and strategically, and in partnership with local government;
- Club administrators require support to enable the governance and operations of clubs to be enhanced, particularly in relation to strategic planning;



- In some cases the policy position / past practices of local government should be challenged to ensure they respond to emerging sports participation trends and modern requirements, and facilitate improved provision for sport;
- The status of soccer administration in Victoria is still developing and maturing;
- Information dissemination and education is important in promoting participation opportunities and developing players and administrators.

The recommendations and actions of the Strategy have been prepared in response to these key drivers, as these are the areas that are deemed to most require attention, and have also concentrated on what is most achievable.

### **5.1.2 Implementing the Strategy & Monitoring**

The recommendations are considered to be relevant to each organisation, however given the different emphasis of Sport and Recreation Victoria (as State Government) and Football Federation Victoria (as the State representative soccer body), these organisations should have broader advocacy roles to inform of the status of soccer participation in the eastern region, and advocate for appropriate actions that will enhance the level of provision to enable participation demand to be met.

In particular, the role of FFV is crucial to the successful implementation of the Strategy, as the State representative body for soccer is to be the leader and driver to oversee and coordinate the achievement of these recommendations and the action plan. This responsibility includes facilitating communication between the custodian organisations of this Study to ensure the regional relationships are maintained, through convening and administering meetings and correspondence, establishing annual work programs and monitoring achievement of the action plan; with an annual review of priorities. FFV must be resourced to undertake these roles to ensure implementation is achieved. Without such a coordinated approach, the successful implementation of the Strategy will be severely hindered.

The role of each Council is equally important, in ensuring that work plans are incorporated into internal resourcing and budget programs, a willingness to implement regional actions to ensure an integrated and coordinated approach, and a commitment to providing for soccer to the intent of the Strategy.

Given the fast pace at which the environment is currently moving in terms of soccer participation, and the significant changes currently occurring to the way in which the sport is administered and governed, a short term review of this Strategy is recommended (i.e. in five years). This is detailed further in the action plan.

## 5.2 Future Facility Provision

### 5.2.1 Criteria Guiding Facility Gap Analysis

This review of opportunities to strategically cater for the growth of soccer through the development of existing, and provision of new facilities has been conducted for each municipality for all levels of facilities; rated Class A to Class D and those not eligible to be rated. The opportunities identified are based on understanding the facilities (pitches and pavilions) currently provided for soccer across the six Councils (as outlined in Section 4.3). Consideration has also been given to the need and opportunity for a regional facility.

The gaps and opportunities identified in the facility analysis are based on the following considerations:

- The current standard of facilities (based on the current classification of the facilities according to the FFV facility criteria);
- Priority is given to facilities that have scope for expansion, and to the establishment of precinct-type developments (i.e. multiple-pitches) where possible, in recognition of the benefits to providing a sustainable model of provision compared to single pitch facilities;
- The status of the current main tenant club, i.e. standard of competition played and prospect for promotion, level of participation (i.e. senior / junior), membership size and growth;
- Priority will be given to the upgrade / development of facilities that are centrally located within the region and each municipality for the respective level of provision (i.e. municipal / regional) where possible (to maximise accessibility), however this is not given a high priority as it is considered that, particularly for a regional level facility, a high quality 'offering' (i.e. a facility with numerous facility components developed to a high standard) will attract users, almost regardless of location (i.e. 'build it and they will come'). The issue of centrality should not be confused with access, and the provision of good access is considered important and will be considered a high priority (e.g. road networks, car parking) for every facility;
- The status of each municipality in terms of number of clubs and facilities, facility mix, and demographic trends (i.e. population growth, age dispersal);
- It is recognised that the availability of adequate Greenfield land is rare in the highly developed eastern region, therefore the availability of space for expansion at existing facilities will dictate opportunities for new developments to service either the municipality or region;
- Every school that has sufficiently sized grassed areas is considered to be an opportunity for provision for soccer, however this analysis prioritises opportunities with schools primarily where municipal facilities are lacking, and of these, secondary and private schools have

been identified as having the greatest potential to sufficiently provide for soccer due to the greater extent and quality of sporting facilities normally provided at these organisations;

- Where appropriate, priority is given to considering the use of school facilities that already provide specifically for soccer;
- Achieving a balance in provision across each municipality and the region is considered to be ideal, but it is recognised that other factors may impact on the ability to achieve this (e.g. land availability, Council policy); and,
- The anticipated growth of soccer and the proposed changes to the current model of provision (outlined in Section 5.2) (i.e. promotion-relegation system, facility standards and criteria, and number of teams in the top leagues, e.g. Premier, State).

## **5.2.2 The Recommended Model of Provision for Soccer in the Eastern Region**

### **5.2.2-1 Principles Guiding the Model of Provision**

The following principles have been developed to guide the future model of provision for soccer in the eastern region. These are based on the demand for additional soccer facilities caused by increasing participation (particularly to cater for junior and women's participation), combined with the constraints in the eastern region, being; few undeveloped sites, a strong culture of provision for cricket and football, and Council policy regarding open space development and public access (i.e. not enclosing facilities, no net loss of open space):

- There is a need to gain consistency in facility standards and the minimum level of facility provision across the region;
- Upgrading existing facilities that do not meet the agreed minimum standard of provision will be a priority where reasonable and practicable before developing new, high standard facilities;
- The benefits of artificial surfaces are recognised in providing all-weather, high intensity facilities;
- Providing for indoor soccer may alleviate demand for outdoor facilities as an alternative form of soccer participation is more readily provided for;
- A hierarchy of facilities should be provided within each municipality, to cater for a range of participation levels, thus supporting a soccer participation pathway;
- The development of high standard facilities relies on partnerships between FFV, State government, Councils and clubs, with FFV to take a leadership role in establishing partnerships and directing the planning of high standard facilities;
- The sharing of facilities where appropriate is crucial to maximising resources; (consideration has been given to the opportunity for different levels of competition sharing facilities (i.e. Premier League and State League 1). Whilst this is a possibility in theory, club cultures would make this reality a difficult proposition – and given the cultural change

required, is not foreseeable within a five year timeframe. Additionally, scheduling changes and restrictions would need to be implemented by FFV to achieve such shared use (this is possible, but would require some change from the current model, again not likely within a five year timeframe)).

- Given the specialised use and high standard of development (and cost to provide and maintain) of Class A facilities, the opportunity of sharing through a centralised model of use should be pursued;
- The funding responsibilities of FFV, local government, State Government, education sector, clubs and others (e.g. private sector) requires clarification for facilities from Class D to Class A level.
- Council's should ensure that soccer clubs have a social inclusive strategy irrespective of sex, colour, creed and ability.

#### *5.2.2-2 Preferred Model of Facility Provision*

To best cater for participation in soccer and balance the demand for sporting facilities, the following model of provision is considered to be the best compromise in meeting all of the competing demands and objectives:

- Councils will work towards bringing lower standard facilities to Class C level (according to the FFV Grounds and Facilities Criteria) as the minimum level of soccer facility provision by the Council on Council owned land, as finances allow and space is available;
- Any improvements to develop higher standard facilities (than Class C level) to be funded through partnerships with clubs and State government; with State government and FFV to contribute significantly to Class A facilities and regional facility developments.
- It is appropriate for Class D level facilities to be provided at schools;
- It is appropriate to consider undersized areas for soccer pitches where it means that additional playing surfaces can be achieved – to cater for junior participation and training;
- At least one synthetic pitch to be provided in each municipality; to be accessible to all clubs through a centralised management model to be rigorously planned and financially modelled (to incorporate surface replacement) through feasibility analysis. It is suggested that this should be prioritised at multi-pitch sites that lend themselves to a hub-type concept, rather than single pitch developments (on the presumption that doing so is conducive to more use), although it is recognised that this is not possible in every case. Such facilities may also be considered for sharing with other sports where deemed appropriate.
- Futsal, indoor soccer and 5-a-side should be provided for through specific facilities / provision at existing facilities / conversion of disused facilities (such as tennis courts), and demand will be monitored for future planning and provision;





- Potential site/s (new or existing) for a regional facility development to be identified – to ensure that the opportunity for provision is preserved in future planning, as it is considered that the demand demonstrated for soccer is adequate to support such facility development;

- Any new Class A facilities developed should be 'neutral', by not being occupied specifically by one club, to be managed through a centralised model (i.e. the model requires further discussion with soccer bodies and local government, but the intention is for such a facility not to be allocated to 'tenants', instead use is administered separately through bookings; with revenue from gate entries, food and beverage sales to be shared between the playing clubs);
- Any precinct / regional-type development should comprise multiple pitches, and should consider the inclusion of a Class A ground and an artificial pitch;

### **5.2.3 Future Facility Provision**

This section builds on the Preferred Facility Provision Model outlined in the previous section, to guide future facility provision for soccer within each municipality. The Future Facility Provision Guide outlined in Table 15 considers the social, demographic and soccer participation trends (the status of each municipality is determined by comparison to the other Councils in the region), and the standard and range of soccer facilities provided within each municipality, to determine future facility development directions. In particular, the Future Facility Provision Guide is underpinned by the following key factors:

- The strategic and policy context of the municipality and the directions and constraints that are determined by this;
- The impact of social trends; in particular the increasing demand for less structured, less formalised and casually based sports participation opportunities;
- The current and projected demographic trends of each municipality (in terms of population characteristics that relate to a greater or lesser likelihood to participate in soccer);
- Current rates of soccer participation within the municipality;
- The current suite of facilities provided within the municipality, in terms of; capacity for further use of facilities; the range of facilities to support different levels of competition; the levels of soccer participation offered and associated facility needs to facilitate growth; and the scope of expansion at facilities;
- The need to provide a range of competitive opportunities (i.e. pathway) and a facility mix to support this;
- The capacities of each Council to provide; and,
- Reflect the Model of Facility Provision for Soccer in the Eastern Region.

**Table 15. Future Facility Provision Guide by Municipality**

Municipality	Municipal Trends	Facility Directions
Whitehorse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High serviceability of players</li> <li>- Lowest proportion of junior members within clubs</li> <li>- High player per team ratio</li> <li>- Some capacity at existing facilities for additional use (through scheduling)</li> <li>- Two year-round use facilities</li> <li>- A number of multi-pitch venues</li> <li>- Few undersized facilities</li> <li>- High standard competition played (SuperLeague, Women's Premier League, State League)</li> <li>- Good level infrastructure at facilities (irrigation, drainage, floodlighting)</li> <li>- One facility with dual change rooms</li> <li>- Many venues shared with other winter tenants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase capacity to provide for soccer through better use of existing facilities, i.e. upgrading pavilions</li> <li>- Some demand for additional pitches</li> <li>- Requirement to provide high standard facilities to support competitive pathway (Class B in short-term; consider Class A in longer term)</li> <li>- Opportunity to provide better for females through dual change rooms, where appropriate</li> </ul>
Knox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highest population growth</li> <li>- Higher proportion of 5-17 year olds – to remain strong in the mid term</li> <li>- 'Family' characteristic of population</li> <li>- Strong population growth</li> <li>- Large club size – with fewest grounds</li> <li>- Largest proportion of senior men participants, but low growth in this category</li> <li>- Highest player per team ratio</li> <li>- Little capacity at facilities (a new venue will provide for increased use)</li> <li>- Several pitches are undersized</li> <li>- High standard competition played (SuperLeague, Premier League)</li> <li>- Some facilities available for year round use</li> <li>- Nearly all pitches are unfenced</li> <li>- Good level infrastructure at facilities (irrigation, floodlighting) – drainage not as readily provided</li> <li>- Few pavilions with multiple change rooms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional pitches required</li> <li>- Requirement to provide high standard facilities to support competitive pathway (Class A in short term and Class B in mid term)</li> <li>- Opportunity to provide better for females through dual change rooms, where appropriate</li> </ul>
Maroondah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Smallest population size</li> <li>- High rate of population growth, and strongest rate of projected population growth</li> <li>- Larger proportion of 5-17 year olds – to remain strong in the mid term</li> <li>- No opportunity for additional sports reserves</li> <li>- Opportunity to reconfigure Manson and / or Dorset Reserves for junior soccer provision</li> <li>- Fewest players; with the majority being juniors</li> <li>- Fewest number of teams</li> <li>- Fewest sub-junior participants, but strong growth in this player category</li> <li>- Low participation by women</li> <li>- Low player per team ratio</li> <li>- High serviceability of players (i.e. lower ratio of players per pitch)</li> <li>- Capacity at existing facilities for additional use (through scheduling)</li> <li>- Multiple pitches are undersized</li> <li>- High standard competition played (Bayside League - Premier League)</li> <li>- Some facilities available for year round use</li> <li>- Few facilities have infrastructure (i.e. irrigation, drainage)</li> <li>- Some facilities have floodlighting</li> <li>- One pavilion included dual change rooms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong potential for growth in participation</li> <li>- Increase capacity to provide for soccer through better use of existing facilities, i.e.;</li> <li>- * Providing infrastructure at pitches (i.e. drainage, irrigation, floodlighting)</li> <li>- * Provide basic building infrastructure with pitches, e.g. toilets and storage</li> <li>- Requirement to provide high standard facilities to support competitive pathway in mid (Class B) to long (Class A) term</li> <li>- Opportunity to provide better for females through dual change rooms, where appropriate</li> <li>- Pursue the opportunity of reconfiguring Manson &amp; Dorset Reserves for additional soccer provision</li> </ul>

Municipality	Municipal Trends	Facility Directions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some venues did not offer public toilets</li> <li>Two reserves only provided public toilets</li> <li>One reserve provided change rooms only</li> </ul>	
Manningham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater cultural diversity amongst residents</li> <li>'Family' characteristic of population</li> <li>Soccer is the 12th highest rated activity undertaken by residents</li> <li>Soccer is the activity that most residents would like to undertake</li> <li>Strong participation rates and strong growth</li> <li>Large club size</li> <li>Highest rate of growth in senior men participants, but a low proportion of this player category</li> <li>Low participation by women</li> <li>Greatest number of teams</li> <li>Little capacity at facilities</li> <li>Majority of pitches are undersized</li> <li>High standard competition played (State League)</li> <li>Some facilities available for year round use</li> <li>Good level infrastructure at facilities (irrigation, drainage, floodlighting)</li> <li>One venue offered competition floodlighting</li> <li>One venue did not provide a pavilion or public toilets</li> <li>Two pavilions did not include social rooms</li> <li>One pavilion provided dual change rooms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional pitches required</li> <li>Provide buildings with pitches where possible</li> <li>Pursue opportunities for additional facilities (pitches)</li> <li>Requirement to provide high standard facilities to support competitive pathway (Class B in mid term with additional Class A (in addition to privately owned facility) in mid term)</li> <li>Opportunity to provide better for females through dual change rooms, where appropriate</li> </ul>
Boroondara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most densely populated municipality</li> <li>Policy of no net loss of open space</li> <li>Strong participation by women</li> <li>High player per team ratio (may lead to poor serviceability of players)</li> <li>Fewest number of teams</li> <li>Little capacity at facilities</li> <li>High standard competition played (Women's Premier League)</li> <li>No year round use facilities available</li> <li>Few pitches provided with drainage</li> <li>The majority of pitches are floodlit (training standard only)</li> <li>Majority of pavilions do not include social spaces</li> <li>No pavilions provide dual change rooms</li> <li>No venues provide disabled toilets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve useability of existing facilities through drainage of pitches</li> <li>Pursue the opportunity for providing additional pitches</li> <li>Requirement to provide high standard facilities to support competitive pathway (to Class B level)</li> <li>Opportunity to provide better for females through dual change rooms, where appropriate</li> </ul>
Monash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slowest population growth of the region</li> <li>Greatest cultural diversity</li> <li>Soccer is the 5th highest rated activity undertaken by residents</li> <li>Recognised need for female conducive facilities</li> <li>Recognised need to improve floodlighting</li> <li>Significant increase in the proportion of junior members</li> <li>Strong growth in senior men players</li> <li>Large sub-junior participant base</li> <li>Strong participation by women</li> <li>Low player per team ratio</li> <li>Strong increase in the number of teams</li> <li>Some capacity at existing facilities for additional use (through scheduling)</li> <li>Majority of pitches are undersized</li> <li>High standard competition played (State League, Women's Premier League)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision is reasonable, although some additional pitches are required</li> <li>Pursue the use of school facilities to achieve increased provision</li> <li>Opportunity to provide better for females through dual change rooms, where appropriate</li> <li>Requirement to provide high standard facilities to support competitive pathway (Class A in short term, with additional Class B in long term)</li> </ul>

Municipality	Municipal Trends	Facility Directions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some facilities are available for year round use</li> <li>- Some pavilions do not include social rooms</li> <li>- Some facilities provide no supporting buildings</li> <li>- Good level infrastructure at facilities (irrigation, drainage, floodlighting)</li> <li>- No pavilions provide dual change rooms</li> <li>- Few venues provide disabled toilets</li> </ul>	

In predicting future trends and making recommendations on that basis, a presumption has been made that future trends will reflect those of the recent past (i.e. growth in participation), particularly as the participation studies would not yet reflect the impact of Melbourne Victory's success in the A League in 2006 or Australia's 2006 World Cup success.

### 5.2.4 Municipal Analysis

Table 16 provides a guide for facility development to achieve both the Model of Provision outlined in Section 5.2.1 (to include those facilities required to meet Class C level, suggested sites for the provision of a synthetic pitch, opportunities to enhance soccer facility use through development to higher classification, and development at schools) and specific directions for each municipality provided in Section 5.2.2. Where appropriate, comment has also been made on the provision of indoor facilities. A Facility Development Plan is provided in Volume 2 to specifically guide each Council in improving the standard of facilities rated as Class D and lower to the agreed minimum Class C level of provision.

The Municipal Facility Development Guide outlined on the next page focuses on the opportunities presented by the facilities rather than the current levels of participation at the facilities, and therefore the recommendations may require a shuffling of occupant clubs accordingly to match the future standards of facilities with the levels of clubs (whilst a policy of centralised venue scheduling and shared use will be pursued for Class A facilities in the longer term). It is acknowledged that there is often reluctance amongst clubs to move from their 'spiritual home', therefore any potential relocation should occur gradually in full consultation with affected clubs. The objective for any relocation is to better match facilities to club needs and this should be strongly communicated to clubs during relocation process.

In proceeding with any substantial development / upgrade of facilities at sports reserves as per the Municipal Facility Development Guide, it is recommended that master planning of each site occurs to comprehensively identify and address issues and opportunities to achieve the most appropriate development (e.g. integrated with surrounding uses).



**Table 16. Municipal Facility Development Guide per Model of Provision**

Municipality	Facility Provision & Recommendations						
	Class A	Class B	Facilities to be Upgraded to Class C	Synthetic pitch	School facilities	Indoor facilities	Comments
<b>Whitehorse</b>	Upgrade Wembley Park to Class A pitch and pavilion.	Retain Mahony's Reserve as a Class B facility ( <i>with Terrara to be considered as longer term option</i> ).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Terrara Park</li> <li>- Bill Sewart</li> <li>- Koonung Reserve - west</li> <li>- Mahoney's Reserve (south east &amp; south west)</li> <li>- Mirrabooka Reserve</li> <li>- Ballyshanassy Reserve - a potential new site for soccer to be developed as a multi-pitch local level facility</li> </ul>	Synthetic pitch to be provided at the most appropriate venue (to be determined by Council) - consideration to be given to Mahoney's Reserve or Wembley Reserve amongst others.	To balance availability of local soccer opportunities, consider provision at schools where partnerships can be reached and opportunities exist to enhance the level of provision for soccer.	There are a number of indoor facilities provided for soccer including Council owned facilities; with a gap in the north. Consider provision for indoor soccer as part of the indoor stadium development in Vermont South if the opportunity arises.	Consider providing for soccer at Springfield Park (East) as demand dictates.



**Table 16. Municipal Facility Development Guide per Model of Provision**

Municipality	Facility Provision & Recommendations						
	Class A	Class B	Facilities to be Upgraded to Class C	Synthetic pitch	School facilities	Indoor facilities	Comments
<b>Knox</b>	Consider the provision of a sporting facility within the Knox Central Urban Design Framework, Wantirna South, that would meet Class A requirements. (The facility may potentially accommodate a number of sporting purposes.)	RD Egan Lee to be developed as Class B facility in the longer term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– HV Jones Reserve</li> <li>– Knox Park</li> <li>– RD Egan Lee (outer)</li> <li>– Schultz Reserve</li> <li>– Sasses Avenue Reserve</li> <li>– Milpera Reserve</li> </ul>	Synthetic pitch to be provided at either of RD Egan Lee or Knox Park – to be determined through site specific planning by Council.	Provision of specific soccer facilities at schools appears to be lacking. Consult with schools to explore partnerships for the development of soccer facilities, prioritising Rowville Secondary College, Waverley Christian College, The Knox School, Boronia Heights Secondary College, St. Joseph's Regional College and Ferntree Gully College (as these schools are located in areas lacking in soccer facilities).	Identify provision for indoor soccer at the existing indoor facilities, and advocate for indoor soccer to be provided if demand is apparent.	Identify opportunity for additional soccer pitches within the Knox Park Master Plan. Consider partnership with Maroondah City Council for the development of soccer facilities at Manson Reserve. Dandenong Valley Parklands is a Greenfield site that should be considered (with Parks Victoria) for soccer as appropriate.



**Table 16. Municipal Facility Development Guide per Model of Provision**

Municipality	Facility Provision & Recommendations						
	Class A	Class B	Facilities to be Upgraded to Class C	Synthetic pitch	School facilities	Indoor facilities	Comments
<b>Maroondah</b>	Consider Dorset precinct for development as Class A as long term option if need arises. Alternatively, consider developing Manson as a regional facility (consider including a Class A pitch) in the long term (if a partnership with the Knox City Council is possible, in which case retain Dorset as a Class B facility).	Consider the development of Jubilee Park as a Class B facility in the longer term (with development of additional pitch), and Manson.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Manson Reserve (1&amp;2)</li> <li>– Gracedale Park</li> <li>– Silcock Reserve</li> <li>– Springfield Park</li> <li>– Fred Geale Oval</li> <li>– Dorset Soccer Reserve (outer)</li> <li>– Town Park</li> <li>– Ainslie</li> <li>– Belmont</li> </ul>	Synthetic to be considered for Dorset Reserve	No supply of soccer facilities north of Maroondah Hwy – consider p/ship with Yarra Valley Grammar School for a club to have a presence in the area (or Parkwood / Norwood Sec College as 2 <sup>nd</sup> preference – if there are available facilities).	One indoor facility only (Ringwood) – consider provision for indoor soccer at Council indoor sports facilities, and advocate to other indoor centres to trial (eg. Kilsyth).	Proposal from school to develop Proclamation Park with 1 x soccer, 1 x football – don't recommend single field developments – rather, develop as multiple fields for one code – to be balanced with football needs. Peter Vergers (Ringwood) – Greenfield site, appears large enough for single pitch development. Manson lends itself to partnership with Knox City Council.





**Table 16. Municipal Facility Development Guide per Model of Provision**

Municipality	Facility Provision & Recommendations						
	Class A	Class B	Facilities to be Upgraded to Class C	Synthetic pitch	School facilities	Indoor facilities	Comments
<b>Manningham</b>	Anderson Park to be upgraded to Class A standard. Develop Petty's Reserve as second Class A facility in long term - as a new, multi-pitch facility with a synthetic pitch and a centralised occupancy model that includes year-round use. Some work required to bring Veneto Club to Class A level.	Bring Donvale to Class B level. Consider Bulleen Park and Petty's Reserve as Class B facilities in the longer term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Park Avenue</li> <li>- Bulleen Park</li> <li>- Timber Ridge Reserve</li> <li>- Donvale Reserve</li> <li>- Boronia Grove Reserve</li> <li>- Wilsons Road Reserve</li> </ul>	Include at new facility at Petty's Reserve.	Consult with schools to explore partnerships for the use / development of soccer facilities, including East Doncaster Secondary College, Warrandyte High School, Templestowe College and Whitefriars College.	Council is planning the development of a new hi-ball facility – consider provision for indoor soccer as a key activity at this facility. Introduce indoor soccer at existing indoor facility as space allows. Encourage East Doncaster Secondary College to provide for indoor soccer.	Most facilities are single field developments, limiting serviceability. Future sites for the development of new soccer facilities may include Petty's Reserve (a Greenfield site with space for significant development) and Tikalara Park.



**Table 16. Municipal Facility Development Guide per Model of Provision**

Municipality	Facility Provision & Recommendations						
	Class A	Class B	Facilities to be Upgraded to Class C	Synthetic pitch	School facilities	Indoor facilities	Comments
<b>Boroondara</b>	Nil Class A facilities suggested.	Council to determine most appropriate sites for Class B level facility development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hays Paddock</li> <li>- Highfield Park</li> <li>- Willsmere Park</li> <li>- Stradbroke North Reserve</li> <li>- Hislop Park</li> <li>- Hartwell Reserve</li> <li>- Warner Reserve</li> <li>- Markham Reserve</li> <li>- Watson Park</li> <li>- Frog Hollow</li> <li>- HA Smith</li> <li>- Howard Dawson</li> </ul>	All grounds are seasonal use only, so any possibility of a synthetic surface in the future would likely need to be investigated with cricket. Council to determine most appropriate site.	A number of schools provide for soccer – there is a gap in the central area of the municipality, consider partnerships with Camberwell Grammar, Strathcona Girls' Grammar, Fintona or Siena if need arises.	Number of options available – although degree of provision for indoor soccer is unknown. A gap exists in the central and western areas. Also investigate the schools that provide indoor venues as options for indoor soccer if need arises.	There are limited options in Boroondara; with no year-round options for soccer and mostly single field reserves.



**Table 16. Municipal Facility Development Guide per Model of Provision**

Municipality	Facility Provision & Recommendations						
	Class A	Class B	Facilities to be Upgraded to Class C	Synthetic pitch	School facilities	Indoor facilities	Comments
<b>Monash</b>	1 Class A facility – to be shared amongst Premier League teams - Jack Edwards, with Jack Edwards outer fields to be incorporated and developed as a precinct.	Retain Gardiners Reserve as Class B facility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Gardiners Reserve (outer fields)</li> <li>– Argyle Reserve</li> <li>– Caloola Reserve</li> <li>– Batesford Reserve</li> <li>– Ashwood Reserve</li> <li>– Glen Waverley North Reserve</li> <li>– Lum Reserve</li> <li>– Lapent Reserve</li> <li>– Jack Edwards (outer fields)</li> </ul>	Synthetic pitch to be provided at the most appropriate venue (to be determined by Council).	Investigate the feasibility of a Class C development at Ashwood College to potentially cater for Women’s Premier League competition.	There are no indoor soccer opportunities at facilities located in the east of the municipality. Council should investigate the indoor facilities more thoroughly to identify provision for indoor soccer in these areas.	Provision of soccer facilities is poor in central Monash. Waverley Wanderers SC will require shared access to the Class B facility for State League games – consider shared use or facility development options (ie. at Carlson Reserve or other facilities as deemed appropriate).



## **5.2.5 Regional Facility Provision**

### *5.2.5-1 In-Principle Support for the Regional Facility Concept*

A key requirement of the Study was to explore the concept of a regional soccer facility in terms of demand and willingness amongst stakeholder organisations for a joint development. Whilst the intent of the Strategy was not to investigate a regional facility in terms of detailed feasibility, a clear direction on the concept was sought.

There is considered to be sufficient demand to warrant further consideration of a 'regional facility' and further, the concept is deemed to have merit by the stakeholder organisations. However, significant factors such as geographic catchment (i.e. the size of the eastern region and the serviceability of one regional facility), and the logistics of managing relationships between multiple partner organisations in addition to the operational management of a facility must be able to be overcome before the concept of a regional facility is considered further.

To this end, the identification of large Greenfield sites / existing facilities with scope for expansion has been undertaken to ensure that; the sites are either considered when a regional soccer facility is planned in more detail, or provision for soccer is considered when any individual sites are master planned.

The rationale for not proceeding with detailed feasibility planning of a regional soccer facility in the short term is to allow the Councils to focus resources on addressing local facilities as a higher priority, as many of these facilities currently fall below an agreed level of provision (as outlined in Section 5.2.1).

The recommended Model of Provision focuses on establishing 'soccer hubs' by prioritising synthetic surface pitches at multi-pitch venues that are superior standard facilities to support higher levels of competition. This is not intended to replace a regional facility, but supports the principle of consolidation of activity at a municipal level.

In summary, the concept of a regional soccer facility is deemed to have merit and warrants further detailed consideration in the future; particularly to resolve the issues of catchment, the management model and required facility components, to comprehensively assess feasibility and fully determine viability.



### 5.2.5-2 Potential Provision for a Regional Facility in the Eastern Region

The directions provided in the Municipal Facility Development Guide (Table 16) have attempted to achieve a balance of facilities of different standards across each municipality and the region. When viewed across the region, it can be ascertained that a relative balance in Class A and B facilities could be achieved, with Class C and school level facilities to continue to be provided locally. The predominant gaps in provision exist where open space provision is generally poor resulting in limited opportunities to address.

It is preferable for any regional facility development to occur at a Greenfield site, to combat any culture of individual club 'ownership' that may be at existing facilities, and to more easily change the structure of use to a centralised model. This will allow for the establishment of an environment and culture of sharing from the outset. However, as the constraints of land availability and capital cost are significant, it is anticipated that a centralised model will need to be introduced at existing Class A and B standard facilities, to enable the shared use by clubs that play at the appropriate level and thus require access to the higher standard facilities.

The facility development recommendations discussed in this report could result in the following soccer facility hubs that, depending on the quality and breadth of development, will result in multiple municipal catchment facilities across the six Council areas that may also present options for regional facility development in the future (these potential regional facility opportunities are highlighted in *italic* below). These include:

Mahoney's Reserve – Whitehorse	<i>Manson Reserve - Maroondah</i>
Knox Park - Knox	Dorset Reserve – Maroondah
RD Egan Lee - Knox	<i>Petty's Reserve - Manningham</i>
<i>Lewis Park precinct - Knox</i>	Gardiners Reserve - Monash
<i>(Knox Central Urban Design Framework)</i>	<i>Jack Edwards Reserve – Monash</i>

The identification of a number of alternatives indicates the need to consider more than one regional facility in the eastern region given the geographic spread and population density of the area.

Few additional open space Reserves were identified as potential new sites to provide for soccer. Those that were included Yarra Bend Park, Fairfield and Dandenong Valley Parklands, Wantirna South. Both of these sites fall under the management of Parks Victoria. The opportunity to contribute to the master planning of these parklands should be pursued by the regional Councils to investigate the willingness, capacity and potential for; a multi-pitch soccer facility development in the least, with the potential for regional level facilities to be



considered (although the site is in relatively close proximity to the State Soccer Centre in Thornbury) at Yarra Bend Park, and a regional soccer development at Dandenong Valley Parklands.

The FFV does not anticipate that the Casey Fields development will service demand within the eastern region, as it will be consumed by the demands of the region within which it is based.

### 5.3 Key Directions for the Future Development of Soccer in the Eastern Region

A whole-of-sport approach has been taken to identifying opportunities to develop, and enhance provision for soccer in the eastern region. Partnerships are central to this, not only in taking a regional approach between the six Councils, but between clubs, peak soccer bodies, and State government; and underpin the successful implementation of all actions. To this end, FFV will take the leadership role in driving the implementation of the Strategy through coordinating the relevant stakeholders and monitoring progress. The role of the Bayside League, Victorian Churches Soccer Association and VicSoccer is equally recognised in the action plan and reflected as 'soccer bodies' in the Responsibility and Stakeholders columns.

The opportunities to enhance provision for soccer are nominated through the following action plan according to the following:

#### Priority & Timing -

Each action is allocated a priority which corresponds to its timing. The following indicative timing is given to each level of priority:

**High** – 1 to 3 years (i.e. 2008 to 2010)

**Medium** – 4 to 7 years (i.e. 2011 to 2014)

**Low** – 8+ years (2015 and beyond)

#### Drivers & Contributors -

The successful implementation of the action plan is based on the direction provided by a lead party. The action plan recognises that a lead responsibility is required to implement a task and coordinate relevant stakeholders to ensure its satisfactory completion. To this end, the action plan nominates a responsible party for each task, and the partner stakeholders as per the following:



- **Responsibility** – the main organisation/s responsible for overseeing satisfactory completion of the task, including involvement of relevant stakeholders; may take the form of a managerial role;
- **Stakeholders** - the parties that are important to the successful completion of the task who should contribute actively to the directions and outcomes; e.g. through consultation.

An indication is provided of estimated resources required for implementation of each action, and is subject to successful funding based on annual planning processes and a review of the priority and timing of each action. Where 'in-kind' is nominated, it is anticipated that the action can be undertaken within existing staffing resources. The priority and therefore timing of each action is provided as a guide only and implementation will be subject to the resourcing (financial and officer time) capabilities of each organisation.

To present the actions in a logical format which ensures that each aspect of provision for soccer is addressed, the categories of Planning, Participation, People, Provision, Facilities, Perception and Profile have been applied (per the discussion in Section 3):

**Table 17. Action Plan**

Ref	Action Plan	Priority	Responsibility	Stakeholders	Indicative Resources
<b>5.3.</b>	<b>Planning</b>				
a)	Establish an Eastern Region Soccer Working Group with committed attendance from FFV (Project & Facility Officer), SRV and each Council (Recreation Coordinators) in the region, to maintain the regional partnerships and coordinate implementation of the regional recommendations of the Strategy, for implementation of various roles within each organisation.	High	FFV	SRV, Each Council	In-kind
b)	Establish municipal Soccer Forums within each Council area, including representation from each soccer club, with the objective of conducting municipal level planning for the coordinated development of soccer. The Forums may have a limited tenure based on the implementation of this Strategy and are required to address the needs of soccer in a coordinated manner as the sport continues to establish in the region. (To feed into regional level planning conducted by the Eastern Region Soccer Working Group. Consider representation by schools, as deemed appropriate.)	High	Each Council	Clubs FFV	In-kind
c)	Research and prepare a Facility Provision Strategy that clarifies FFV's role in the planning, development, management and funding of each class of facility for soccer, and those of other	High	FFV	Each Council, SRV	\$50,000



Ref	Action Plan	Priority	Responsibility	Stakeholders	Indicative Resources
	stakeholders (e.g. State and Local government); and quantifies the desired level of provision and model for use in the long term. To be prepared in consultation with State and local government. In particular, the Strategy should nominate greater involvement than present of FFV in the provision of Class A facilities.				
d)	Investigate the willingness, appropriateness and viability of establishing a grant program to support the installation of synthetic sports surfaces.	High	SRV		In-kind
e)	Prepare a policy guiding the provision and use of floodlighting (where these do not already exist) to consider prioritising sites with synthetic surfaces. The policy should address financial contributions to floodlighting (by Council and / or clubs), and siting criteria and also consider competition standard floodlighting at high standard facilities / facility hubs.	Med	Each Council		In-kind
f)	Where appropriate, consider the formulation of 'sports clubs' to combine cricket and soccer clubs, with the objective of improving coordination of facility use, enhancing participation between the sports, sharing fundraising initiatives, expanding the pool of volunteers, or affording paid administration. Trial where individual clubs indicate a willingness for such a model.	Low	Each Council	Other sports' local clubs	In-kind
g)	Prepare and distribute soccer facility design guidelines that address best practice sustainable planning for soccer facilities.	High	SRV	FFV	\$7,000
h)	Seek funding (e.g. through grants, sponsorship for initiatives) to continue to support the implementation of the recommendations guided by this Strategy.	High	Eastern Region Soccer Working Group		In-kind
i)	Conduct a training session with soccer clubs to introduce the Australian Sports Commission Club Development Framework resource and also to include ERLS to provide support to clubs develop plans and resources for people of all abilities.	High	Each Council	Clubs	In-kind
j)	Convene a working group to consider the issues identified in this Study that inhibit councils' ability to provide for soccer and strategically address at a metropolitan Melbourne level (e.g. through advocacy).	High	SRV	FFV	In-kind
k)	Conduct a mid-term review (2012) of the Eastern Region Soccer Strategy, in particular; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participation trends,</li> <li>- Facility provision, capacities and needs,</li> <li>- Appropriateness and priority of mid to long term actions, and</li> </ul>	Med	FFV	Eastern Region Soccer Working Group SRV	\$30,000





Ref	Action Plan	Priority	Responsibility	Stakeholders	Indicative Resources
	– Consider appropriateness and timing of a detailed investigation into a regional facility.				
<b>5.3.1</b>	<b>Participation</b>				
a)	Consolidate, and if appropriate, expand the FFV service mix to incorporate the needs of social soccer, through partnerships with Bayside League, VicSoccer and Victorian Churches Soccer Association (e.g. consider the introduction of a 'thirds' / more social team that doesn't require training and has interchange rules).	High	FFV	Soccer bodies	\$10,000
b)	Improve accessibility to lower levels of participation through reviewing fees and charging concession fees, particularly to enhance access to socially based clubs and junior clubs; in partnership with the Bayside League, VicSoccer and Victorian Churches Soccer Association.	Med	FFV	Soccer bodies	In-kind
c)	Continue to allow for relaxed uniform requirements for lower levels of participation, to address accessibility for all participants, and ensure this approach is adopted across all Leagues.	Med	FFV Soccer bodies	Clubs	In-kind
d)	To assist in combating facility constraints on participation, consider introducing a model of participation where players rotate more frequently (thus allowing more players per team where demand is high).	Med	FFV	Soccer bodies	In-kind
e)	Continue a program of training youth in refereeing to implement through schools.	Low	FFV	Eastern Region Soccer Working Group Schools	Existing budget
f)	Trial the establishment of a casual mid-week social competition on a selection of facilities that can cater for additional use.	Low	FFV	Clubs	In-kind & \$5,000 (materials, promotion)
g)	Trial the implementation of Gala GoalKick days as annual events to diversify the GoalKick program.	Med	FFV	Clubs Eastern Region Soccer Working Group	In-kind & \$5,000 (materials, promotion)
h)	Develop a Corporate Soccer Program and trial implementation and target workers in each area, similar to the success that other sports have experienced (e.g. basketball, bowls etc.)	Low	FFV	Clubs Eastern Region Soccer Working Group	In-kind & \$5,000 (materials, promotion)



Ref	Action Plan	Priority	Responsibility	Stakeholders	Indicative Resources
<b>5.3.1</b>	<b>People</b>				
a)	Coordinate annual training and development opportunities for clubs across the region, in partnership with FFV; including the provision of inclusive training to raise awareness of the needs of disadvantaged population groups.	Med	Eastern Region Soccer Working Group	FFV	In-kind & existing budget / \$3,000 (materials, resources, promotion)
b)	Actively work with local clubs through the municipal Soccer Forums to identify club development needs and strategies for improvement, including provision of information, strategic planning, and assistance with funding.	High	Each Council	Clubs	In-kind & \$3,000 (materials, resources)
c)	Develop a Recognition Program that offers incentives and rewards to clubs that demonstrate positive governance, management and inclusive practices. Including greater access to facility development grants.	Low	FFV		In-kind & \$3,000 (materials, promotion)
d)	Continue to provide a recognition program of inclusive practices at clubs (to encourage participation by people of CALD backgrounds, youth from low socio economic backgrounds and people with disabilities) and consider incentives to acknowledge these clubs (e.g. reduced fees or funding priority).	Med	Eastern Region Soccer Working Group	Community agencies	In-kind
e)	Develop a volunteer recruitment program through strategies such as waiving fees, splitting responsibilities into manageable tasks, and offering incentives (e.g. uniforms, equipment) / rewards.	Med	Clubs	Each Council	In-kind
f)	Establish and trial a program introducing youth to club administration / officiating roles, and consider introducing within schools, e.g. through work experience.	Med	Clubs	FFV Schools	In-kind
g)	Continue a program of encouraging female involvement in club administration, through addressing barriers such as self confidence, club cultures, and reinforcing skill development.	Med	FFV	SRV Womensport & Recreation Victoria	In-kind
h)	Continue the All Nations Soccer competition to recruit people from disadvantaged communities and review as an ongoing initiative.	High	FFV Community agencies	Community agencies, including VicHealth, Sports Assemblies	In-kind & \$3,000 (materials, promotion)



Ref	Action Plan	Priority	Responsibility	Stakeholders	Indicative Resources
<b>5.3.1</b>	<b>Provision</b>				
a)	Re-establish the Facility and Project Officer position within FFV, with the portfolio of local government relations, driving the implementation of this Strategy, and coordinate FFV's responsibilities in the action plan.	High	FFV		\$55,000 p/annum
b)	Establish a second hand equipment & uniform program to enhance access for disadvantaged population groups.	Med	Clubs		In-kind
c)	Encourage a municipal approach to ensuring that the range of FFV non-competitive programs are provided and are accessible to all participants, e.g. school holiday programs, academies, come & try sessions, coaching clinics, SuperLeague. Promote these municipal wide opportunities broadly, and ensure the sharing of benefits across all clubs.	Low	Municipal Soccer Forums	FFV Soccer bodies	In-kind
d)	Enhance participation pathways across the 'player lifespan' by encouraging junior clubs and senior clubs to affiliate, thus providing feeders, and benefiting club viability.	Low	FFV Clubs	Each Council	In-kind
e)	Encourage clubs to implement car pooling initiatives to enable access for members with transportation difficulties.	High	Clubs		In-kind
<b>5.3.2</b>	<b>Facilities</b>				
a)	<p>Plan for implementation of the Model of Provision through master planning and seeking funding as required, according to the following:</p> <p><b>Whitehorse</b></p> <p>Terrara precinct (assessed as one facility complex) – team benches, first aid, disabled toilet</p> <p>Mahoney's (south east &amp; south west) - team benches</p> <p>Bill Sewart - team benches</p> <p>Mirrabooka - team benches</p> <p>Koonung - team benches (west oval)</p> <p>Ballyshanassy (new venue for soccer) - team benches, disabled toilet</p> <p>Synthetic pitch – site TBD (consider Mahoney's or Wembley)</p>	PRIORITIES TO BE DETERMINED THROUGH ANNUAL PLANNING	Council	FUNDING TO BE ASCERTAINED AT THE TIME OF DETAILED PLANNING	



Ref	Action Plan	Priority	Responsibility	Stakeholders	Indicative Resources
	<p><b>Knox</b></p> <p>Schultz - first aid, team benches, ref change  Sasses Ave – first aid, team benches, disabled toilet, ref change  Knox Park – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change  HV Jones – first aid, team benches, ref change  RD Egan Lee (outer) - team benches, ref change, 2 x players change  Guy Turner - first aid, team benches, ref change, ramp for disabled toilet  Milpera - first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet  Synthetic pitch – site TBD (consider RD Egan Lee or Knox Park)</p> <p><b>Maroondah</b></p> <p>Ainslie - first aid, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change  Silcock – first aid, team benches, ref change  Springfield – first aid, team benches, 2 x players change  Town Park – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet  Fred Geale – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change  Dorset (outer) – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change, public toilets  Belmont – first aid, team benches, ref change, 2 x players change  Gracedale – new pavilion  Manson (1&amp;2) - first aid, team benches  Dorset Reserve – synthetic pitch</p>	<p>PRIORITIES TO BE DETERMINED THROUGH ON ANNUAL PLANNING</p> <p>PRIORITIES TO BE DETERMINED THROUGH ON ANNUAL PLANNING</p>	<p>Council</p> <p>Council</p>		<p>FUNDING TO BE ASCERTAINED AT THE TIME OF DETAILED PLANNING</p> <p>FUNDING TO BE ASCERTAINED AT THE TIME OF DETAILED PLANNING</p>



Ref	Action Plan	Priority	Responsibility	Stakeholders	Indicative Resources
	<p><b>Manningham</b></p> <p>Donvale - team benches, first aid            Boronia Grove – team benches, first aid, ref change, 2 x players change            Wilsons Reserve – first aid, enlarge ref change, disabled, 2 x players change            Bulleen Park - first aid, team benches, player change x 2, ref change            Timber Ridge - team benches, ref change, first aid</p> <p>Park Avenue - first aid, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change            Petty's Reserve – new soccer development to be master planned (incl. pitches, pavilion, synthetic pitch)</p>	PRIORITIES TO BE DETERMINED THROUGH ON ANNUAL PLANNING	Council		FUNDING TO BE ASCERTAINED AT THE TIME OF DETAILED PLANNING
	<p><b>Boroondara</b></p> <p>Willsmere – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, kiosk            Hays Paddock – team bench, ref change, first aid            Stradbroke – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet            Hislop – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, kiosk            Frog Hollow – team bench, first aid, public toilets, disabled toilet, 2 x players change            Highfield – first aid, team benches, ref change, public toilets, disabled toilet, kiosk            Hartwell – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change            Warner – first aid, team benches, ref change, public toilets, disabled toilet, 2 x players change            Markham – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet            Watson - first aid, team benches            HA Smith - first aid, team benches, disabled toilet, ref change            Howard Dawson - first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet            Synthetic pitch – site TBD</p>	PRIORITIES TO BE DETERMINED THROUGH ON ANNUAL PLANNING	Council		FUNDING TO BE ASCERTAINED AT THE TIME OF DETAILED PLANNING



Ref	Action Plan	Priority	Responsibility	Stakeholders	Indicative Resources
	<p><b>Monash</b></p> <p>Glen Waverley North – first aid, team benches  Lapent – first aid, ref change  Lum – first aid, team benches, disabled toilet, 2 x players change  Argyle – first aid, team benches, disabled toilet  Caloola – first aid, team benches, disabled toilet, 2 x players change  Batesford – first aid, team benches, ref change, disabled toilet, 2 x players change  Ashwood – first aid, team benches, ref change, public toilets, disabled toilet, 2 x players change  Jack Edwards (outer) – first aid, ref change, team benches, disabled toilet  Gardiners Creek – first aid, ref change  Synthetic pitch – site TBD  Ashwood College (school) - first aid, team benches, disabled toilets, ref change</p>	PRIORITY TO BE DETERMINED THROUGH ON ANNUAL PLANNING	Council            School/Council		FUNDING TO BE ASCERTAINED AT THE TIME OF DETAILED PLANNING
b)	Review the existing Grounds & Facilities Criteria which is achievable in particular the inclusion of the associated fencing requirements for Class B facilities (to incorporate temporary measures), and add the minimum level of provision to support junior levels of competition and social facility requirements, and incorporate infrastructure requirements appropriate to school facilities.	High	FFV	Eastern Region Soccer Working Group	In-kind
c)	Prepare minimum facility development standards for the provision of soccer grounds and pavilions (that is consistent with facility provision for other sports; and clarifies the elements that will be provided / funded by Council, and those to be provided by clubs). Incorporate Class C requirements as the minimum level of provision for Council owned / managed facilities.  Where such standards exist, review to incorporate four change rooms as the minimum level of provision for soccer (which can be achieved through creative design).	High	Each Council	FFV	In-kind / \$5,000 (outsource)
d)	Audit the actual use of soccer and other seasonal sporting facilities. Establish variations from the 'reported' level of use to identify opportunities for more efficient use of facilities through sharing, reconfiguration or consolidation of use to allow for the generation of additional sports fields.	High	Each Council		In-kind / \$10,000 (outsource)
e)	Establish a Facilities sub-committee within FFV to proactively address the planning and use of facilities across each Classification (i.e. from	High	FFV	Local Government	In-kind

Ref	Action Plan	Priority	Responsibility	Stakeholders	Indicative Resources
	grassroots to elite).			SRV	
f)	Where opportunities exist for further use of facilities, consider changing current scheduling to include competition games on alternative weekdays (e.g. u/15, 16 games).	Med	FFV Clubs	Each Council	In-kind
g)	Investigate the willingness, appropriateness and viability of establishing a grant program to fund new / upgraded grounds at school sites.	High	SRV		In-kind
h)	Develop pathways for Women's Premier League teams to have access to higher standard facilities.	Med	FFV	Each Council	In-kind
i)	Coordinate the management of local government owned / managed facilities across the region, through building consistency in the conditions of use of facilities and consider offering long term tenure for club funded facility improvements. Link facility upgrades with clubs having to demonstrate their professionalism through a strategic business plan. Provide for the promotion / relegation potential of clubs by restricting use of Class A & B level facilities to appropriate levels of play only (i.e. occupancy agreements to become void if club relegated to lower level participation).	Med	Eastern Region Soccer Working Group		In-kind / \$15,000 (outsource)
j)	Lobby the Department of Education for the continuation of the Community Facilities Funding program, and to seek involvement in the planning of new school developments (or facility developments at existing schools).	High	Eastern Region Soccer Working Group	SRV	In-kind
k)	Pursue alternative technologies (e.g. artificial surfaces) to achieve increased provision for soccer through creating all-weather surfaces.	High	FFV Each Council		In-kind
l)	Consider covering outdoor hard surfaces (e.g. tennis, netball) with appropriate synthetic grass matting, and roofing to provide for all-weather use for 5-a-side soccer (where demand exists).	Med	Each Council	SRV	TBD on case-by-case basis
m)	Prepare (or review where these exist) a policy for the provision of floodlighting on Council reserves, that considers competition level floodlighting at high standard reserves where appropriate.	Med	Each Council		In-kind
n)	Explore opportunities and partnerships for the installation of floodlighting on school facilities.	Med	Each Council Dep't of Ed	Schools	In-kind
o)	Prepare a feasibility study for regional soccer facility provision in the eastern region (that considers frequency of provision; management model; activity mix, standard and facility components; funding options (including private sector partnerships); determines life cycle costings; partnerships and develops a business plan).	Low	Eastern Region Soccer Working Group		\$50,000



Ref	Action Plan	Priority	Responsibility	Stakeholders	Indicative Resources
<b>5.3.1</b>	<b>Perception &amp; Profile</b>				
a)	Ensure the promotion of programs is relevant to the target markets (e.g. use appropriate images, use of ethno-specific workers to access communities for CALD programs etc). Utilise community agencies to access specific target groups.	Med	Councils	Clubs	Existing budgets
b)	Inform clubs and peak bodies of the vision and direction for soccer, to share in these directions.	Med	FFV	Clubs	In-kind
c)	Conduct a regional wide promotion of soccer participation initiatives through schools.	Low	Eastern Region Soccer Working Group	Clubs Schools	\$10,000
d)	Generate role models to encourage participation in soccer by juniors, women and people from disadvantaged population groups (e.g. CALD, people with disabilities); through initiatives such as player profiles in newsletters, sports person awards.	Low	Eastern Region Soccer Working Group	Clubs	Existing budgets & promotional avenues
e)	Establish a clear pathway from schools to club based participation, and involve clubs in facilitating the link from schools. Promote broadly as an FFV program to schools.	Med	FFV Clubs	Schools	In-kind
f)	Ensure that the community is aware that soccer is all about fully inclusive opportunity.	High	Councils	Clubs	In-kind





## Appendices





## Appendix 1. Football Federation Victoria, Grounds & Facilities Criteria (per Extract from 2006 Football Federation Victoria Regulations, and updated to include 2008 requirements of Class A facilities)

All grounds used shall be classified as "A", "B", "C", or "D" class grounds as follows:

- CLASS "A"** Men's Premier League
- CLASS "B"** Men's State League Division One (1)
- CLASS "C"** Men's State League Division Two (2) & Three (3), Men's Provisional League Division One (1) & Women's Premier League
- CLASS "D"** Men's Provisional League Division Two (2) & Three (3), Men's Metropolitan League, Women's State League, Women's Metropolitan League, Thirds & Masters Leagues, & Junior Leagues

Unless otherwise advised, from the commencement of the 2008 season, all clubs must comply with the Classification of Grounds Criteria stated herein.

**Member Clubs or Affiliated Leagues, Associations that do not conform with the Classification of Grounds criteria by the 1<sup>st</sup> December in the relevant season, will be relegated to such a League the FFV Commission deems appropriate.**

FFV reserves the absolute right to grant special dispensation to Member Clubs or Affiliated Leagues and/or Associations who are in the process of upgrading their facilities in accordance with FFV Classification of Grounds Criteria.

### ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS (CLASS "A")

#### Playing Arena

- (a) The pitch markings must fall between the following range:
  - (i) minimum length of 100 metres and maximum length of 105 metres
  - (ii) minimum width of 60 metres and maximum width of 68 metres.
- (b) The field of play must be rectangular. The pitch shall be an evenly grassed surface, all internal field markings must be marked in accordance with the Laws of the Game,
- (c) A permanent chain wire fence around the pitch meshed to the ground, with a minimum height of 1.1 metres, and at minimum 3 metres in distance from the side lines and goal lines,
- (d) A covered roof player's race from the dressing rooms to the playing area, with a minimum height of 2.2 metres and a minimum width of 2 metres. Shade cloth must be provided running the length of the player's race and the height shall be a minimum at 1.5 metres set 0.5 metres from the ground,
- (e) Goalposts, goal nets and corner flags of approved material, colour and dimensions as per the current laws of the game. Corner posts must not be metal or spring loaded. They must be plastic or wood and stand a minimum of 1.5 metres above the ground with a non-pointed top. Corner flags must not feature nationalistic emblems or reference,
- (f) Two covered coaches/substitutes benches/dugouts, with adequate seating for eight (8) people.



### Players' and Match Officials' Amenities

- (a) Four players' and one match official's lockable dressing rooms (each minimum 25m<sup>2</sup>), with exclusive access to:
  - (i) The shower area, floors and walls to 1.2 metres, finished in impervious material, providing hot and cold showers,
  - (ii) The designated player's dressing rooms (each minimum 25m<sup>2</sup>), with a tiled and/or stainless steel shower area,
  - (iii) The designated match official's dressing room must be no smaller than 20m<sup>2</sup> and have a writing desk or bench,
  - (iv) Toilet facilities,
  - (v) One fully functional and purpose built massage table for each of the player's dressing rooms,
- (b) A first aid room (minimum 15m<sup>2</sup>), including basic first aid equipment, a bed or massage table constructed to ensure it is maintained in a clean and sterile condition;
- (c) All changing room structures must be permanent buildings and have the appropriate council approvals.

### Spectator Amenities

- (a) Spectator amenities shall be fully enclosed with perimeter fencing, at least 1.8 metres high,
- (b) Two Ticket Box entrances of a structure, size and design as approved by FFV for the collection of admission fees,
- (c) Car parking for 200 cars within 400 metres of the ground,
- (d) A fully functional, permanent and fixed scoreboard (including the names of each participating club), clearly visible to the majority of spectators and the media/press box,
- (e) At least two toilet blocks for male and female patrons (each being a minimum of 20m<sup>2</sup>) situated not more than 50 metres from the playing field,
- (f) A canteen/kiosk serving hot and cold drinks and snack foods compliant with all health and council regulations,
- (g) Disabled toilet access,
- (h) Spectator seating for 500 people (increasing to 1,000 seats by 2009 season).

### Other

- (a) A media room that can accommodate all members of the media (including television and radio at the same time), with two telephone handsets and a facsimile machine,
- (b) A media viewing area, providing unobstructed views of the playing arena and scoreboard,
- (c) A media tower of an approved design and structure that can safely cater for television broadcasts, with access to power,



- (d) A fully functional Public Address system that is audible to all parts of the venue, including social areas,
- (e) External signboard, displaying the names of teams playing.

### **Preferred Requirements (CLASS “A”)**

#### **Playing Arena**

- (a) A pitch of 105 metres in length and 68 metres in width,
- (b) Floodlights to match standard (as per FFV Lighting Guidelines).

#### **Players’ and Match Officials’ Amenities**

- (a) Four players’ dressing rooms (each minimum 35m<sup>2</sup>), with tiled and/or stainless steel shower area floors and walls to 2 metres,
- (b) Two match officials’ dressing rooms (minimum 20m<sup>2</sup>), with tiled and/or stainless steel shower area floors and walls to 2 metres,

#### **Spectator amenities**

- (a) Perimeter fencing, at least 2 metres in height,
- (b) Car parking for 500 cars, within 100 metres of the ground
- (c) Covered spectator accommodation for 1,000 people,
- (d) An indoor refreshment area (approximately 200m<sup>2</sup>), with views over the playing arena.

#### **Other**

- (a) One flagpole displaying the Australian Flag.

### **ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS (CLASS “B”)**

#### **Playing Arena**

- (a) The pitch markings must fall between the following range:
  - (i) minimum length of 100 metres and maximum length of 105 metres.
  - (ii) minimum width of 60 metres and maximum width of 68 metres.
- (b) The field of play must be rectangular. The pitch shall be an evenly grassed surface, all internal field markings must be marked in accordance with the Laws of the Game,
- (c) A permanent chain wire fence around the pitch meshed to the ground, with a minimum height of 1.1 metres, and minimum 3 metres in distance from the side lines and goal lines,
- (d) A covered roof player’s race from the dressing rooms to the playing area, with a minimum height of 2.2 metres and a minimum width of 2 metres. Shade cloth must be provided running the length of the player’s race and the height shall be a minimum at 1.5 metres set 0.5 metres from the ground,



- (e) Goalposts, goal nets and corner flags of approved material, colour and dimensions as per the current laws of the game. Corner posts must not be metal or spring loaded. They must be plastic or wood and stand a minimum of 1.5 metres above the ground with a non-pointed top. Corner flags must not feature nationalistic emblems or reference,
- (f) Two covered coaches/substitutes benches/dugouts, with adequate seating for eight (8) people.

#### **Players' and Match Officials' Amenities**

- (a) Four players' dressing rooms (each minimum 25m<sup>2</sup>) and one match officials' dressing room (minimum 20m<sup>2</sup>), each lockable with hot and cold water showers, and access to toilets within the building structure,
- (b) A first aid room, including basic first aid equipment, a bed or massage table constructed to ensure it is maintained in a clean and sterile condition.

#### **Spectator Amenities**

- (a) A fully functional scoreboard, clearly visible to the majority of spectators,
- (b) Male and female public toilets.

#### **Preferred Requirements (CLASS "B") Playing Arena**

- (a) A pitch of 105 metres in length and 68 metres in width,
- (b) A chain wire fence around the pitch, with a minimum height of 1.1 metres.

#### **Players' and Match Officials' Amenities**

- (a) Four players' dressing rooms (each minimum 35m<sup>2</sup>),
- (b) Two match officials' dressing room (minimum 20 m<sup>2</sup>),
- (c) First aid room (minimum 15m<sup>2</sup>), constructed to ensure it is maintained in a clean and sterile condition.

#### **Spectator amenities**

- (a) Canteen/kiosk serving hot and cold drinks and snack foods,
- (b) Disabled toilets.



## **ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS (CLASS “C”)**

### **Playing Arena**

- (a) The pitch markings must fall between the following range:
  - (i) minimum length of 96 metres and maximum length of 105 metres
  - (ii) minimum width of 60 metres and maximum width of 68 metres.
- (b) The field of play must be rectangular. The pitch shall be an evenly grassed surface, marked in accordance with the laws of the game,
- (c) A minimum distance of 3 metres must be provided from the side lines and goal lines to the benches,
- (d) Goalposts and corner flags of approved material, colour and dimensions as per the current laws of the game. Corner posts must not be metal or spring loaded. They must be plastic or wood and stand a minimum of 1.5 metres above the ground with a non-pointed top. Corner flags must not feature nationalistic emblems,
- (e) Two covered coaches/substitutes benches, with adequate seating for five (5) people.
- (f) Regardless of the external dimensions, the internal measurements must be in accordance with the laws of the game.

### **Players’ and Match Officials’ Amenities**

- (a) Two players’ (25m<sup>2</sup>) and one match officials’ (20m<sup>2</sup>) lockable dressing rooms each with hot and cold water showers, and access to toilets within the building structure,
- (b) A first aid area, which is kept clean and sterile and providing basic first aid equipment.

### **Spectator Amenities**

- (a) Male and female public toilets (may be shared with player/referee toilets).

## **Preferred Requirements (CLASS “C”)**

### **Playing Arena**

- (a) A pitch of 105 metres in length and 68 metres in width,
- (b) A fence around the pitch (permanent or temporarily erected for each game).

### **Players’ and Match Officials’ Amenities**

- (a) Four players’ dressing rooms (each minimum 25m<sup>2</sup>),
- (b) Two match officials’ dressing rooms (minimum 20m<sup>2</sup>),
- (c) First aid room (minimum 15m<sup>2</sup>), constructed to ensure it is maintained in a clean and sterile condition.

### **Spectator amenities**

- (a) Scoreboard,



- (b) Canteen/kiosk serving hot and cold drinks and snack foods,
- (c) Disabled toilets.

## **ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS (CLASS “D”)**

### **Playing Arena**

- (a) The pitch markings must fall between the following range:
  - (i) minimum length of 96 metres and maximum length of 105 metres  
(Juniors: Minimum 90 metres and maximum length of 105 metres)
  - (ii) minimum width of 60 metres and maximum width of 68 metres.  
(Juniors: Minimum 50 metres and maximum width of 68 metres)
- (b) The field of play must be rectangular. The pitch shall be an evenly grassed surface, marked in accordance with the laws of the game,
- (c) A minimum distance of 3 metres must be provided from the side lines and goal lines to the public viewing position, barrier fence (if present) or nearest hazard including the respective team benches,
- (d) Goalposts and corner flags of approved material, colour and dimensions as per the current laws of the game. Corner posts must not be metal or spring loaded. They must be plastic or wood and stand a minimum of 1.5 metres above the ground with a non-pointed top. Corner flags must not feature nationalistic emblems,
- (e) Two covered coaches/substitutes benches, with adequate seating for five (5) people.
- (f) Regardless of the external dimensions, the internal measurements must be in accordance to the laws of the game.

### **Players’ and Match Officials’ Amenities**

- (a) Lockable separate dressing rooms for players and match officials, each with hot and cold water showers,
- (b) Toilet Access,
- (c) A first aid area which is kept clean and sterile and providing basic first aid equipment.

## **Preferred Requirements (CLASS “D”)**

### **Playing Arena**

- (a) A pitch of 105 metres in length and 68 metres in width

### **Players’ and Match Officials’ Amenities**

- (a) Access to toilets within the building structure,
- (b) First aid room or area.



### **Spectator amenities**

- (a) Canteen/kiosk serving hot and cold drinks and snack foods,
- (b) Scoreboard,
- (c) Disabled toilets.





## Appendix 2. – FFV Referee and Registration Fees



### 2007 SEASON REFEREE FEES

LEAGUE	SENIOR REFEREES	AR1 & AR2 (SENIORS)	RESERVE REFEREE	AR1 & AR2 (RESERVES)
Premier League	\$ 220.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 55.00
State League One	\$ 160.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 40.00
State League Two	\$ 150.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 40.00
State League Three	\$ 130.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 35.00
Provisional League 1, 2 & 3	\$ 120.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 30.00
Women's Premier League	\$ 130.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 65.00	\$ 35.00
Women's Leagues	\$ 75.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	-
Thirds & Veterans Leagues	\$ 85.00	\$ 50.00	-	-
Junior U18's	\$ 75.00	\$ 35.00	-	-
Junior U17's	\$ 55.00	\$ 25.00	-	-
Junior U16's	\$ 50.00	\$ 25.00	-	-
Junior U14/15's	\$ 45.00	\$ 20.00	-	-
Junior U12/13's	\$ 40.00	\$ 20.00	-	-
Junior U11's	\$ 35.00	\$ 20.00	-	-

#### PRE/POST SEASON PRACTICE MATCHES

LEAGUE	REFEREE	AR
Premier League	\$ 120.00	\$ 60.00
State League One	\$ 100.00	\$ 50.00
State League Two	\$ 80.00	\$ 50.00
State League Three	\$ 80.00	\$ 50.00
Provisional League 1, 2 & 3	\$ 60.00	\$ 30.00

#### NOTES

Practice matches - **MINIMUM 5 clear working days notice** required for referee requests. An administrative charge of \$50 will apply. Additional charges apply for late, incomplete or variations on original requests.

Requests for referees must be **in writing** on the “**Out of Season Match**” form and include the following details: **teams, date, kick-off time, venue, age group** and whether Assistant Referees are also required.



Additional Travel Allowance Fee is payable for FFV Senior Appointments involving travel from the metropolitan area TO (or FROM to the metropolitan area) the following locations; Geelong \$30, Gippsland \$30, Ballarat \$50, Bendigo \$50.

Fees are to be paid directly to the referee on the day.

Tournaments and multiple games will be quoted and will include administration charge.



## Football Federation Victoria - 2007 Fee Schedule

### PLAYER REGISTRATION FEE

GoalKick - 5 to 12 years	\$	55.00
Rooball - 10 or under	\$	50.00
Junior - 11 to 17	\$	70.00
Junior - 18	\$	92.00
Senior - Over 18 (Men)	\$	157.00
Senior - Over 18 (Women)	\$	145.00
Professional (Contract)	\$	220.00

### AFFILIATION FEE

Men's Premier League	\$	11,391.41
Men's State League 1	\$	7,129.91
Men's State League 2 South-East	\$	6,063.45
Men's State League 2 North-West	\$	6,063.45
Men's State League 3 South-East	\$	4,873.69
Men's State League 3 North-West	\$	4,873.69
Men's Provisional League 1 South-East	\$	4,093.86
Men's Provisional League 1 North-West	\$	4,093.86
Men's Provisional League 2 South-East	\$	3,915.39
Men's Provisional League 2 North-West	\$	3,915.39
Men's Provisional League 3 South-East	\$	3,575.77
Men's Provisional League 3 North-West	\$	3,575.77
Men's Metropolitan League	\$	1,250.00
Men's Thirds League - Club Account	\$	115.00
Men's Masters League - Club Account	\$	115.00
Women's Premier League - Club Account	\$	1,250.00
Women's State League - Club Account	\$	260.00
Women's Metropolitan League - Club Account	\$	260.00
Junior Leagues - Club Account	\$	260.00

### TEAM ENTRY FEES

Rooball Team Entry	\$	50.00
Junior Boys Team Entry	\$	210.00
Junior Girls Team Entry	\$	210.00
Junior Boys Discounted Team Entry	\$	200.00
Junior Girls Discounted Team Entry	\$	200.00
Men's Thirds League Team Entry	\$	240.00
Men's Masters League Team Entry	\$	240.00
Women's State League Team Entry	\$	240.00
Women's Metropolitan League Team Entry	\$	240.00

### FINES DISCIPLINARY SEND OFFS

Men's Premier League	\$	90.00
Men's State & Provisional League	\$	60.00
Men's Metropolitan League	\$	60.00
Men's Thirds & Masters League	\$	80.00
Women's Premier League	\$	60.00
Women's State & Metropolitan League	\$	60.00

### FINES DISCIPLINARY ACCUMULATION OF 5 YELLOW CARDS

Men's Premier League	\$	90.00
Men's State & Provisional League	\$	60.00
Men's Metropolitan League	\$	60.00
Men's Thirds & Masters League	\$	80.00
Women's Premier League	\$	60.00
Women's State & Metropolitan League	\$	60.00

### ADMINISTRATION FEES

Disciplinary Request	\$	200.00
Tribunal Appeals Lodgement Fee	\$	1,000.00
Dishonoured Cheques	\$	30.00