

DRAFT Community Infrastructure Needs Assessment

Alpine Shire Council

April 2025





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SGS Economics and Planning Pty Ltd
ACN 007 437 729
www.sgsep.com.au

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Description
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
BPLR	Bushfire Place of Last Resort
CfP	Centre for Population
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action
ERC	Emergency Relief Centre
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
FFP	Fit-for-purpose
KISP	Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan
JUA	Joint Use Agreement
LDC	Long Day Care
LGA	Local Government Area
MAV	Municipal Association of Victoria
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas
VIC	Visitor Information Centre
VIF	Victoria in Future
VSBA	Victoria School Building Authority

Executive summary

Council has commissioned SGS Economics and Planning (SGS) to develop the Alpine Shire Community Infrastructure Needs Assessment (CINA). With input from key stakeholders, it identifies opportunities for each community infrastructure type across the Shire and within the townships of Bright, Porepunkah, Myrtleford, and Mount Beauty.

Policy and legislation

State-level policy sets the overarching directions for future growth and planning for communities, which local policies and plans build on, establishing local visions and priorities. Relevant implications for community infrastructure include:

- State policy recognises the importance of access to community infrastructure, with regional areas facing challenges that include limited budgets and the tyranny of distance. The policy encourages upgrading existing community infrastructure and delivering new infrastructure as shared, multipurpose facilities.
- Also at the state level, kindergarten reforms will drive an increase in demand for this service, and the Alpine Shire Draft Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) indicates that additional infrastructure will be required in Myrtleford in the short-term.
- The Alpine Shire Land Development Strategy, adopted in 2024, identifies four Service Towns in the Shire: Myrtleford, Bright, Mount Beauty, and Porepunkah, that will accommodate population growth and provide community infrastructure.
- The Shire's Economic Development Strategy identifies aged care, healthcare, and social assistance needs, labour shortfalls that may impact community services, and the need to attract young families to support economic growth.
- The Alpine Shire Sport and Recreation Plan highlights the opportunities for making use of school facilities and improving existing assets to increase their capacity/use.
- The Alpine Shire Events Strategy points to the importance of library and arts and culture facilities to support both local and tourist needs, and a need for improved events space to grow the tourism industry.
- The Alpine Shire Youth Strategy encourages accessible, welcoming and inclusive community infrastructure that can support young people with their concerns around substance abuse, social isolation, mental health and wellbeing problems, and family conflicts.
- The Alpine Shire Access and Inclusion Plan recognises the role of community infrastructure (buildings, services, and programs) in creating inclusive communities especially for people with a disability.
- The Alpine Shire Asset Plan identifies an ageing population and ageing infrastructure, with the increasing cost of providing services, as the main challenges facing the Shire's assets.

Trends in community infrastructure

- Community infrastructure, such as libraries and Neighbourhood Houses, generates significant social and economic benefits, including improved health, career development, and social connections.
- Effective delivery of community infrastructure requires collaboration between local, state, and private sectors, with local governments playing various roles from research to active service provision.
- Rural and regional communities face challenges in accessing community services due to lower population density and limited public transport, often resulting in higher costs for service delivery and/or lack of viability for some facilities. There are some state policies and grants, such as the Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund and Growing Regions Program, which aim to address these challenges by funding infrastructure projects to improve access and wellbeing.
- Community hubs, which integrate various services and activities in one location, provide benefits such as cost efficiency, social connection, and innovation for both community members and service providers. This model is now preferred to traditional, standalone community infrastructure that services a single user group/activity.
- Partnerships in community infrastructure are increasingly valuable for filling gaps and enhancing service delivery via arrangements such as joint use agreements and co-management models. This approach can offer benefits to providers in the form of cost-savings as well as increased community utilisation.
- Schools, often incorporating high-quality recreation and arts and cultural facilities, are increasingly being seen as potential community hubs. But their accessibility varies, and careful planning and management is necessary to accommodate the school community as well as the general public.
- Rapid technological changes have made it crucial for community infrastructure, such as libraries and community centres, to provide tech-enabled spaces and online services, supporting both remote access and greater participation in learning and social activities.
- Some community facilities play a role in emergency management/response as Emergency Relief Centres (ERCs) that provide essential services, shelter, and recovery support during and after disasters.
- Tourism contributes to the local economy by generating revenue that can be reinvested into community infrastructure, but it also places seasonal pressures on public facilities such as parks, toilets, and visitor information centres. Local governments are increasingly strategising to manage these impacts, with plans that balance infrastructure needs for both residents and tourists. Alpine Shire is currently developing a tourism strategy that will address the use of visitor information centres and other tourism infrastructure.

The Alpine Shire community

- Alpine Shire covers a large geographic area. While most of the population is concentrated in the four service towns, there are small residential populations elsewhere. In some instances, these locations are some distance between the townships with limited road networks.
- While Alpine Shire covers a large geographical area, the residential population is relatively small, with approximately 13,000 residents in 2021.

- Compared to the Victorian average, the typical Alpine Shire household is smaller and with fewer children. Shire residents are also less culturally diverse than the state average.
- Across Alpine Shire there are significant disparities in the levels of advantage and disadvantage. The most disadvantaged areas of the Shire are in Myrtleford and surrounds.
- Porepunkah's community profile suggests the township has a higher demand for early years services than others, with higher proportions of people in the workforce, families with children, more parents or partners working, and more people who provided unpaid care for child/children.
- Future population growth scenarios were sourced from the LDS, and the high growth scenario was adopted for the purposes of the community infrastructure needs assessment. Under this scenario, the Shire's population is forecast to grow to 15,890 people in 2041, an increase of 2,734 residents.

Existing infrastructure assessment

- Alpine has a large number of community facilities, many of which are smaller and older stand-alone facilities. Each existing facility was assessed to understand the spaces and services it includes, its condition, fitness-for-purpose (FFP; refers to functionality), and utilisation.
- The condition of the majority of facilities across the Shire is rated as average or better, however there are 17 facilities with a score of 5 (poor condition). Many are multi-purpose community facilities (community 'meeting spaces') that are older, smaller, stand-alone facilities like clubrooms and halls.
- Most facilities across the Shire scored well for FFP. Only three facilities earned a poor FFP score of 4 or 5 (poor FFP) – the Pioneer Park Netball & Pony Clubrooms (Bright), the Memorial Park Cricket Clubroom (Myrtleford), and Alex McCulloch Hall at the Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve.
- There are only eight facilities that have poor utilisation as reported by Council. As is the case for most facilities with poor condition and FFP scores, the majority of these facilities are multi-purpose community facilities.

Demand assessment

- A demand assessment was undertaken for community infrastructure using industry-standard benchmarks (shown in the table below). These benchmarks are limited in their appropriateness for regional areas such as Alpine Shire, and the assessment therefore provides only a starting point for understanding the number and type of facilities that should be provided. Results were contextualised for the communities of Alpine Shire before determining recommendations.

Service area	Facility/service	Existing supply	2041 total demand	2041 gap/surplus
Multipurpose community	Meeting Space - Small	19	4.0	15.0
	Meeting Space - Medium	30	2.0	28.0
	Meeting Space - Medium to Large	4	2.0	2.0
	Neighbourhood House Service	2	1.1	0.9
	Multi-Purpose Community Centre (Level 1)	4	1.8	2.2
	Multi-Purpose Community Centre (Level 3)	0	0.4	-0.4

Service area	Facility/service	Existing supply	2041 total demand	2041 gap/surplus
Library	Library	3	0.4	2.6
Early years	Kindergarten (3+4-year-old)	365	--	-42 places*
	Playgroup	4	0.8	3.2
	Maternal and Child Health (MCH)	3	1.0	2.0
	Toy Library	3	0.6	2.4
Education	Government Primary School	9	1.8	7.2
	Government Secondary School	3	0.6	2.4
	Catholic Primary School	1	1.4	-0.4
	Catholic Secondary School	1	0.4	0.6
	Government Specialist Secondary School	0	0.3	-0.3
	TAFE campus	0	0.1	-0.1
Young people	Youth space (as part of community centre)	1	2	-1
	Youth Centre (dedicated facility)	0	0.4	-0.4
Seniors & aged care	Residential Aged Care (beds)	186	520	-334
	Senior citizen's centres	4	N/A	N/A
Sport & recreation	Indoor Recreation Centre / Stadium (Hard Court) – Lower Order (2 courts)	4.0	0.6	3.4
	Indoor Recreation Centre / Stadium (Hard Court) – Higher Order (4-6 courts)	0.0	0.3	-0.3
	Indoor Aquatic / Leisure / Fitness Centre (25m pool)	3.0	0.4	2.6
	Outdoor Netball Facility – Small (2 courts)	3.0	1.0	2.0
	Outdoor Netball Facility – Large (8 courts)	0.0	0.3	-0.3
	Tennis Facility – Small / Low-Order (2 courts, no pavilion, free to public)	1.0	0.5	0.5
	Tennis Facility – Higher Order (6-10 courts, with pavilion)	3.0	0.5	2.5
	Lawn Bowls Facility (4 greens)	2.0	0.4	1.6
	Synthetic Athletics Track	0.0	1.0	1.0
	Pavilion – Level 1	1.0	2.6	-1.6
	Pavilion – Level 3	1.0	0.3	0.7

The CINA demand assessment also includes general discussion of demand for other state-led infrastructure, including health, emergency services, and justice.

Opportunities

Based on the assessment, opportunities are identified for each service area and for specific sites. These are listed in the table below. The report also provides some case studies to illustrate the potential for realisation of the opportunities in Alpine Shire.

Recommendations & site-based opportunities

Multipurpose community

- Engage with intended tenant/user groups to co-design new or redeveloped multipurpose facilities that bring together groups/service/activities under one roof to ensure the design can respond to their respective needs. Consideration of storage capacity and access arrangements will be important.
- Support Neighbourhood House/U3A services to relocate into hub facilities; continuously engage with these groups to ensure their offering aligns with community needs, and that they can continue to play a key role in programming and activation at each township hub. Ideally, the groups can partner/merge over time, offering a range of activities to all age groups.
- Continue to promote bookable rooms to the community, organisations, and service providers to increase utilisation of multipurpose spaces.
- Deliver a new community hub in Myrtleford. This should consider the existing Senior Citizens Centre site or other existing Council-owned site. This should include:
 - A range of flexible multipurpose rooms
 - A dedicated youth space, ideally with its own entrance (alternatively, this could be co-located with the library)
 - A neighbourhood House service/ U3A service (relocated)
- Redevelop the Mount Beauty Community Centre as a multipurpose community hub. This should include:
 - A range of flexible multipurpose rooms, including some smaller flexible rooms that can be used for service consults (incl. for young people) or office space.
 - Neighbourhood House service/ U3A (relocated)
- Redevelop the Bright Community Centre as a multipurpose community hub to include:
 - A range of flexible multipurpose rooms
 - A larger events/venue space
 - A Neighbourhood House/U3A service (relocated)
 - A dedicated youth space
- Redevelop to improve condition/FFP:
 - Pioneer Park Netball & Pony Clubrooms in Bright: as a multipurpose clubhouse space capable of accommodating multiple user groups (pony club, netball, cycling club, scouts) and public toilets to support groups, general park users, and use of the adjacent outdoor events space. In the longer-term, explore whether equestrian activities can be consolidated at the Myrtleford Showgrounds.
 - The Scout Hall at Pioneer Park, if this group cannot be accommodated in the redeveloped multipurpose clubhouse noted above.
 - Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve community facility (redeveloped tennis clubhouse/scout hall): include in the new community facility at this site a multipurpose room and shed space with

storage to accommodate multiple user groups and allow for consolidation of other community buildings on site.

- Consolidate (repurpose or decommission) sites surplus to need, including:
 - 5 Elm Court, Bright (Council has long-term plans for the redevelopment of this site, but current tenant will remain on a year-on-year lease)
 - Bright Senior Citizen's Centre (integrate into the new multipurpose community hub)
 - Myrtleford Memorial Hall Neighbourhood Centre (integrate into a new multipurpose community hub)
 - Mount Beauty Senior Citizen's Centre (integrate into the new multipurpose community hub)
 - Mount Beauty Neighbourhood Centre & Hall (integrate into the new multipurpose community hub or new community facility at the reserve)
 - Mount Beauty Men's Shed (integrate into a new multipurpose facility at the reserve)
 - Mount Beauty Cub & Scout Hall (integrate into a new multipurpose facility at the reserve)
 - Alex McCulloch Hall, Mount Beauty (integrate into a new multipurpose facility at the reserve)
 - The Auditorium, Mount Beauty (integrate into the new multipurpose community hub)
 - St Albans Hall, Running Creek
 - Dinner Plain Community Centre (requires further review in an emergency management context as this is an ERC and licensed to DoE in non-school periods)

Library

- Consider a 24-hr model for libraries with access by swipe card (e.g., Gippsland), especially at the Bright and Myrtleford sites.
- Explore options for outreach library services for rural towns such as Dinner Plain. This can include mobile libraries, library kiosks in existing community infrastructure, and/or (seasonal) pop-up libraries.
- Engage with High Country Library Network to expand e-library services to support access in remote areas (small settlements and rural localities).
- Maintain the three libraries, however look to integrate other complementary services/activities at the Mount Beauty and Myrtleford sites through redevelopment/expansion that cannot be located at the previously mentioned new community hub sites (see multipurpose community centres).
- Refurbish the Bright Library with an upgraded multipurpose room.
- If the revised heritage controls allow for redevelopment, consider upgrading Myrtleford as the main 'regional' level library which could include a higher level of service offering and resources (e.g. specialised collections), and more spaces to accommodate remote work and study.

Culture and tourism

- Improve coordination of arts and cultural programming and activation of Council-owned sites to:
 - reinforce Myrtleford as the performing arts centre
 - reinforce Bright as the events and visual arts centre
- Support private arts and culture venues, e.g. Bright Art Gallery and the Courthouse to continue to offer their services/activities for residents and visitors
- Engage with school principals and state government for joint use of school arts and cultural facilities (e.g. EMPAC).

- Ensure all community centres/hubs have multipurpose rooms that support the flexible delivery of community arts practices, e.g. appropriate flooring, sinks, storage.
- For Museum sites (and the Gold Battery), engage with Heritage Victoria to discuss potential option for re-use/better activation including:
 - decommissioning, consolidation of artefacts into visitor information centres/parks/other community facilities
 - commercial use (e.g. specialised accommodation, café, shop – already in-progress for the Bright Museum)
- Under the Tourism Strategy development, review the need for the 3 VICs. Consider:
 - Potential for consolidation of one or more of these sites into a community sites (e.g. one of the new community hubs)
 - Further commercial uses (e.g. selling goods from local businesses or coffee cart from a local provider) at the Mount Beauty VIC for improved activation.
- Deliver a new events/venue space through the Bright Community Centre redevelopment that can accommodate larger gatherings such as weddings and conferences, as well as continue to be used for activities such as school exams.
- Investigate the potential to enhance the commercial function (e.g. selling more goods from local businesses or installing a cafe) of the Mount Beauty Visitor Information Centre.

Early years

- Support the continued operation of ACS via use of Council early years facilities, and workforce planning.
- Support Dederang and Harrietville primary schools to continue to run services in these more remote areas.
- Engage with the State Government to understand whether a new childcare centre will be delivered on a school site in Myrtleford. If not, redevelop the Mountain View Children's Centre (Myrtleford) to improve its condition/FFP and provide one additional kindergarten room by 2032.
- Over the medium-long term, refurbish the Lake View (Mount Beauty) Centre to ensure it can continue to operate. Through redevelopment:
 - Provide spaces for MCH, playgroups and other family/children's activities.
 - Improve safety so that OSHC can safely operate if there is future demand for the service.
- Continue to monitor demand for kindergarten and other childcare services in Bright (which currently also services Porepunkah) in consultation with ACS to determine if additional rooms are required. If yes, provide a new early years centre with 2 kindergarten rooms and spaces for MCH, playgroups and other family/children's activities in Porepunkah in the long-term.

Education

- Engage with state government to advocate for accommodating specialist needs by integrating services into existing schools.
- Support distance learning by engaging with tertiary education providers to deliver courses/programs from libraries, multipurpose community centres, or secondary school campuses.

Young people

- Engage with Headspace and other service providers to provide local satellite services from youth spaces/community centres, especially in Myrtleford.
- Deliver a dedicated youth space in Bright:
 - In the short-term, as a pop-up at the Bright Community Centre (the Lighthouse – this is already active).
 - Overtime, this should become a dedicated space with the redeveloped community centre (see multipurpose community centres).
- Deliver a dedicated youth space in Myrtleford within the new multipurpose community centre, and attract other youth support service providers to run services from this site.
- Provide services for young people who cannot travel to Bright or Myrtleford via outreach youth programs in Mount Beauty/Tawonga from multipurpose rooms at existing and future facilities.

Seniors & aged care

- Where new community hubs in Bright, Myrtleford and Mount Beauty are developed, Council should adopt universal design principles to ensure that facilities are accessible, and provide spaces that can accommodate the existing programs and activities offered at senior citizens centres
- Support existing U3A/ senior citizens groups in the Shire to continue providing activities/programs.
- Over time, encourage and support partnerships between Neighbourhood House, U3A, and other community service providers at multipurpose centres.
- Engage with residential aged care providers to advocate for an increase in residential aged care beds.
- Consider developing an investment prospectus or similar to attract additional residential aged care services to the Shire.

Sport & recreation

- Continue to engage with school principals and state government for joint use of school sport and recreation facilities.
- Provide lighting and durable play surfaces at major reserves in the two largest townships (likely Memorial Park in Myrtleford and Pioneer Park in Bright) to support longevity and increased use.
- Advocate to state government to upgrade the sports stadium at Bright P-12, and for continued joint use of this facility.
- If redevelopment of the Bright P-12 Stadium does not progress and long-term community access cannot be secured under a joint use agreement, consider redevelopment of the Sports Centre to include an indoor stadium.
- Refurbish/ upgrade the Canine Clubrooms at RC McNamara Reserve in Myrtleford (noted in the existing master plan). Consider opening this facility up to wider community use.
- The Gym at RC McNamara Recreation Reserve is in very poor condition and has poor fitness for purpose - this can be consolidated and replaced by the delivery of an outdoor gym, as per the existing masterplan.
- Refurbish/ upgrade the Memorial Park Pavilion in Myrtleford to improve condition/FFP and ensure it is female-friendly (noted in the existing master plan).
- Continue to engage with Marion College (Myrtleford) for delivery of an athletics track, and secure community access outside school hours under a joint use agreement.

- Redevelop the tennis clubroom facility at the Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve, if this group cannot be accommodated at the new multipurpose community facility at this site.
- Develop a masterplan for the Porepunkah Recreation Reserve. Consider upgrading play surfaces and providing a facility to support sport and recreation at the site, with a multipurpose community space (pending outcome of the Hall redevelopment).
- Upgrade the Bright, Mount Beauty, and Myrtleford aquatic facilities to accommodate warm water activities, and provide winter access in Mount Beauty and Myrtleford.
- Refurbish the Bright Skate Park (Council is currently pursuing funding for this project).

Community health services

- Continue to advocate for the provision of adequate health services via Alpine Health, and for an upgrade to the Bright Hospital.
- Consider opportunities for the co-location of mental health services in community facilities, especially those that include youth services.

Emergency services

- Continue to liaise with the respective state agencies to ensure services are sufficient for increasing population.

Justice

- Liaise with Court Services Victoria and legal aid services to further understand service demands and opportunities to deliver additional local services through council community infrastructure.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project background

Alpine Shire's population is growing, and its demographic profile is changing. Following the development of the Alpine Shire Land Development Strategy 2023 (LDS), Alpine Shire Council (Council) have continued to progress strategic, long-term planning to address the residential, commercial, and employment needs of Alpine Shire (the Shire) through 2041, while also safeguarding the natural environment.

Planning for community infrastructure is a key component of successful planning for positive growth and development outcomes. Council owns and operates a significant amount of community infrastructure across the municipality. To ensure the future population has access to the services and infrastructure required, Council requires a strong evidence base to understand the role, need and future provision of community infrastructure required.

1.2 Purpose

Council has commissioned SGS Economics and Planning (SGS) to develop the Alpine Shire Community Infrastructure Needs Assessment (CINA). With input from key stakeholders, it identifies opportunities for each community infrastructure type across the Shire and within the townships of Bright, Porepunkah, Myrtleford, and Mount Beauty.

The objectives of the CINA are to:

- identify relevant trends and drivers of demand for community infrastructure in Alpine Shire
- provide a detailed assessment of the performance of existing Council facilities
- determine need for each infrastructure type using industry-standard provision benchmarks
- reflect community (user) interests and aspirations for local facilities and services
- identify opportunities for improved service/facility models that reflect industry best practice and are more impactful and cost-effective
- provide township-based recommendations to inform future detailed structure planning.

The outcomes of this project will be used to inform future capital works programs, strategic planning, service planning, advocacy, and future partnerships.

1.3 Community infrastructure definition & scope

Community infrastructure can be broadly defined as the:

Spaces and activities through which people socialise, learn, recreate, create, and celebrate culture. It is the sum of 'hard' infrastructure (buildings) and 'soft' infrastructure (services and programs).

The assessment focusses on Council-owned facilities but also considers the role of other providers in the infrastructure network, including state government and the private and not-for-profit sectors.

Community infrastructure within the scope of this assessment includes:

- Community health
- Culture and tourism
- Early years
- Education
- Emergency & Justice
- Libraries
- Multi-purpose community spaces
- Seniors and aged care facilities
- Sport and recreation

1.4 Community infrastructure assessment methodology

The community infrastructure needs assessment methodology includes three stages, inputs and assumptions, community needs assessment, and specific recommendations (Table 1).

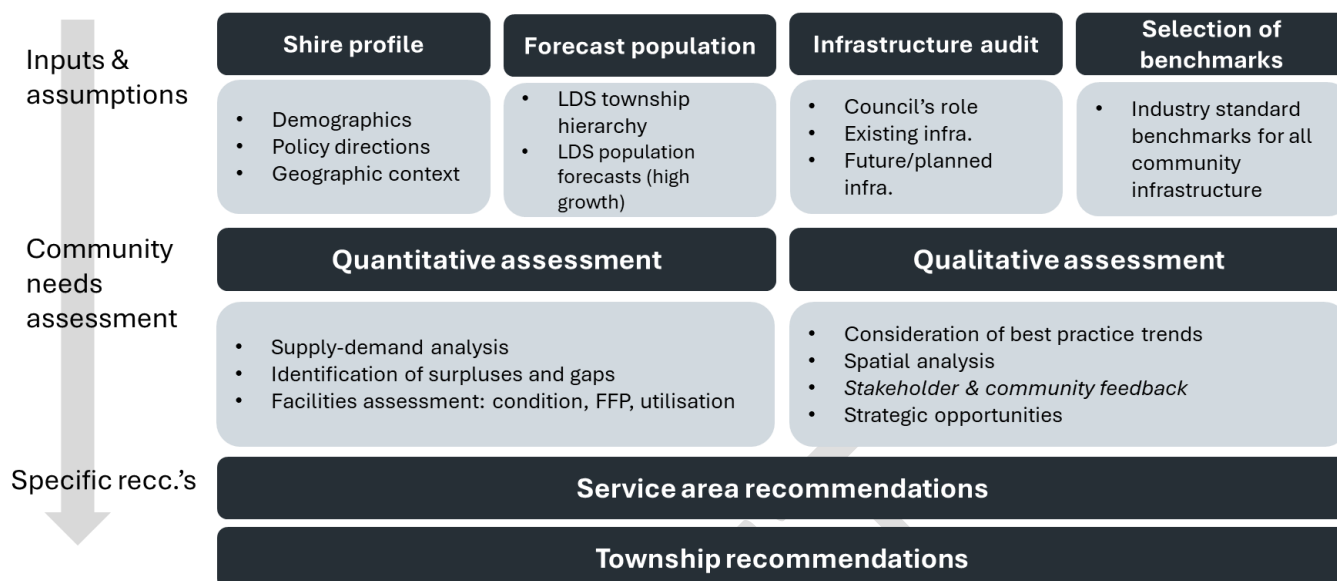
The first stage includes gathering quantitative data relating to population and infrastructure, and the selection of industry standard community infrastructure benchmarks.

The second stage undertakes a quantitative supply and demand of community infrastructure based on the benchmarks and key data inputs.

A qualitative assessment is then applied to understand best practice and emerging trends regarding service delivery, specific considerations in each community, and feedback from stakeholders and community.

Taken together, these inputs provide an evidence and decision-making basis for opportunities at the service area and township levels.

Table 1. Community services and infrastructure methodology



2. Strategic context

2.1 Summary policy review

State-level policy sets the overarching directions for future growth and planning for communities, which local policies and plans build on, establishing local visions and priorities.

Within community infrastructure, state level policy articulates the high-level challenges and opportunities regarding community infrastructure, while municipal policy offers insights and directions more specific to Alpine Shire.

Common across all is a recognition of the key role that community infrastructure provides in improving community wellbeing, the ongoing funding challenges faced by local governments, the unique spatial challenges faced by regional governments, and recognition of the utility and efficiency of flexible and multifunctional facilities.

Documents reviewed are outlined in Table 2. A summary of each level of planning is provided in the following section, with a detailed review at Appendix A.

Table 2: Policy documents reviewed

State policy	Municipal strategic policy	Masterplans
- Victoria's Infrastructure Strategy (2021-2051) - Plan Melbourne (2017-2050) and relevant updates from the newly released Plan for Victoria	- Alpine Shire Land Development Strategy (2023) - Alpine Shire Economic Development Strategy (2021) - Alpine Shire Sport and Active Recreation Plan (2022-2033) - Alpine Shire Events Strategy (2021) - Alpine Shire Youth Strategy (2022-2024) - Alpine Shire Access and Inclusion Plan (2021-2024) - Alpine Shire Asset Plan (2022-2032) - Creative Workers in the Alpine Shire – Preliminary Arts Audit (2024) - Alpine Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2021-2024	- Pioneer Park masterplan - Mount Beauty masterplan - Myrtleford - RC McNamara masterplan - Myrtleford - Memorial Park masterplan - Myrtleford - Jubilee Park masterplan - Myrtleford - Cundy Park masterplan - Myrtleford Recreation Reserve masterplan

Note: The existing Alpine Shire Community Vision 2040 & Council Plan 2021-25 (incl. Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) is currently being updated as the Council Plan 2025-29.

State-level directions

The recently released *Plan for Victoria* provides the overarching planning direction for metropolitan Melbourne and the regions. This was released in 2025, and supersedes both Plan Melbourne 2050 and the 12 Regional Growth Plans. The pillars by which the Plan is organised are:

- Self-determination and caring for Country
- Housing for all Victorians
- Accessible jobs and services
- Sustainable environments
- Great places, suburbs and towns

Under the ‘accessible jobs and services’ pillar, there is a commitment to ensuring ‘communities have the public transport, facilities and services they need to lead healthy, productive lives, including schools and kindergartens, TAFEs, emergency services, health care, active transport and open space.’ Beyond this, the Plan does not make any specific commitments or actions relevant to community infrastructure provision in the regions.

Infrastructure Victoria continues to provide advice on the state’s community infrastructure needs. Regional Victoria was a key focus area for *Victoria’s Infrastructure Strategy (2021-2051)*, acknowledging:

- Unique growth pressures
- Limited budgets
- The tyranny of distance that limits access to services.

The Strategy recommends:

- Delivering multipurpose shared social service facilities in the regions
- Updating existing community infrastructure (to address the poor fitness for purpose and condition of existing facilities)
- Creating climate-adapted facilities for rural communities
- Building regional residential alcohol and drug rehabilitation facilities
- Funding more Youth Foyers in regional Victoria

This strategy is currently being refreshed with the draft strategy (Victoria’s Draft 30 Year Infrastructure Strategy) currently on public exhibition. The draft has a reduced focus on community infrastructure in regional/rural areas, and limited implications for the CINA.

Municipal directions

There are many Alpine Shire Council policies and plans that set out standards, directions, and actions for community infrastructure or Council service delivery. Collectively these documents articulate a municipality that is growing with changing demographics and needs, existing infrastructure that is ageing, the importance of utilising existing infrastructure more effectively, providing inclusive spaces for all ages and abilities, and ensuring infrastructure is financial sustainable.

Each of the key documents are summarised below.

Document	Implications for community infrastructure
Alpine Shire Land Development Strategy (2023)	Defines the township hierarchy of Bright, Myrtleford and Mount Beauty-Tawonga South as the Shire's 'service towns', and Porepunkah as an 'emerging service town'. Growth, including that of community infrastructure, should be directed to safe, suitable and well serviced locations within these locations. Other considerations are an ageing population and the desire to minimise the need to travel to access services.
Alpine Shire Economic Development Strategy (2021)	Calls for enhanced liveability and resident attraction through a focus on improving amenity within the 'service towns'. A focus is on responding to the needs of an ageing population (aged care, health care and social assistance) without losing sight of the quality of service to smaller centres. Despite the ageing population, there is prioritise amenity improvements and address labour shortfalls to attract younger people, including families.
Alpine Shire Sport and Recreation Plan (2022-2033)	Highlights the opportunities for making use of school facilities and improving existing assets to increase their capacity/use. The Plan argues for a focus on improving existing assets rather than providing new ones.
Alpine Shire Events Strategy (2021)	Points to the importance of library and arts and culture facilities to support both local and tourist needs, and a need for improved events space to grow the tourism industry. It notes the lack of a contemporary indoor venue that can be used year-round.
Alpine Shire Access and Inclusion Plan (2021-2024)	Highlights the role of community infrastructure (buildings, services, and programs) in creating inclusive communities especially for people with a disability.
Alpine Shire Asset Plan (2022-2032)	An ageing population and ageing infrastructure, with the increasing cost of providing services are identified as the main challenges. Ensuring that assets are suitable for needs and are able to be maintained within achievable budgets are key.

2.2 Service reforms

The delivery of community infrastructure is in response to service needs, i.e. the physical location and building/space for providing services. Given this, community infrastructure needs to respond to changes in the service sector. There have been three key reforms to services (kindergarten, disability, aged care) over the last 10 years which has shifting the demand and role of community infrastructure and service delivery. These are further outlined below.

Best Start, Best Life Kindergarten

The Victorian Government are investing \$14 billion into a range of initiatives over the next decade as part of the Best Start, Best Life Reform.¹ This reform was announced to assist families financially, support women in returning to the workforce, and to provide children with an enhanced start to life. The initiatives under this reform, which is currently being rolled out and be fully operational by 2036, includes:

- **Free Kindergarten:** kindergarten will be free for three and four-year-old children in participating services across the state. This will save up to \$2,500 per child, per year.
- **Three-Year-Old Kindergarten:** funded three-year-old kindergarten was announced as part of the state's 2020-21 budget and is being delivered in stages – initially focusing on rural and regional Victoria. Three-year-old kindergarten will continue to roll out across the state – increasing from a minimum of five hours per week (currently) to 15 hours per week by 2029. Timing of the roll-out varies, based on individual centre capacity.
- **Pre-Prep:** over the next decade, four-year-old kindergarten will transition to 'Pre-Prep' – increasing from a 15-hour to a 30-hour per week statewide program of play-based learning for four-year-old children by 2036.

The roll out of the pre-prep program is staged, starting in 2025. The roll out will begin in Alpine Shire Council in 2027 with funding for up to 20 hours, up to 25 hours in 2029, and up to the full 30 hours from 2031 (Table 3).

Table 3: Best Start, Best Life roll out for pre-prep in Alpine Shire (4-year-old Kindergarten)

Year	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031+
Alpine Shire	15hrs	15hrs	20hrs	20hrs	25hrs	25hrs	30hrs

Source: State Government of Victoria (2024)

¹ Victoria Government 2023 *The Best Start, Best Life reforms*, <https://www.vic.gov.au/best-start-best-life-reforms>

- **Early Learning Centres:** state government have committed to providing 50 government-owned and operated early learning centres by 2032. Some of these are planned for regional areas, but none in Alpine Shire.
- **Kindergarten infrastructure:** the State Government has a range of funding streams through Building Blocks Grants to investment in kindergarten infrastructure across the state, including new kindergarten establishments on or in proximity to existing school sites (see next section for more detail).
- **Kindergarten workforce:** increased investment to attract, upskill and retain early childhood teachers and educators – such as scholarships, incentives, traineeships, and career advancement programs.

To support the delivery of these reforms, the State Government is working with each council to develop a Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) that calculates unmet demand for kindergarten places through to 2032. Alpine's KISP was being finalised concurrently with this needs assessment at the time of writing this report. Draft results indicate that there will be unmet demand for kindergarten services in Myrtleford by 2027.

NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was first introduced in 2013 as a joint program between the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments to better support Australians. By 2020 full rollout had occurred, and this replaced many old programs and ways of delivering services, including some provided by local government.

Individualised disability services are instead provided by NDIS partner organisations such as Alpine Health, and Council plays a supporting role by:

- providing information on available services on the Council website (Community Resource Guide)
- engaging directly with advocacy groups
- providing community grants for people with disability and disability organisations

Aged care

Aged care in Australia has been undergoing reform following the Aged Care and Other Legislation Amendment (Royal Commission Response) Act 2022, with a range of new measures intended to improve accountability and transparency in the industry for better care and safety of older Australians. These include funding reforms, increased governance, accountability and reporting requirements for providers, increased information sharing between providers and government, and additional oversight of health care pricing and costing.

Many local governments were providing aged care services such as in-home care, respite, social support, and to a lesser extent residential aged care. With the changes in reform many councils have grappled with their ongoing role in the sector. Most metropolitan councils have since retracted from direct service delivery, leaving this to the private market. In rural and regional areas with thinner service

markets however, this has not always been an option. In 2021 the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) summarises the risks for councils resulting from the reform as:²

- “New responsibilities, requirements and obligations
- Their capacity, capability and interest to operate in an intensifying market-driven, competitive environment with consideration for competitive neutrality policy,
- Alignment with councils' roles and responsibilities under the Local Government Act (Vic) 2020 and, by extension, how LG provides an integrated policy, planning and program approach for older residents.”

Similar to disability services, Alpine Shire Council relies on the private and not for profit sector to deliver aged care services. Council plays a supporting role with information and contacts for local services provided through its New Residents Guide and online Community Resource Guide.

² Municipal Association of Victoria (2021), *Commonwealth Aged Care Reforms: Analysis and Considerations for Victorian Councils*, p.4

3. Trends in community infrastructure

The following section provides an overview of the importance of community infrastructure, best practice principles and considerations for the Alpine Shire context.

3.1 Community infrastructure and the role of local government

Community infrastructure is critical for supporting community health and wellbeing, building community connections, and social inclusion.

Research indicates that every dollar invested in public libraries generates \$4.30 in benefits, which include the facilitation of career development, social interaction, improved local amenity and health, and other benefits for both users and non-users.³

Similarly, Neighbourhood Houses across Victoria have contributed over \$737 million in value to communities, with the largest contribution being improved quality of life through social connection.⁴ That community value equated to \$22.05 for every \$1 in funding.⁵

Investment in community infrastructure therefore generates significant returns and plays a critical role in mitigating health issues and other social issues that would otherwise require a more acute, costly response.

While the benefits are clear, community infrastructure and service delivery can be costly. Given this, it is important to understand the range of stakeholders that can be involved. This includes local government, state government, Not-For-Profit/community sector, and the private sector. Each stakeholder can take on a range of roles in relation to community infrastructure – from a more passive role, such as researcher or advocate, to more active roles such as directly providing or delivering a facility or service. In a successful infrastructure network, a mix of formal and informal partnerships are also at play between these providers, where one provides funding, information, or other in-kind support to another to provide what they cannot.

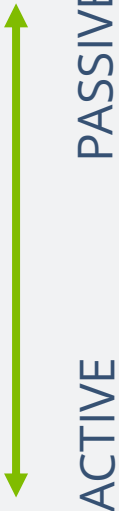
Table 4 provides an overview of the types of roles that local government can have in the delivery and servicing of community infrastructure.

³ SGS Economics and Planning (2018), *LIBRARIES WORK! The socio-economic value of public libraries to Victorians*

⁴ Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (2019), *Victoria's Neighbourhood Houses: Whole of Sector Value in 2019*

⁵ *ibid*

Table 4. Roles in the delivery and servicing of community infrastructure

Active vs passive role	Local governments roles
	Researcher and advocate – undertake assessments and other analysis, advocate on behalf of the community to other tiers of government and the private sector, in place of or alongside having a more active role.
	Promoter/enabler – provide funds or assistance/support to organisations to access grants, establish governance structures and systems, and achieve other outcomes.
	Partner – work closely with the private sector, community groups, agencies, and service providers to coordinate planning, funding/delivery and operation of infrastructure
	Provider/developer – active involvement as an investor, developer, landlord and/or service provider.

Alpine Shire Council takes a leading role in providing library, culture and tourism, early years, multipurpose community spaces, and youth infrastructure and services. Services where another sector leads (e.g. emergency and justice, education, health), Council has a more supporting role in advocacy and promotion to secure good community outcomes. Table 5 provides a summary of these roles.

Table 5: Role of Council across service types

Service type	Provider - infrastructure	Provider - service	Partner	Promoter/enabler	Researcher/advocate
Community health				X	X
Culture and tourism	X	X	X	X	X
Early years	X	(MCH only)	X	X	X
Education					X
Emergency & Justice				X	X
Libraries	X	X	X	X	X
Multipurpose community spaces	X	X	X	X	X
Seniors and aged care	X			X	X
Young people	X	X	X	X	X

3.2 Improving access in rural and regional settings

Rural and regional communities are lower in density and typically have limited public transport and a high reliance on private vehicles to travel longer distances. In these areas, community services can also be more costly to deliver, with lower returns on investment due to a lower population and utilisation rate.⁶

While the benefits of providing community infrastructure and services is clear, providers need to balance equitable access for all community members with service viability. For these reasons, some regional communities face poorer access to some services, which can directly impact quality of life and wellbeing.

State policies recognise this, and there are some grants/ funds targeting regional areas to help address these challenges, including:

- **Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund** supports regional and rural communities with funding support for indoor stadiums and aquatic facilities, facilities for women and girls, community facilities and all abilities infrastructure.
- **Multicultural Community Infrastructure Fund** supports Victoria's multicultural community organisations to upgrade, renovate, extend or construct new multicultural community infrastructure, and is currently prioritising applications from communities in regional Victoria.
- **Growing Regions Program** provides funding to local governments and not-for-profits for capital works that deliver community and economic infrastructure projects across regional and rural Australia. The program offers funding from \$500,000 to \$15 million, with a total of \$600 million. Committed by the Australian Government over four years.⁷ Successful projects in Victoria from the first two rounds have included community wellbeing hubs, multipurpose and emergency relief centres, civic precincts, libraries and learning centres, and urban realm upgrades. Guidance on the next stage of funding for 2025 has not yet been published.

3.3 Planning inclusive community infrastructure

Just as providing safe and inclusive streets for cyclists and pedestrians benefits all users, so too does planning for the needs of women and gender-diverse people, First Nations peoples, and other historically marginalised groups when considering community infrastructure. In more recent years, this inclusive perspective on whose needs are accounted for when designing and providing public assets has been expanded through the lens of intersectionality, recognising the overlapping experiences of inequalities based not only on gender identity, but also race, age, class, sexual identity, religion, or disability status.⁸

⁶ Infrastructure Australia (2019), *Small towns, rural and remote areas*, <https://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-08/Audit%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Small%20Towns%2C%20Rural%20and%20Remote.pdf>

⁷ Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (ND), Growing Regions Program, <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regional-australia/regional-and-community-programs/growing-regions-program>

⁸ UN Women (2020), Intersectional feminism: what it means and why it matters right now, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/explainer-intersectional-feminism-what-it-means-and-why-it-matters>

Victoria's Infrastructure Strategy (2021-2051) includes a recommendation to work with Aboriginal Victorians to develop a plan to guide investment in Aboriginal community-controlled infrastructure. More broadly, the development of community infrastructure should recognise the valuable experience and perspectives of First Nations peoples, actively considering their needs but also seeking opportunities to support capacity building for leadership and inclusion within this space.

More generally, to ensure that community facilities reflect the needs of the entire community, more inclusive planning practices should consider the following principles:⁹

- Talk to the experts (users of the space)
- Engage everyone equally
- Ensure taking part and contributing is accessible
- Inclusive planning benefits everyone
- The benefits are far-reaching - public spaces and facilities can be inclusive and accommodate lots of people
- Recognise the historical significance of LGBTQ+ venues and support them to thrive
- Councils have a role in championing inclusive spaces
- Recognise where interests and needs of constituents align
- Recognise where specific support and policies are needed

This was not always done successfully in past, and the outcomes are damning. For example, many sports pavilions have facilities only to accommodate male clubs, and childcare was not as consistently provided and subsidised. The consequences of this are harmful, and both direct (historical exclusion from some public spaces and activities) and indirect (barriers to entering the workforce).

3.4 More than the sum of the parts – community hubs

Just as economies benefit from the principle of agglomeration, community facilities and services benefit from being located together.¹⁰ Community hubs are the sum of elements like place, function, social networks, and relationships that are activated in a collective community space.¹¹ Community members benefit from having access to multiple services without the need to visit multiple locations and can connect with a wide range of other people and activities. It can benefit services providers through shared resources that result in cost efficiencies, easy access to the knowledge, support, and referrals of other professionals,¹² and even increased opportunity for innovation and flexibility.¹³

⁹ Honeybul, L (2024), Building better: inclusive planning to create spaces for everyone, LGiU, <https://lgiu.org/briefing/building-better-inclusive-planning-to-create-spaces-for-everyone/>

¹⁰ Premier's Community Hubs Framework Advisory Group (2015), Building the evidence base: the foundation for a strong community hub, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/building-evidence-base-foundation-strong-community-hub>

¹¹ City of Greater Dandenong (2021), Community Hubs Framework, <https://www.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/community-hubs-framework>

¹² City of Yarra (2016), Strategic Community Infrastructure Framework Context Paper, <https://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/-/media/files/ycc/the-area/yarras-future/strategic-community-infrastructure-framework.pdf>

¹³ McShane I (2022), Rethinking community hubs: community facilities as critical infrastructure, *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, vol 54, pp. 1-6, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2022.101149>

At the local level, community hubs are regarded as an essential tool for service delivery, place-making and social interaction for all community members, especially those most vulnerable.¹⁴ Hubs play a vital role in building up social capital and community resilience through the delivery of services that provide education, skill development, access to resources, and connection to others.

Community hubs can offer a diversity of spaces that can draw in people with different needs at different stages of life. These spaces can include formal spaces that support specific community services like health and learning opportunities, ‘third places’ like libraries and cafes, ‘bumping places’ that offer incidental interaction like indoor or outdoor gallery spaces, ‘ephemeral spaces’ that are temporary and invite renewed interest over time like pop-up spaces and festivals, and even online and hybrid spaces to connect people across a broader range of time and space.¹⁵

A thorough review of the evidence of the value of community hubs based on international best practice case studies¹⁶ summarised the benefits of community hubs as:

- a strong social return on investment
- the opportunity for integrated service delivery to meet concurrent needs for more effective interventions and impacts
- a model that is flexible, multi-purpose and adaptable
- a driver of placemaking and community building
- the leveraging of partnerships
- providing a ‘local’ response to need that is accessible and adaptable
- an ability to reduce stigmatization associated with some single-purpose facilities

Anchor institutions such as libraries, schools, and healthcare organisations are important cornerstones of community hubs.¹⁷ Libraries in particular act as effective anchors, as they are a truly public and neutral place for all community members that can facilitate a broad range of opportunities for sociality, community cohesion, support and learning across a broad range of groups.¹⁸

Transitioning to a hub model in more communities means that some consolidation of services and groups/activities operating at traditional standalone, single-use sites is required. This is a gradual process that should ensure opportunities are realised before any facilities are decommissioned.

¹⁴ City of Greater Dandenong (2021), *Community Hubs Framework*. <https://www.greaterdandenong.vic.gov.au/community-hubs-framework>

¹⁵ Karg, A., De Cotta, T., Farmer, J., Aryani, A., Knox, J., Adler, V., & Kamstra, P. (2021). *Infrastructure for Social Connection*, Swinburne Social Innovation Research Institute.

¹⁶ Premier’s Community Hubs Framework Advisory Group (2015), *Building the evidence base: the foundation for a strong community hub*, <https://www.ontario.ca/page/building-evidence-base-foundation-strong-community-hub>

¹⁷ Mersand S, Gascó M, Udoh E, Gil-García JR (2019), *Public Libraries as Anchor Institutions in Smart Communities: Current Practices and Future Development*, Conference: Proceedings of the 52nd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, DOI:10.24251/HICSS.2019.399, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330204810_Public_Libraries_as_Anchor_Institutions_in_Smart_Communities_Current_Practices_and_Future_Development

¹⁸ Schloffel-Armstrong S (2023), *The public library and the futures of social infrastructure*, *Dialogues in Human Geography*, issue 0, no. 0, pp. 1-5.

3.5 Partnerships for collective impact and increased utilisation

With challenging financial settings facing community infrastructure, partnerships are widely seen as an increasingly beneficial and viable pathway for infrastructure and service delivery. Formal partnerships can fill gaps in skillsets and experience that councils are not positioned to provide and can fill a gap where informal relationships through community volunteering rates are decreasing.¹⁹ Partnership models vary – examples include joint use agreements (JUAs) where multiple providers agree to share a single space between their respective users, lease and license agreements where one provider allows another exclusive use of a facility or space, or integration/co-management of a facility where multiple providers collaborate for a seamless user experience.

To maximise the success of such arrangements for all partners and users, there needs to be strong alignment around the vision and operational goals and requirements of all parties, resulting in a collaborative design process from the start for new facilities and careful refurbishment of existing facilities.²⁰ Individual parties involved in multi-party projects that want to hold on tightly to ‘their way’ of doing business will not result in successful partnerships.

Though not without their own challenges, operational partnerships can also be beneficial for council, service delivery, and the community. The delivery and/or the operation of community facilities and services can be shared by a greater or lesser degree by council and other private or public partners, including state and federal government, community health providers, or a not-for-profit (NFP) organisation such as a Neighbourhood Houses or U3A.

It is not uncommon for community services and facilities to be located in state owned buildings and on state (or Commonwealth) owned land. While this is most common for emergency services, justice, and education, a wide range of other facilities and services in Alpine are on State or Commonwealth land including indoor and outdoor recreation, early years, community meeting spaces, and arts and cultural spaces.

State owned land presents opportunities for Council to form partnerships to reduce the costs associated with purchasing land and increases the number of sites to better locate services. While locating Council or community-managed services within State-owned facilities can present further opportunities to reduce the cost of facility development, there are risks around maintenance and renewal of non-Council owned facilities being neglected, or maintenance responsibility being passed to Council to manage. A further risk is that state owned land or facilities could be sold or redeveloped if the state desires, putting long-term service delivery at active facilities at risk.

Councils are now also working directly with Victoria School Building Authority (VSBA) for provision of Kindergartens on School Sites (KOSSs) and the provision of temporary modular facilities through Building Blocks grants. While there are clear benefits such as an efficient use of resources, faster delivery times, easy organisation for families with multiple children, and an easier transition from kindergarten to school, Councils need to consider the risks and trade-offs, such as saving on capital costs versus modular classrooms providing a shorter lifecycle, limited design responses to specific

¹⁹ Zhu, R., (2022), The Decline of Formal Volunteering in Australia (2001–2020): Insights from the HILDA Survey, https://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/wp-content/uploads/VRP_The-Dcline-of-Formal-Volunteering-in-Australia-2001–2020-Insights-from-the-HILDA-Survey.pdf

²⁰ Tordoff, D, Atkin J. (2023), Developing a School and Community Learning Hub: A Case Study from Regional Australia, in *Schools as Community Hubs - Building ‘More than a School’ for Community Benefit*, pp. 233-249, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-9972-7>

needs, their ability to be fit-for-purpose, and the potential for higher maintenance from these facilities over their lifespan.

Alpine Shire Council owns around a dozen facilities on State owned land across early years, sport and recreation, multi-purpose community spaces, and culture and tourism services. Of just over 50 facilities owned by the state or Commonwealth, all are managed by the community, privately, or by a state agency.

3.6 Schools as community infrastructure

There is increasing interest in making better use of schools as community hubs, both in research and by governments.²¹ Schools are community hubs when they engage with their social networks, outside partners, and make their facilities available to meet both community needs and improve student outcomes.²²

Miles et al.²³ propose a shift from thinking about schools in terms of what they can provide to thinking about their role in the broader integrated network of community infrastructure. A concern about safety and liability in society has motivated school design to effectively design out reciprocity and collaboration that are hallmarks of community hubs, which can be aided by bringing together school planning and community infrastructure planning, as well as collaboration between state and local government departments. Careful consideration of bespoke or retrofit facilities can accommodate core school activities with inclusive spaces for the broader community.²⁴ A better understanding of the existing and potential networks between schools and other community facilities can be a good start, as well as considering the physical links between them with safe and walkable connections for everyone including children.²⁵

The learning and development of children and young people is often still the focus of school-based hubs, with schools benefiting from partnerships with people and organisations external to the school, but they can also support collaboration to provide for the wellbeing of disadvantaged groups, culturally and linguistically diverse groups, new migrants and refugees, and even leadership and employment opportunities.²⁶ Schools as full-service hubs can offer a range of health (both mental and physical) and educational services both before and after school hours,²⁷ including social events such as visual and performing arts events.

²¹ Cleveland, B, Backhouse, S, Chandler, P, McShane, I, Clinton, JM, Newton, C (eds) (2023), *Schools as Community Hubs - Building 'More than a School' for Community Benefit*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-9972-7>

²² Colless, R; Cleveland, B; Backhouse, S; McShane, I; Clinton, J; Chandler, P; et al. (2022), *Sharing Schools, Building Communities: An e-book of the exhibition*. The University of Melbourne. Presentation. <https://doi.org/10.26188/20762230.v4>

²³ Miles, N, Cleveland, B, Philippa, C (2023), *School and Community Infrastructure Networks: What Might These Look Like?*, in *Schools as Community Hubs - Building 'More than a School' for Community Benefit*, pp. 97-112, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-9972-7>

²⁴ Building Connections (2023), *How to Hub Australia: Evidence and advice for policy makers, school leaders and designers involved in schools as community hubs*. The University of Melbourne. <https://doi.org/10.26188/21692492>

²⁵ Miles, N, Cleveland, B, Philippa, C (2023), *School and Community Infrastructure Networks: What Might These Look Like?*, in *Schools as Community Hubs - Building 'More than a School' for Community Benefit*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-9972-7>

²⁶ Teo, I., Mitchell, P., van der Kleij, F., & Dabrowski, A. (2022), *Schools as Community Hubs*. Literature Review. Australian Council for Educational Research, <https://doi.org/10.37517/978-1-74286-684-0>

²⁷ Teo, I., Mitchell, P., van der Kleij, F., & Dabrowski, A. (2022), *Schools as Community Hubs*. Literature Review. Australian Council for Educational Research, <https://doi.org/10.37517/978-1-74286-684-0>

Schools-as-community-hubs are not a one-size-fits-all venture, being shaped by the community they are situated within, and require engagement with the local community and the various organisations. Common starting points include early childhood education and care, allied health care, parent or community-focused classes and groups, and sport and recreation activities.²⁸ Doveton College (Doveton, VIC), Fraser Rise Community Precinct and Springside West Secondary College (Fraser Rise, VIC), and Hazel Glen College (Doreen, VIC) are three examples of very successful schools as community hubs.

The Victorian government encourages and provides policy guidance on community use of schools, which can be hired for occasional use, licenced for more regular use, or community JUAs where new school infrastructure is created or redeveloped.²⁹ However, under the current policy setting it is ultimately up to each school's leadership whether or not open space, theatres, or other non-classroom spaces will be accessible to the broader community, and how and when that access is granted. As such, school sites cannot consistently be relied upon to fill gaps in community infrastructure provision. According to analysis from Infrastructure Victoria, approximately two-thirds of government schools currently make their outdoor areas available for community use, but more is needed to support and incentivise schools' shared access.³⁰ The amount, and appropriateness of space that could be made available to the community also varies from site to site.

Moreover, while there is great potential for schools as community hubs, this is only a partial solution to the need for community infrastructure, and one with several limitations. Schools are places that are not accessible to everyone – one example being adults who disengaged from school before completion or did not have a good experience in school may not feel comfortable returning to one to seek out services and activities.

In Alpine there are both public and private schools with facilities including indoor courts/stadium (Bright P-12) and performing arts facilities (EMPAC at Marian College). Council should continue to pursue arrangements that promote community use of these facilities.

Partnerships with schools also go the other way with many Council facilities being regularly used by schools, such as the Bright Community Centre and The Auditorium in Mount Beauty for school exams.

3.7 Emerging role of technology

Rapid technological changes mean it can be hard for many, particularly those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage, to keep up with the latest advances. Community infrastructure (both indoor and outdoor spaces) is increasingly providing spaces and tools to support effective online working and learning. The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the importance of this infrastructure, with many relying on quality internet and conferencing equipment for their work, daily tasks, and socialising.

²⁸ Building Connections (2023). How to Hub Australia: Evidence and advice for policy makers, school leaders and designers involved in schools as community hubs. The University of Melbourne. <https://doi.org/10.26188/21692492>

²⁹ SchoolsVic (2022), Community Use of Schools – Community Joint Use Agreements, <https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/community-use-schools-community-joint-use-agreements/policy>

³⁰ Infrastructure Victoria (2024), Getting more from school grounds, <https://assets.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/assets/Getting-more-from-school-grounds-sharing-places-for-play-and-exercise.pdf>

In addition to this, community centres are having an online presence, delivering services online to support community members that might not be able to access the community centre and or are looking for alternative ways to engage. These shifts have re-emphasised the importance of tech-enabled spaces, particularly at multipurpose facilities.

The East Gippsland Library, for example, offers e-resources that allow users to remotely access and check-out ebooks, audiobooks, e-magazines, and other resources including online learner driver practice tests, digital literacy, and a range of essential skills.

Technology can also be used to extend access to community infrastructure. Libraries across Victoria have started to offer 24hr access so users can make use of tools, materials and study spaces around their own schedules. Once the facility is enabled, eligible users go through an induction process and are then given their own swipe card to access the facility at any time (see the case study in section 6.2 – Libraries).

3.8 Emergency management and community infrastructure

Council is a key member of the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC) and is responsible for aiding local emergency response agencies before, during and after an emergency, and in setting up, staffing and running Emergency Relief Centres (ERCs).

An ERC is a building or place that has been activated to support the immediate needs of those affected by or responding to an emergency, where particular facilities are chosen depending on the location and nature of the event. A new program (Strengthening Telecommunications Against Natural Disasters, or STAND) provides satellite internet in strategic locations across the Shire at existing ERCs. Similar to STAND, an expansion of the ERC concept to become localised resilience hubs more generally has been raised, with the idea that they provide not only essential services such as the internet, power, water and sewerage, and mobile phone reception, but also relief from the heat, showers, washing machines, and cooking facilities.

When residents and visitors of the Shire are unable to escape the effects of an emergency, they are directed towards a (bushfire) place of last resort (BPLR), of which there are eight across the Shire. Council is the lead agency for arranging emergency shelter and accommodation for displaced residents and visitors, coordinating volunteers, and for arranging psychosocial support in relief and recovery centres. Current ERC and BPLR locations are shown in Table 6.

Sites that also accommodate community facilities form the majority of these crucial BPLRs, and many will also be key resources for ongoing support, community connection, sharing of information, and recovery following a natural disaster event, especially if fit with solar and batteries.

Table 6: Locations of ERCs and BPLRs

Location	ERC	BPLR
Bright	- Bright Community Centre - Pioneer Park Pavilion (STAND site)	Pioneer Park Oval

Location	ERC	BPLR
Porepukah	-	Porepukah Hall and oval
Harrietville	Harrietville Community Hall (STAND site)	
Mount Beauty	- Mt. Beauty Community Centre (STAND site) - Mt. Beauty Swimming Pool & Sports Stadium (STAND site)	Mount Beauty Sports Stadium
Dederang	- Dederang Multipurpose Building - Dederang Golf Club - Dederang Memorial Hall (STAND site)	Dederang Memorial Hall
Myrtleford	- Myrtleford Sports Stadium (STAND site) - Myrtleford Senior Citizens Centre (STAND site)	RC McNamara Reserve oval
Dinner Plain	Dinner Plain Community Centre (STAND site)	
Tawonga	-	Refer to CFA or Alpine Shire website

Source: Alpine Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan (2024)

3.9 Tourism and community infrastructure

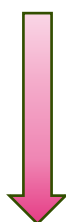
Tourism can make a positive contribution to a local economy and community through the generation of revenue that can be reinvested into the development, maintenance or expansion of community infrastructure and other Council services. It can, however, also put additional pressures on some local facilities where there will be surges in demand across seasons.

Impacted infrastructure

Some infrastructure types are not directly impacted, as visitors typically do not engage with services like allied health, childcare, youth services, or learning/education and training programs. Other services, however, do get used by visitors to the region.

Arts and cultural spaces, visitor information centres (VICs) parks and playgrounds, public toilets, and – to a lesser extent – libraries, are the community infrastructure assets that are most likely to be used by non-residents, whether they are briefly stopping on their way to another destination, or spending a few hours or days there.

- Toilets
- Parks and playgrounds
- Visitor information centres
- Libraries



Necessity / convenience / incidental visits
(stop, might stay)

Destinations (stay)

- Recreation facilities
- Arts and Cultural facilities

Where tourism is significant, community infrastructure can also formally include visitor information centres like those in Alpine Shire to provide both visitors and local industry with a useful point of contact for local knowledge.³¹ While in the past these have often been standalone facilities, they can be integrated with other community services. This is all the more relevant as more and more people are finding their information online.³² In addition, many of these centres are staffed by volunteers so the integration of other services can support in extending operating and staffed hours.

Challenges and opportunities with tourism and community infrastructure

Libraries are both a facility and a service which can respond to the visitor economy. They can serve the function of providing free WiFi and typical tourist information such as points of interest and accommodation, but also more in-depth information from a curated collection of a variety of media that reflects the local characteristics of the community (e.g., mountaineering, winter sports, Traditional Owners, local flora and fauna, historic development of the region, etc.), show collections of local artists, host talks and other events, and offer services for tourists passing through (café, souvenirs, etc.) or seeking refuge (inclement weather or a quiet place to take a break).³³

Library buildings are also often destinations in their own right, especially when developed with a striking design and/or placed in uncommon locations such as forests and beaches.³⁴ In Alpine Shire, visitor information centres and Museums are acting in this role currently, however there may be opportunities to consolidate these uses in future.

Public toilets play an underappreciated role in supporting the use of both public and private spaces,³⁵ with well-located and accessible public toilets often being the simple reason a traveller may end up in one stopover destination over another and contributing to the local economy by visiting other facilities while there.³⁶ The public toilets contribution to the local economy is recognised internationally with a category of ‘best economic contributor’ at the International Tourism Toilet Award.³⁷

Planning for mutual benefits

Many local governments that have a substantial tourism economy have begun to think strategically about how their assets can both support the additional demand from tourism and how to manage

³¹ Moreton Bay Regional Council (2015), Community Infrastructure Strategy 2012-2031; City of Onkaparinga (2021), City of Onkaparinga Strategic Asset Management Plan

³² Archer, D (2018), ‘Do your visitors still need a visitor centre? Use these 4 criteria to find out’, <https://destinationthink.com/blog/visitor-centre-4-criteria-can-help/>

³³ L, Yang and L, Xiaodong (2019), “Library + Tourism”: A New Direction for the Sustainable Development of Libraries. Paper presented at: IFLA WLIC 2019 - Athens, Greece - Libraries: dialogue for change in Session S09 - Management and Marketing. In: Recruiting and managing the new generation of employees to attract new markets and create new services, 22-23 August 2019, Pythagoreion, Samos, Greece.

³⁴ See: Seashore Library, <https://www.archdaily.com/638390/seashore-library-vector-architects>; Capsule Hotel, Bookstore and Library, <https://www.ateliertaoc.com/en/projects/>

³⁵ Webber, K, (2018), We Need to Talk About Public Toilets, The University of Queensland, <https://stories.uq.edu.au/policy-futures/2021/we-need-to-talk-about-public-toilets/index.html>

³⁶ Webster, L, (2022), Public toilet planning: an inconvenient imperative for local governments, LGiU, <https://lgiu.org/briefing/public-toilet-planning-an-inconvenient-imperative-for-local-governments/>

³⁷ <https://www.mytravelresearch.com/2021-international-toilet-tourism-awards-are-now-open/>

spikes in visitation across the year. Some have prepared strategies that go as far as to identifying the reciprocal relationship between community infrastructure and tourism. While the focus of these strategies is typically more on how infrastructure supports tourism than on how tourism impacts local infrastructure,³⁸ some strategies do point to the latter for infrastructure such as playspaces,³⁹ public open space, and toilets.⁴⁰

Some local government asset management plans evaluate their assets for funding priority and level of service via a priority classification score that includes 'tourism importance'.⁴¹ Kangaroo Island, in South Australia, currently experiences a 17% growth in their population during peak season. To support the significant income this generates, Council has an objective to service this seasonal demand, promoting the adaptive reuse of cultural and heritage buildings and ensuring reliable availability of telecommunications and data.⁴² Council's in other tourist destinations identify key public assets that include sporting and recreation reserves,⁴³ parks and playgrounds,⁴⁴ and arts and cultural facilities.⁴⁵

Alpine Shire is currently developing a tourism strategy that will address the use of visitor information centres and other tourism infrastructure.

³⁸ Bayside City Council (2013), Draft Bayside Tourism Strategy; Indigo Shire Council (2018), Indigo Shire Council Tourism Strategy; Mornington Peninsula; Macedon Ranges Shire Council (2018), Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-2028, Background Document

³⁹ Mornington Peninsula Shire (2015), Playspace Strategy 2015-2020

⁴⁰ Mornington Peninsula Shire (ND), Open Space Strategy – Volume 2

⁴¹ The Barossa Council (2021), Infrastructure Asset Management Plan 2020-2030; Southern Midlands Council (2024), Draft Southern Midlands Community Infrastructure Plan

⁴² State Planning Commission (2024), Kangaroo Island Regional Plan

⁴³ The Barossa Council (2021), Infrastructure Asset Management Plan 2020-2030

⁴⁴ Southern Midlands Council (2024), Draft Southern Midlands Community Infrastructure Plan

⁴⁵ Macedon Ranges Shire Council (2018), Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-2028: Background Document

4. The Alpine Shire community

4.1 Overview of Alpine Shire

The Alpine Shire is located approximately 300 kilometres north-east of Melbourne and 70 kilometres south of Albury-Wodonga, located within the North East Victoria Region and Central Hume sub-region. The municipality is a desirable location for residents and visitors due to its proximity to snowfields and mountains, wide range of food and wine outlets, and myriad recreational activities including hiking, camping, fishing, paragliding, mountain biking and snow sports.

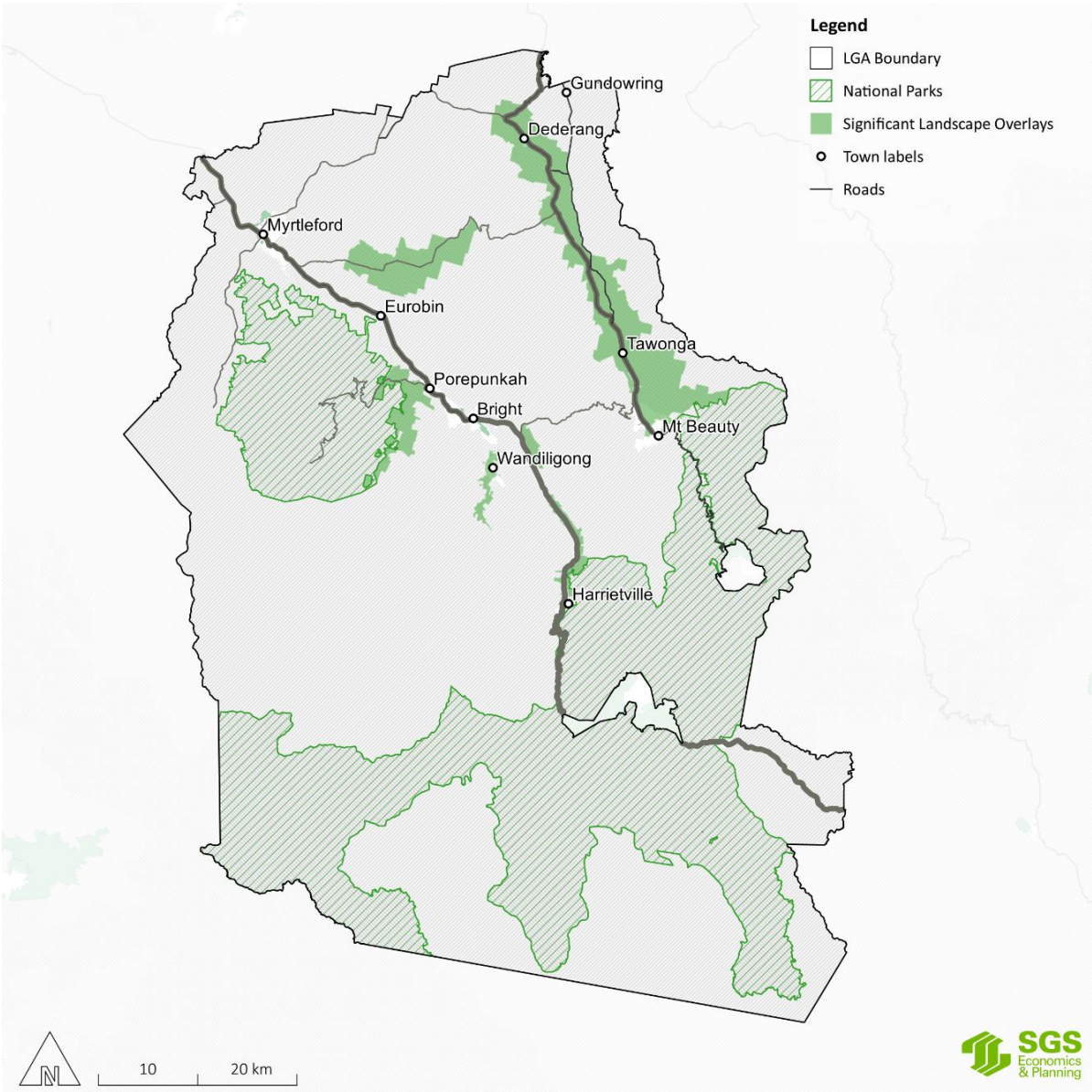
The largest towns are Bright, Myrtleford, Porepunkah and Mount Beauty-Tawonga South, with further settlements at Harrietville, Dederang and Tawonga, amongst others. Alpine Shire covers a large geographic area relative to its population. While most of the population is concentrated in these four townships, there are small residential populations elsewhere. In some instances, these locations are some distance between the townships with limited road networks.

Covering 4,790 square kilometres, approximately 92% of land is declared public land and containing parts of the Alpine National Park and all of Mount Buffalo National Park. The designated Alpine resorts of Falls Creek and Mount Hotham are located entirely within the Shire boundary (although not managed by Alpine Shire Council).

The Shire is situated on Dhudhuroa, Gunaikurnai, Taungurung, Waywurru and Yaitmathang Country.

Figure 1 depicts its key features.

Figure 1: Alpine Shire



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

4.2 Township hierarchy

The Alpine Shire LDS outlines the township hierarchy which reflects the existing and future roles of the settlements within the Shire. Each of Alpine's settlements is distinctive, offering a unique character, lifestyle, choice of housing, and services/facilities to the community. The roles of each of the Shire's settlements takes into consideration:

- Existing population size and number of dwellings.
- Extent of commercial activity and presence of defined commercial areas.
- Presence of community infrastructure, facilities and services.
- Land use zoning patterns.
- Local environmental features and exposure to natural hazards.
- Use for special-purpose activities.
- Infrastructure servicing including reticulated services.

Based on the hierarchy set out in the LDS Table 7, it is important that the four Service Towns are provided with, at a minimum, basic community infrastructure to meet local needs.

Table 7: Alpine Shire Township Hierarchy (Alpine Shire LDS)

Hierarchy	Locations	Role
Service Towns	▪ Bright ▪ Myrtleford ▪ Mount Beauty-Tawonga South ▪ Porepunkah (emerging)	Service towns are moderate to large sized towns containing commercial centres that provide a variety of housing and a moderate employment base. Service Towns provide a range of important community services and infrastructure, including health, education and sporting and recreation facilities, and are also popular visitor and retirement destinations. Growth in Service Towns will be supported by the provision of required development and community infrastructure which will be prioritised for delivery in Service Towns above other settlements. Porepunkah's emergence as a service town means it will no longer operate as a kind of dormitory suburb of Bright, and will require some local facilities and services alongside housing growth.
Rural Towns	▪ Dederang ▪ Harrietville ▪ Tawonga ▪ Wandiligong ▪ Dinner Plain (seasonal tourist town)	Most of the Rural Towns have limited urban zoned land with a variety of zones being applied including Township Zone, Low Density Residential Zone and Farming Zone. They accommodate small populations. Rural Towns have limited commercial and community facilities which is generally dispersed throughout the towns.
Small Settlements	▪ Freeburgh ▪ Ovens	Small Settlements represent areas of dispersed dwellings primarily on small lots within the Farming

Hierarchy	Locations	Role
		Zone. They function as quasi-rural residential areas with the pattern of residential development not reflecting the zoning and subdivision restrictions on the land. Small Settlements include very limited urban zoning, commercial activity, community facilities or reticulated services.
Rural Localities	- Barwidgee Creek - Buffalo River - Buckland Valley - Eurobin - Gapsted - Rosewhite - Smoko	Rural localities are areas with dispersed dwellings on medium to large Farming Zone lots (and in Buffalo River, Rural Living Zone). The exception is Bogong Village which is zoned Special Use Zone. They have no retail activity, community facilities or reticulated services.
Bogong Village	Bogong Village	Bogong Village has been functioning as a small settlement until recently, accommodating holiday houses and school camps and a general store. No future growth of Bogong Village is supported given the environmental risks (bushfire and erosion) and remoteness of the locality.

Source: Alpine Shire Land Development Strategy, prepared by SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

4.3 Shire community profile

While Alpine Shire covers a large geographical area, the residential population is relatively small, with approximately 13,000 residents in 2021.

Compared to the Victorian average, the typical Alpine Shire household is smaller and with fewer children. This is in alignment with the higher proportion of older residents, and the median age being 49, compared with 38 in Victoria. In addition there are fewer people born overseas or speaking a language other than English living in the Shire compared to Victoria. A summary of key demographics is provided in Table 8.

Table 8: Alpine Shire Community Profile 2021

Indicator	Alpine Shire	Victoria
Total population (ERP)	13,235	6,548,040
Average household size (persons per dwelling)	2.3	2.52

Quantity of separate houses (dwellings structure)	93.3%	73.4%
Households with children	34.9%	45.5%
Lone person households	29.2%	25.9%
Median age (years)	49	38
Born overseas	22%	35%
Language other than English spoken at home	13.7%	32.8%
Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1%	1%
Low-income households (\$650 per week or less)	20.8%	16.4%
High income households (\$3,000 per week or more)	14.5%	24.2%
Year 12 or equivalent completed	38%	59.5%

Source: ABS Census (2021)

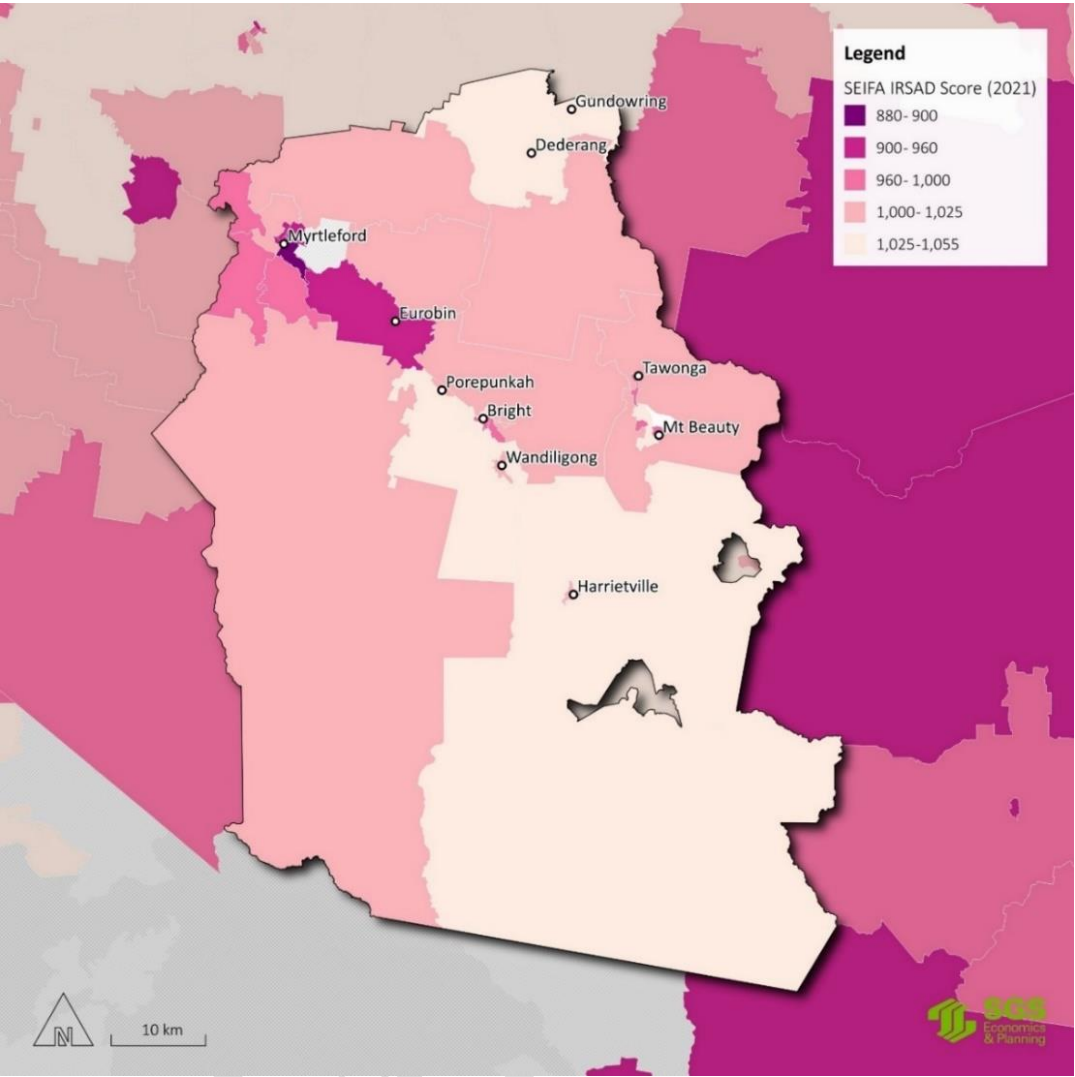
In addition to the above demographics, there are a suite of health challenges that impact the Alpine community at higher rates than the Victorian average, including:

- mental health issues
- obesity
- smoking
- alcohol consumption
- poor nutrition.⁴⁶

Across Alpine Shire there are significant disparities in the levels of advantage and disadvantage. The most disadvantaged areas of the Shire are in Myrtleford and surrounds, extending to the west, south, and east (including Eurobin) (Figure 2).

⁴⁶ Alpine Health (2023) *Alpine Health Service Plan 2023-2028*

Figure 2: SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage Scores (2021)



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

4.4 Key characteristics by township

As to be expected, there are variations across each township. Compared to the other service towns in Alpine, Porepunkah has a much higher proportion of people in the workforce, a much higher proportion of families with children, more parents or partners working, and more people who provided unpaid care for child/children.⁴⁷ These types of demographics could result in a higher demand of services such as early years. As illustrated in Figure 2, Myrtleford is the most disadvantaged of the four townships, followed by Mount Beauty. Table 9 highlights key indicators by township

Table 9: Select characteristics of service towns, ABS Census 2021

Indicator	Porepunkah	Bright	Myrtleford	Mount Beauty
Couple families with children	40.5%	32.7%	32.8%	28.3%
People in the labour force	65.8%	55.6%	54.1%	49.9%
Couple families both employed	54.9%	46.4%	47.0%	36.4%
Couple families one employed full time, one part time	47.9%	38.7%	39.9%	29.3%
People providing unpaid care for child/children	28.2%	21.1%	22.1%	22.4%
SEIFA – IRSD*	1,068 (9 th decile)	1,047 (7 th decile)	975 (3 rd decile)	998 (5 th decile)

Source: ABS Census (2021)

*The Index of Relative Social Disadvantage (IRSD) measures relative levels of disadvantage across Australia, where a higher score indicates less disadvantage.

4.5 Forecast population

To forecast growth to 2041, a **base case population growth scenario** was established under the LDS project, with adjustments to align the forecast with the recorded resident population from Census 2021, which was higher than what was forecast. The projected average annual growth rate (AAGR) under the latest state government forecasts was extended a further five years to 2041. The base case population scenario sees a population of 13,936 in 2041, growing by only 780 people from 2021.

The LDS also sets out an alternative **high population growth scenario**, which builds on the base case scenario discussed above. The high scenario takes account:

- Continuing uncertainty regarding population trends for regional areas over the long term.

⁴⁷ ABS Census data (2021)

- Aggregation of Centre for Population estimates of population growth for all of regional Victoria. Here, it is reasonable to assume that Alpine Shire might experience a longer running increase in population growth on average than other parts of the state.

This high growth scenario contains a COVID-19 growth uptick based on migration patterns around the time of the pandemic, then growth rates taper to pre-COVID rates (10-year average) after a 5-year period.

The scenarios outlined in Table 10 show an annual population growth of around 39 (base) and 137 (high) people respectively.

Table 10: Base and High Population Scenarios (2021-2041)

	2021	2026	2031	2036	2041	Change 2021-41	Av. Per Yr	AAGR
Base	13,156	13,357	13,555	13,744	13,936	780	39	0.3%
High	13,156	13,881	14,567	15,214	15,890	2,734	137	0.9%

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2024)

Table 11 displays the age profile of the Shire in 2041 at base and high growth scenarios, broken down into ten-year groups. In both scenarios, the largest quantity of residents are aged between 60-69 years of age. This reflects the Shire's relatively high (current) median age of 49.

Table 11: Base and High Scenario Age Profile (2041)

2041	Age Groups								
	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+
Base	1,294	1,429	1,190	1,499	1,812	1,875	1,915	1,689	1,233
High	1,476	1,629	1,356	1,710	2,066	2,137	2,184	1,926	1,406

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2024)

The high growth scenario has been adopted as an input to the community infrastructure demand assessment. This protects against underestimating the number of users of services and local facilities that might be required by 2041. That said, there is only a modest difference in total population between the scenarios; adoption of the base case scenario would not materially change the recommendations set out by this report.

5. Existing infrastructure assessment

This section provides a summary of the performance of existing community infrastructure across the Shire. This considers the type of infrastructure, the condition, how the infrastructure is supporting service delivery, and level of utilisation, and has informed the recommendations made for specific sites.

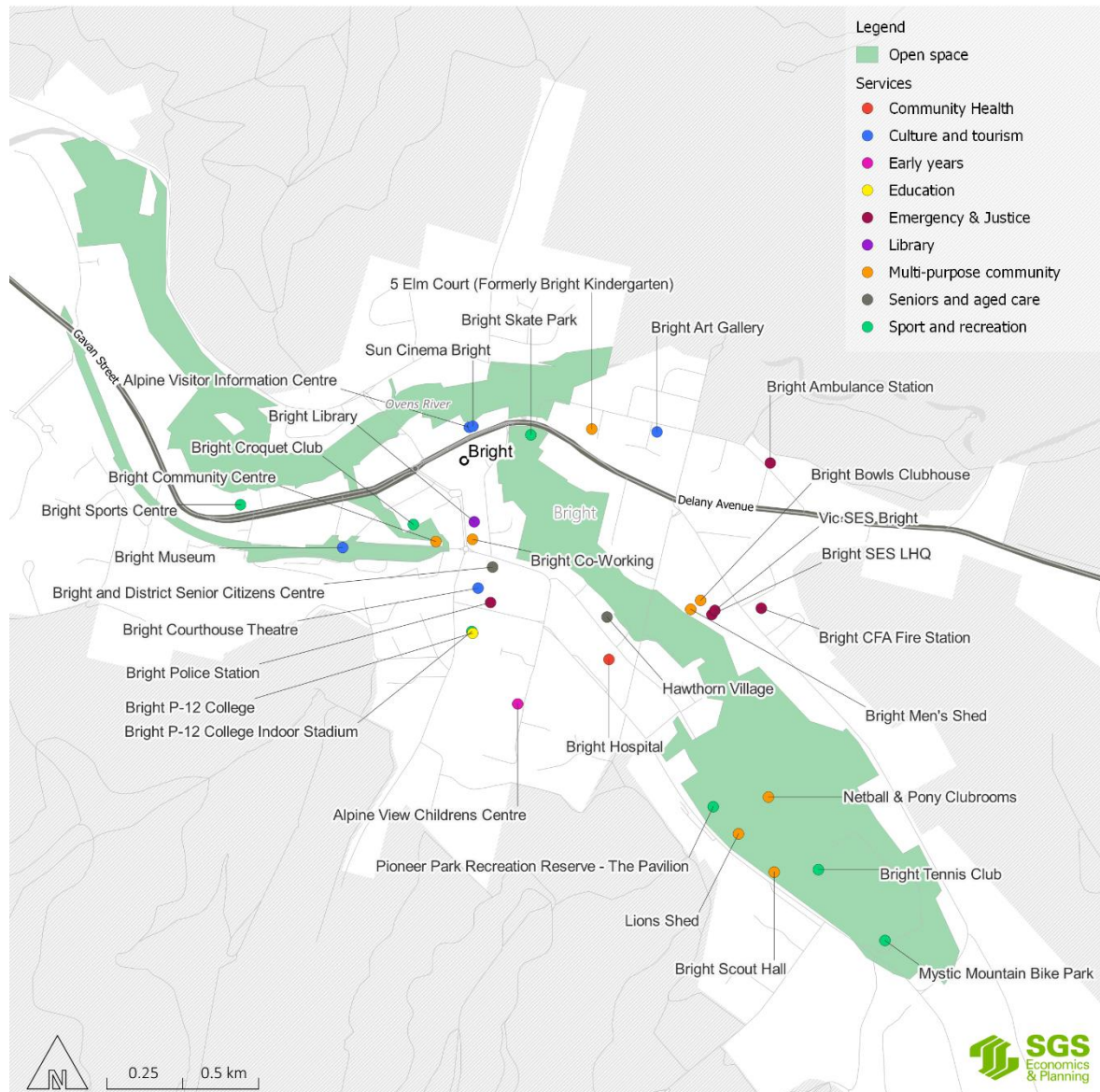
5.1 Type and distribution of community infrastructure

Alpine has a large number of community facilities, many of which are smaller and older stand-alone facilities. The following section provides an overview of community infrastructure across each of the main townships: Bright, Porepunkah, Myrtleford and Mount Beauty.

Bright

Bright has a diversity of community infrastructure distributed across the entire urban area (Figure 3). Many of these facilities are standalone with one service provider. A key consideration for Bright is how these services currently interact with one another, and opportunities for further integration.

Figure 3: Community infrastructure in Bright



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

Porepukah

The township of Porepukah has limited community facilities (Figure 4). This includes a primary school, community hall, recreation reserve, and fire station. A key consideration for Porepukah is how the existing infrastructure is working and if additional services are required to support the future population.

Figure 4: Community infrastructure in Porepukah

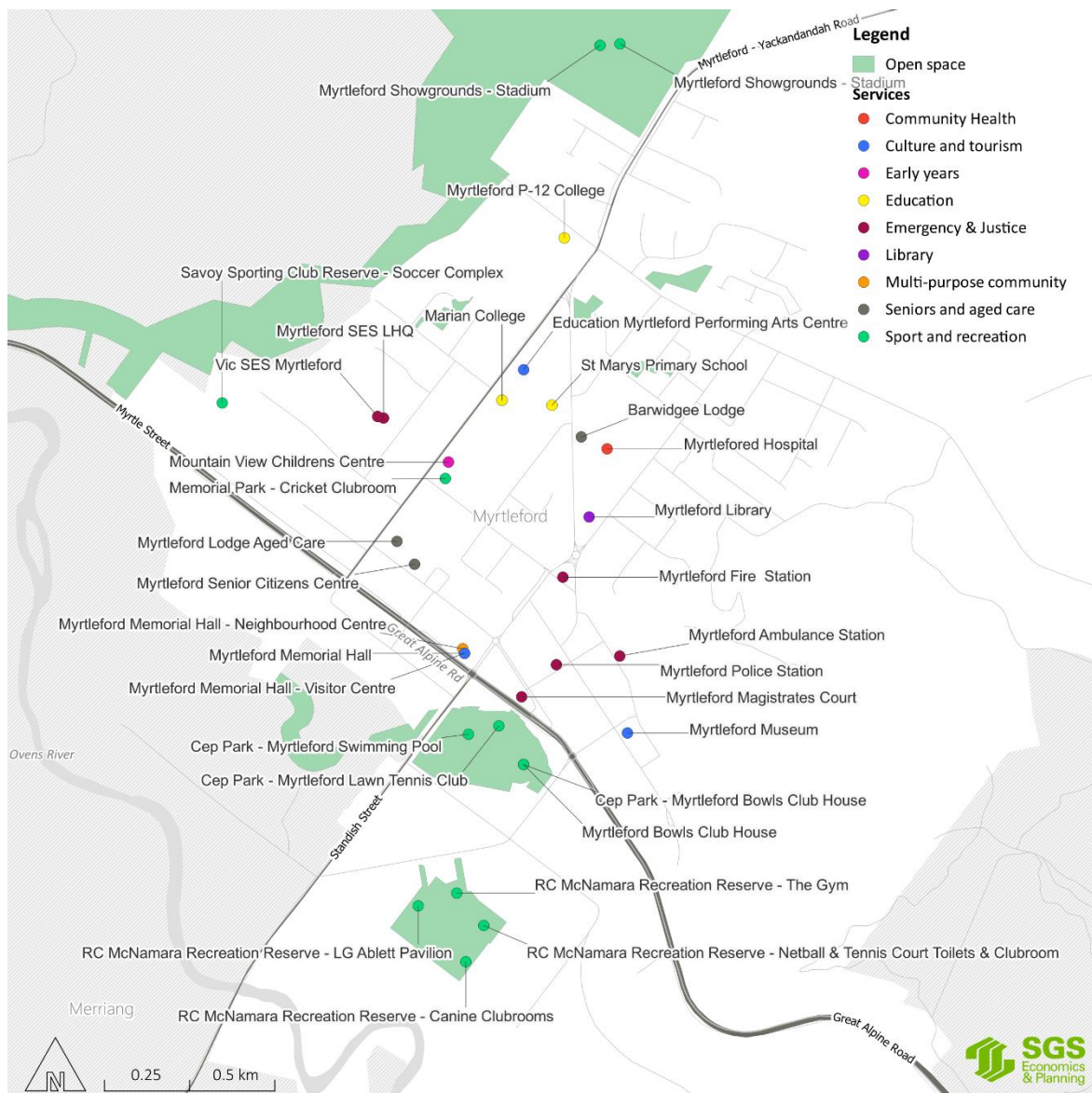


Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

Myrtleford

Similar to Bright, the township of Myrtleford has a diverse range of community facilities and services. There is a clustering of infrastructure across the township with sport and recreation facilities located towards the edges of the township to the north, south, and west. Schools are clustered towards the north, and seniors and aged care facilities are more centrally located. Myrtleford is also host to the Shire's only Court. As noted in the previous data, Myrtleford is where some of the largest vulnerabilities are across the Shire. This will be a key consideration within the assessment, along with the useability of the existing facilities.

Figure 5: Community infrastructure in Myrtleford

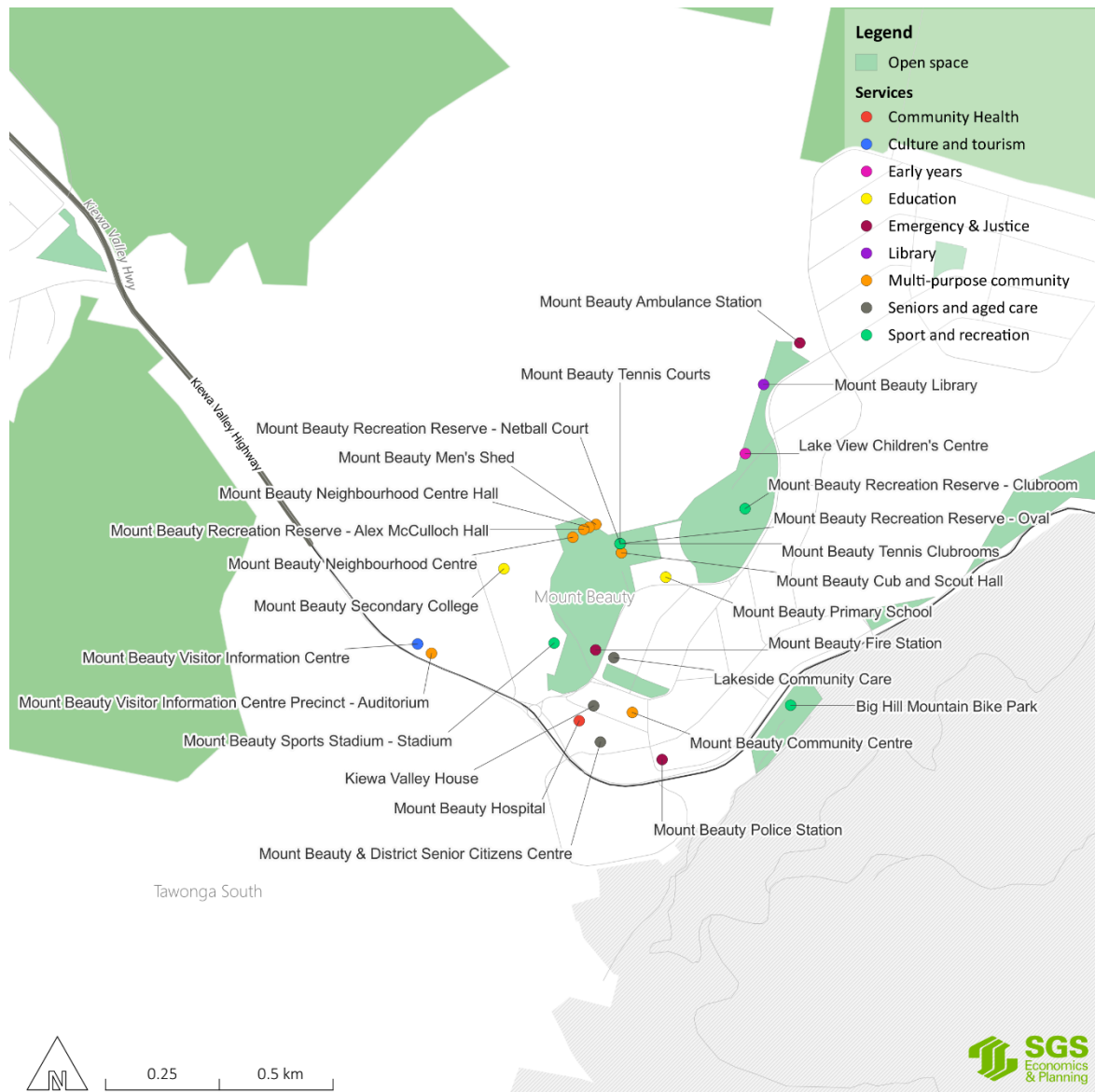


Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

Mount Beauty

The township of Mount Beauty, while its direct population is relatively small, it is a key service centre for the surrounding smaller settlements. The township has a diversity of community facilities. The facilities are distributed across the township, however there are clusters of community spaces and sport and recreation facilities located on the Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve, providing opportunities for colocation and integration.

Figure 6: Community infrastructure in Mount Beauty



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

5.2 Condition

Criteria & scoring

Facility condition has been provided by Council as part of their facilities audit undertaken in 2024. Council-issued scores for facility condition range from 1-7, with scoring provided for individual components of a building.

This scoring has been converted to a five-point scale for the purposes of this assessment, taking an average of the all-component scores provided for each building.

Criteria	Scoring	
Average score of the condition of individual components (e.g. roof)	1	Excellent condition
	...	...
	5	Poor condition

Results summary

The condition of the majority of facilities across the Shire is rated as average or better, however there are 17 facilities with a score of 5 (poor condition). As noted in Table 12, most of these facilities are located in the three largest service towns of Bright, Mount Beauty and Myrtleford. Many are multi-purpose community facilities (community ‘meeting spaces’) that are older, smaller, stand-alone facilities like clubrooms and halls. One facility – the Alex McCulloch Hall in Mount Beauty – is currently closed due to the severity of its condition.

The Tawonga Memorial Hall is currently under renovation and will reopen when completed. The St Albans Hall is somewhat isolated in Running Creek, some 10km south of Dederang, 18km north of Tawonga, and 40km to the east of Myrtleford.

Table 12: Facilities in poor condition

Facilities with condition scores of 5	Facility type	Location
5 Elm Court (Formerly Bright Kindergarten)	Multi-purpose community	Bright
Bright Museum – DEECA owned – Council not responsible for maintenance	Culture and tourism	Bright
Bright Skate Park	Sport and recreation	Bright
Gold Battery – Shed	Culture and tourism	Bright
Pioneer Park Recreation Reserve - Netball & Pony Clubrooms	Multi-purpose community	Bright
Mount Beauty & District Senior Citizens Centre	Seniors and aged care	Mount Beauty

Facilities with condition scores of 5	Facility type	Location
Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve - Alex McCulloch Hall (*currently closed)	Multi-purpose community	Mount Beauty
Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve – Clubroom	Multi-purpose community	Mount Beauty
Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve - Mount Beauty Cub and Scout Hall	Multi-purpose community	Mount Beauty
Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve - Mount Beauty Tennis Clubrooms	Multi-purpose community	Mount Beauty
RC McNamara Recreation Reserve - The Gym	Sport and recreation	Myrtleford
RC McNamara Recreation Reserve – Outdoor netball courts	Sport and recreation	Myrtleford
RC McNamara Recreation Reserve - Canine Clubrooms	Multi-purpose community	Myrtleford
RC McNamara Recreation Reserve - Oval	Sport and recreation	Myrtleford
Memorial Park – Cricket Clubroom	Multi-purpose community	Myrtleford
St Albans Community Hall	Multi-purpose community	Running Creek
Tawonga Memorial Hall (*currently being renovated)	Multi-purpose community	Tawonga

5.3 Fitness-for-purpose

Criteria & scoring

Fitness-for-purpose (FFP) relates to the functionality of facilities. It is about how well they are able to meet the needs of intended service or building users. An assessment was conducted to rate the FFP of each facility. FFP differs to the building condition audit which looks at the physical condition of built facilities and is assessed through regular audits carried out by specialist contractors.

FFP of a facility is judged across the five criteria set out in Table 13 below.

Table 13: Fitness-for-purpose criteria

Size and configuration	Is the overall size of the facility, and the size of individual rooms functional? Consider all space types including storage.
	Is the layout of spaces functional? Consider configuration, interconnectedness, ease of use and circulation
Design and fit out – Interior	Is the interior appearance and finish functional? Consider cleanliness, age, overall design, appliances, paint, fixtures and fittings.
	Are surfaces fit for purpose? Consider floors, walls, windows, doors
	Are utilities, systems, equipment and furniture functional? Consider electrical, lighting, heating, cooling, IT, plumbing, lifts etc.

Design and fit out - Exterior	Is the exterior appearance fit for purpose? Consider gardens, paths, sheds, outside lighting
Location and accessibility	Are users (including staff) able to easily access the building? Consider all abilities, genders, generations etc.
	Is the facility in the right location? Consider proximity to public transport, other services.
	Is there sufficient and suitable parking?
Safety	Does the facility provide a high level of personal safety for users, especially those who are alone, while using the facility?
	Is the facility safe to get to and from?

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

The FFP assessment has been undertaken by Council officers, and is evaluated on a value of 1-5, with 1 being the most fit-for-purpose and 5 being the least. This is further detailed in Table 14.

Table 14: Fit-for-purpose scoring

Score	Fitness for Purpose
1	Fully meets the service needs with no impact on service delivery
2	Minor impact on ability to deliver the required service
3	Moderate impact on ability to deliver the service
4	Severe impact- required service cannot be delivered
5	Unfit for use

Results summary

Most facilities across the Shire scored well for FFP, with an average overall score of 1.7. The scores are also similar across the different criteria, averaging 1.6-1.8. It should be noted that ratings are subjective and may reflect how services have adapted to the infrastructure, compared to their desired infrastructure set up.

Only three facilities earned a poor FFP score of 4 or higher, all of which are multi-purpose community facilities. These facilities are provided in Table 15.

Table 15: Facilities with poor FFP

Facilities with poor fit-for-purpose (scores of 4-5)	Facility type	Location
Pioneer Park Recreation Reserve - Netball & Pony Clubrooms	Multi-purpose community	Bright
Memorial Park - Cricket Clubroom	Multi-purpose community	Myrtleford
Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve - Alex McCulloch Hall (*currently closed)	Multi-purpose community	Mount Beauty

5.4 Utilisation

Criteria & scoring

The utilisation of each facility considers its current level of service and use (and therefore capacity). This is informed by the facility's opening/operational hours, activity levels within facilities, room bookings, and unmet demand. Utilisation may or may not be impacted by existing functionality or building issues. The utilisation assessment has been carried out by Council officers and is evaluated on a three-point scale of high, moderate and low.

Table 16: Utilisation scoring

Score	Utilisation
1	High utilisation (limited capacity for a higher level of use)
3	Moderate utilisation (some capacity for greater use)
5	Low utilisation (infrequently used, high capacity)

Results summary

There are only eight facilities that have poor utilisation as reported by Council, with an average overall score of 2.2 across all facilities. It should be noted that ratings are subjective and may reflect historical/current service standards rather than future.

Compared to the average score for FFP for facilities generally, the utilisation is slightly lower. As is the case for most facilities with poor condition and FFP scores, the majority of these facilities are multi-purpose community spaces ('meeting spaces'). A summary of these facilities are provided in Table 17.

Table 17: Facilities with lowest utilisation

Facilities with poor utilisation (scores of 5)	Facility type	Location
Bright Museum – DEECA owned – Council not responsible for maintenance.	Culture and tourism	Bright
Pioneer Park Recreation Reserve – Bright Scout Hall	Multi-purpose community	Bright
Gapsted Community Hall	Multi-purpose community	Gapstead
Mount Beauty Community Centre - Centre	Multi-purpose community	Mount Beauty
Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve - Alex McCulloch Hall	Multi-purpose community	Mount Beauty
Mount Beauty Sports Stadium - Stadium	Sport and recreation	Mount Beauty
Mount Beauty Visitor Information Centre Precinct - Auditorium	Multi-purpose community	Mount Beauty
St Albans Community Hall	Multi-purpose community	Running Creek

6. Needs assessment

There are a range of provision ratios (benchmarks) used across the community infrastructure planning sector. Provision ratios provide the basis for understanding demand for different facilities and services. For each infrastructure type, they establish the trigger for delivery (typically total population or households), and the unit for provision (e.g. 1 school).

The Victorian government-endorsed benchmarks from the Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas Guideline 2008 have been adopted for the purposes of this assessment, with the exception of kindergarten services, which references the latest Kindergarten Infrastructure Service Plan (KISP) methodology.

Because these benchmarks are dated as well as developed for a metropolitan growth area context, they are limited in their appropriateness for regional areas such as Alpine Shire. The demand assessment therefore provides a starting point for understanding the number and type of facilities that should be provided. Results are then contextualised for Alpine Shire, where population is highly dispersed, and there is a myriad of localised drivers of demand along with existing strategic priorities and ongoing projects.

The following section discusses each type of community infrastructure, collating the previous sections summary of existing infrastructure, along with forecast demand and recommendations.

Consolidation

Consolidation refers to the process of combining individual parts into a single, more efficient and effective whole. Consolidating community facilities can avoid ongoing and costly maintenance and upgrades to a higher number of ageing facilities in favour of supporting newer, more fit-for-purpose, and more cost-efficient facilities to replace them. This assessment identifies opportunities across Alpine Shire where the consolidation of legacy community facilities could occur.

It is important to note that consolidation does *not* mean a loss of capacity to service the needs of the community, whether that be existing or new community groups, or NFP, private, or Council provided services. A new multi-purpose community centre should contain the volume and diversity of spaces that will serve current and future community expectations.

For example, where a stand-alone facility is currently being used – even extensively or exclusively – by one or more groups, the consolidation of that facility into a larger, multipurpose facility should be considered in the design and capacity of the new facility. Council should seek to clearly and consistently communicate with community groups and stakeholders that this is a long-term process that is a transition into an upgraded facility rather than a loss of a current one.

Where particular user groups are particularly active or have particular needs, they should be involved in a co-design process to ensure that future facilities are fit-for-purpose and support community ownership in their ongoing management and activation.

Consolidation of sites can not only improve the utilisation, fitness for purpose, sustainability and energy efficiency of community infrastructure (achieving social, economic, and environmental benefits), but also opens up more sites for other uses, such as:

- affordable and/or key worker housing
- commercial opportunities
- social enterprises
- etc.

Alternatively, sites that may not be suitable for alternative uses or are surplus to need may be sold, and the revenue generated through this transaction can be reinvested at other community infrastructure sites, or used to fund other Council investments for the benefit of the community.

6.1 Multipurpose community centres

Multipurpose community centres are multi-functional buildings that can be used by local organisations and the community to deliver programs and services. These facilities can be council owned and operated, or council owned and community run or leased, or owned and operated by an external organisation.

Multipurpose community centres will often accommodate a range of spaces for general activity available to the broader community, and may include spaces for young people, seniors, community health services, libraries, and council services. As such they need to be flexible and adaptable in their design to accommodate a range of activities and group sizes.

Existing multipurpose community centres

The Shire has a range of smaller and/or single room halls, community centres and other multipurpose spaces located across the LGA. Many of these spaces are under exclusive leases, no longer fit-for-purpose and/or not in a widely accessible location.

As highlighted in Section 5 and shown in Table 18 below, there are 10 multi-purpose community facilities that are in poor condition, two of which are also no longer fit-for-purpose. This includes: Pioneer Park Recreation Reserve - Netball & Pony Clubrooms and Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve - Alex McCulloch Hall.

Table 18: Facility assessment for multipurpose community spaces

Facility name	Building Ownership	Inclusions/ other services	Township	Condition score	FFP score	Utilisation score
5 Elm Court (Formerly Bright Kindergarten)	Council	Currently a dance studio, leased on a year by year basis	Bright	5	3	3
Bright Alpine Shire Council Depot - Men's Shed	Private/NFP	Commercial kitchen	Bright	2	2	1
Bright Alpine Shire Council Gardens - Bright Bowls Clubhouse	Council	Bowls greens	Bright	2	1	1
Bright Community Centre	Council	Youth-friendly space, playgroup, Commercial kitchen	Bright	3	1	3
Bright Co-working	Private/NFP	None noted	Bright	--	--	--
Pioneer Park Recreation Reserve - Netball & Pony Clubrooms	Council	Exclusive use by the Pony Club	Bright	5	5	3
Pioneer Park Recreation Reserve - Bright Scout Hall	Council	Used by Scouts and Alpine Cycling Club	Bright	4	2	5
Pioneer Park Recreation Reserve - Lions Shed	Private/NFP	None noted	Bright	3	1	3
Pioneer Park Recreation Reserve - The Pavilion	Council	None noted	Bright	2	1	1
Dederang Recreation Reserve Hall	State / Cth	None noted	Dederang	--	--	--
Dinner Plain School and Community Centre	State / Cth	None noted	Dinner Plain	3	1	4
Freeburgh Hall	State / Cth	None noted	Freeburgh	--	--	--
Gapsted Community Hall	State / Cth	None noted	Gapsted	3	1	5
Harrierville Community Hall	State / Cth	None noted	Harrierville	--	--	--
Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve - Alex McCulloch Hall	Council	None noted	Mount Beauty	5	5	5
Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve - Mount Beauty Cub and Scout Hall	Council	None noted	Mount Beauty	5	2	3

Facility name	Building Ownership	Inclusions/ other services	Township	Condition score	FFP score	Utilisation score
Mount Beauty Visitor Information Centre Precinct - Auditorium	Council	Used by schools	Mount Beauty	4	3	5
Mount Beauty Community Centre	Council	None noted	Mount Beauty	4	1	5
Mount Beauty Men's Shed	Council	None noted	Mount Beauty	2	1	3
Mount Beauty Neighbourhood Centre	Council	None noted	Mount Beauty	3	1	3
Mount Beauty Neighbourhood Centre Hall	Council	None noted	Mount Beauty	4	1	3
Mudgegonga Community Hall	State / Cth	None noted	Mudgegonga	--	--	--
Myrtleford Memorial Hall - Hall	Council	Expected to also host the new VIC when renovations complete.	Myrtleford	3	Awaiting renovations	Awaiting renovations
Myrtleford Memorial Hall - Neighbourhood Centre	Council	None noted	Myrtleford	4	Awaiting renovations	2
Cep Park - Myrtleford Bowls Club House	Council	None noted	Myrtleford	3	1	1
Porepunkah Hall	State / Cth	None noted	Porepunkah	Not available	2	3
Happy Valley Hall	State / Cth	None noted	Rosewhite	--	--	--
St Albans Community Hall	Council	None noted	Running Creek	5	1	5
Tawonga Pioneer Memorial Park - Scout Alpine Centre (no longer in use)	Council	N/A	Tawonga	--	--	--
Tawonga Memorial Hall (currently being renovated)	Council	Has been used by the school, playgroup, Red Cross, and others.	Tawonga	5	1	3
Wandiligong Public Hall	State / Cth	Bookable community space	Wandiligong	Not available	1	3

Note: "--" = data not available; typically these are non-council facilities

Demand assessment

Based on the forecast population of Alpine to 2041, the provision benchmarks indicate that Alpine has a large surplus of small, medium, and medium-large meeting spaces, as well as an oversupply of smaller (level 1) community centres.

Meanwhile, there is a slight shortfall of larger community centres (level 3). These facilities typically serve a broader catchment, with more rooms and potentially some specialised spaces for specific services, groups or activities.

For the Alpine context, given its geographic distribution of community, it is preferable to have a higher number of smaller community centres rather than level 3 community centres which people would need to travel great distances to reach.

Table 19: Supply and demand assessment for multipurpose community spaces

Facility/service	Existing supply	2041 total demand	2041 gap/surplus
Meeting Space - Small (1-20 people)	19	4.0	15.0
Meeting Space - Medium (21-100 people)	30	2.0	28.0
Meeting Space - Medium to Large (101-200 people)	4	2.0	2.0
Neighbourhood House Service	2	1.1	0.9
Multi-Purpose Community Centre (Level 1)	4	1.8	2.2
Multi-Purpose Community Centre (Level 3)	0	0.4	-0.4

Discussion

Meeting spaces (many of which are standalone halls) are oversupplied relative to the current and forecast population of the Shire. Based on the benchmarks, there is opportunity to consolidate some smaller facilities into larger, updated, and multipurpose facilities. Opportunities for consolidation of meeting spaces are found in Bright, Myrtleford, and Mount Beauty.

To enable facility consolidation, each of these townships should have a hub facility designed to be flexible/multipurpose and accommodate a range of activities. As is noted in the Alpine Shire Events Strategy (2021), one of these hubs (likely in Bright) could accommodate an attractive events space that can also support growth in the tourism industry.

Preferred sites include existing community infrastructure sites that are both well-located within the townships and large enough to accommodate a hub. Some townships may have multiple options that could be considered relative to ongoing development opportunities, however preferred sites have been identified by this assessment that maximise accessibility and make the most of co-location with other key services (see section 3.3 **Error! Reference source not found.** for further discussion).

There are some plans and projects already underway that will impact community spaces in various townships:

- The masterplan for Pioneer Park recommends the Netball & Pony Clubrooms to be replaced with a new clubhouse/events space and public toilets, with a smaller arena space.
- Southeast of Pioneer Park, Council is progressing provision of a Mystic Park Trail Hub that will include public toilets. With the distance between the two sites, it is not expected that this facility would also service the park user groups.
- Renovations are underway at Tawonga Memorial Hall.
- The master plan for the Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve recommends demolishing the existing Tennis Club house and Scout Hall and replacing with a new community facility to cater for these clubs and other reserve users, with toilet facilities and storage.
- In Myrtleford, Memorial Hall is being renovated with a state government grant, and will include a small performance space. The project will also relocate the Myrtleford Visitor Information Centre within the Hall. The renovations are to the main hall site, but the neighbourhood centre continues to operate from the adjacent building, which is not fit-for-purpose. The site is impacted by a heritage overlay.

General recommendations

- Engage with intended tenant/user groups to co-design new or redeveloped multipurpose facilities that bring together groups/service/activities under one roof to ensure the design can respond to their respective needs. Consideration of storage capacity and access arrangements will be important.
- Support Neighbourhood House/U3A services to relocate into hub facilities; continuously engage with these groups to ensure their offering aligns with community needs, and that they can continue to play a key role in programming and activation at each township hub. Ideally, the groups can partner/merge over time, offering a range of activities to all age groups.
- Continue to promote bookable rooms to the community, organisations, and service providers to increase utilisation of multipurpose spaces.

Site-specific opportunities

- Deliver a new community hub in Myrtleford. This should consider the existing Senior Citizens Centre site or other existing Council-owned site. This should include:
 - A range of flexible multipurpose rooms
 - A dedicated youth space, ideally with its own entrance (alternatively, this could be co-located with the library)
 - A neighbourhood House service/ U3A service (relocated)
- Redevelop the Mount Beauty Community Centre as a multipurpose community hub. This should include:
 - A range of flexible multipurpose rooms, including some smaller flexible rooms that can be used for service consults (incl. for young people) or office space.

- Neighbourhood House service/ U3A (relocated)
- Redevelop the Bright Community Centre as a multipurpose community hub to include:
 - A range of flexible multipurpose rooms
 - A larger events/venue space
 - A Neighbourhood House/U3A service (relocated)
 - A dedicated youth space
- Redevelop to improve condition/FFP:
 - Pioneer Park Netball & Pony Clubrooms in Bright: as a multipurpose clubhouse space capable of accommodating multiple user groups (pony club, netball, cycling club, scouts) and public toilets to support groups, general park users, and use of the adjacent outdoor events space. In the longer-term, explore whether equestrian activities can be consolidated at the Myrtleford Showgrounds.
 - The Scout Hall at Pioneer Park, if this group cannot be accommodated in the redeveloped multipurpose clubhouse noted above.
 - Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve community facility (redeveloped tennis clubhouse/scout hall): include in the new community facility at this site a multipurpose room and shed space with storage to accommodate multiple user groups and allow for consolidation of other community buildings on site.
- Consolidate (repurpose or decommission) sites surplus to need, including:
 - 5 Elm Court, Bright (Council has long-term plans for the redevelopment of this site, but current tenant will remain on a year-on-year lease)
 - Bright Senior Citizen's Centre (integrate into the new multipurpose community hub)
 - Myrtleford Memorial Hall Neighbourhood Centre (integrate into a new multipurpose community hub)
 - Mount Beauty Senior Citizen's Centre (integrate into the new multipurpose community hub)
 - Mount Beauty Neighbourhood Centre & Hall (integrate into the new multipurpose community hub or new community facility at the reserve)
 - Mount Beauty Men's Shed (integrate into a new multipurpose facility at the reserve)
 - Mount Beauty Cub & Scout Hall (integrate into a new multipurpose facility at the reserve)
 - Alex McCulloch Hall, Mount Beauty (integrate into a new multipurpose facility at the reserve)
 - The Auditorium, Mount Beauty (integrate into the new multipurpose community hub)
 - St Albans Hall, Running Creek
 - Dinner Plain Community Centre (requires further review in an emergency management context as this is an ERC and licensed to DoE in non-school periods)

Case studies are below to guide planning for future community hubs in the townships. Some case studies are larger hubs that have consolidated more services onto a single site than may be appropriate for townships in Alpine. Nonetheless, they are illustrative of the potential space/service mixes of community hubs that can be replicated in Alpine by using community sites more effectively and efficiently.

Case study 1: Multipurpose community & tourism hub

The Woodend Community Centre is set to be redeveloped to make the site more modern, flexible, sustainably-designed and capable of meeting the needs of multiple user groups. It will consolidate separate existing community centre, library, and visitor information centre buildings into a combined facility with:

- proposed new library
- multi-purpose indoor performance space
- community and visitor information hub
- multi-purpose foyer and gallery space
- cafe and produce kiosk, and
- a village green/multi-purpose outdoor events space.



Source: Macedon Ranges Shire Council

The project is jointly funded by Macedon Ranges Shire Council and state government, and expected to boost tourism and economic development in the region.



Case study 2: Neighbourhood House-led Community Hub – West Footscray Neighbourhood House

Neighbourhood Houses provide a range of valuable services for the entire community, but at their heart they are about active community engagement. Services offered by Neighbourhood Houses can be vast, and are often designed to respond to social isolation, mental health concerns, disengaged youth, food security, homelessness, sustainability, family violence, refugee support, vocational training, employment pathways, disability support, positive ageing, life-long learning, social justice, community advocacy, volunteering, childcare and family support.⁴⁸



Source: Mitchell Shire Council

The West Footscray Neighbourhood House in Melbourne's inner north offers programs for children and adults, but has been offering a unique service since 2012 called Soul House that has a focus on older adults and community members that are marginalised. This program facilitates a safe space for social interaction and civic participation, ongoing support and advocacy, access to fresh food and healthy meals, connections to other services that may be needed by guests, and programs and information.

Case study 3: Regional Community Hub & Visitor Information Centre – Bass Coast Shire



Source: Bass Coast Shire

The Inverloch Community Hub is a successful example of a multipurpose community hub in a regional setting, servicing the coastal community of Inverloch in Victoria, home to approximately 6,000 residents. It is located within the commercial core and next to an oval and pavilion, tennis courts, skate park, and seniors club.

This facility is open 7 days a week, and includes the Library, Community Centre/Community House, Meeting Venue with capacity for 400 people, Leisure Centre, Visitor Information Centre & Art Exhibition Space.

⁴⁸Maribyrnong City Council (2018), Neighbourhood Houses & Community Centres: Delivering in the City of Maribyrnong, https://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/community-services-documents/community-centres/maribyrnong-community-centre/neighbourhood-houses-and-community-centres-delivering-in-the-city-of-maribyrnong-v3_lr_r.pdf

6.2 Libraries

Libraries offer a wide range of programs, activities and resources to inform and encourage active participation in community. This includes access to physical and digital collections such as ebooks and audiobooks, access to computers and other mainstream technology, internet, and printers. Libraries also provide spaces for relaxing, meeting others, studying, working and often integrate Council customer service functions.

Existing infrastructure assessment

The Shire has three libraries located in Myrtleford, Bright, and Mt Beauty, all of which are Council-owned facilities, with library services provided by High Country Library Network. These are generally fit-for-purpose and well utilised. The libraries in Myrtleford and Mount Beauty are a 10 and 15-minute walk from the town centre, respectively, while Bright's library is well-located in the centre of town.

The library in Bright is noted as being in poor condition. The Bright Library has the smallest footprint of the three, and aside from the collection areas, only contains one small multipurpose room that is in need of refurbishment.

The Bright Library and Myrtleford Library sites are both subject to Heritage Overlays. The application of the overlay at the Myrtleford Library site is currently being reviewed and will likely be extended to cover the extent of the library building.

Table 20: Facility assessment for libraries

Facility name	Inclusions/ other services	Township	Condition score	FFP score	Utilisation score
Bright Library	Meeting space - Small	Bright	4	2	1
Myrtleford Library	Meeting space – Small (x2); Council services centre.	Myrtleford	3	1	1
Mount Beauty Library	Meeting space – Small (x2)	Mount Beauty	2	1	1

Demand assessment

Based on community infrastructure benchmarks the Shire is overserved with libraries, however due to the distance between the townships the current level of provision is justified.

Table 21: Supply and demand assessment for libraries

Facility/service	Existing supply	2041 total demand (high growth)	2041 gap/surplus (high growth)
Library	3	0.4	2.6

Discussion

Libraries make excellent anchor services, but each one in the Shire is currently a standalone site, offering traditional library services. Some e-services are available (e.g. e-books, e-audiobooks), but could be expanded to include other digital learning services, and other media such as e-Film and e-Music.

The existing library sites therefore have opportunities to be redeveloped to offer a wider range of the contemporary services and to integrate other complementary uses such as youth programming, early years spaces, general meeting spaces, and/or distance education (e.g., Country Universities Centre), especially at the Myrtleford and Mount Beauty sites, which are less constrained. Extending opening hours at Myrtleford and Bright would also increase their capacity for activities and programs without requiring physical expansion.

General recommendations

- Consider a 24-hr model for libraries with access by swipe card (e.g., Gippsland), especially at the Bright and Myrtleford sites.
- Explore options for outreach library services for rural towns such as Dinner Plain. This can include mobile libraries, library kiosks in existing community infrastructure, and/or (seasonal) pop-up libraries.
- Engage with High Country Library Network to expand e-library services to support access in remote areas (small settlements and rural localities).

Site-specific opportunities

- Maintain the three libraries, however look to integrate other complementary services/activities at the Mount Beauty and Myrtleford sites through redevelopment/expansion that cannot be located at the previously mentioned new community hub sites (see multipurpose community centres).
- Refurbish the Bright Library with an upgraded multipurpose room.
- If the revised heritage controls allow for redevelopment, consider upgrading Myrtleford as the main 'regional' level library which could include a higher level of service offering and resources (e.g. specialised collections), and more spaces to accommodate remote work and study.

A case study is provided below to illustrate a more contemporary library service model.

Case study 4: Libraries After Dark / 24 hour access

Libraries After Dark (LAD) is a program initiated in 2019 through an initiative by Moreland City Council. In an effort to offer an alternative to gambling venues and promote social connection, participating libraries extend their opening hours into the evening and offer free events and activities for the community to participate in.

Though funding for the program ended in 2023, there are still a number of libraries that continue to remain open into the evening on a weekly basis with support from Public Libraries Victoria and funding from local councils. One example is the Bairnsdale Library in East Gippsland, which is open until 9pm every Thursday evening and provides activities such as movie nights, board games, and more.



Source: East Gippsland Shire Council

Other ways that libraries are expanding their services to the community are a shift to 24hr libraries using a swipe key for access to the facility. The first to do so was a small library in the community of Foster, in West Gippsland (with additional branches rolling this out in Mirboo North, and Poowong, and other examples in the City of Yarra in Melbourne). After going through an induction, users can check out books on their own, study, and make use of the internet.⁴⁹

6.3 Culture and tourism

Arts and cultural activities and facilities include but are not limited to visual and performing arts, music, museums and galleries, history and heritage including the natural environment, Indigenous culture, craft, libraries, literature, publishing, digital and new media, design, architecture, food, film, fashion, television and radio. These activities can be done within or outside of a community facility.

These facilities also serve an important function in tourism and economic development, alongside visitor information centres, which can be incorporated into community facilities.

Existing infrastructure assessment

Most of the cultural facilities across the Alpine Region are located in Bright or Myrtleford. Some facilities in Bright are in very poor condition with poor utilisation and/or are already being considered for other uses. Private facilities, such as the Bright Courthouse Theatre, are well utilised, as are multiple art galleries and the cinema in Bright. While all Council facilities are considered to be fit-for-purpose,

⁴⁹ Maunder, S (27 December 2019), First library in Victoria to open 24 hours a day, seven days a week has town buzzing, ABC News, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-27/foster-library-first-in-victoria-to-open-24-hours-a-day/11777696>

the Bright Museum, Myrtleford Museum, and the Mt Beauty Visitor Information Centre all have low to very low utilisation rates.

For the Bright Museum site, Council have already commenced exploring repurposing options, including café or bike workshop that would better activate the facility, however no funding has yet been allocated to any works that maybe required.

The Myrtleford Memorial Hall (accounted for in multipurpose community centres in section 6.1) is currently undergoing redevelopment. Once completed, it is expected to be able to host a range of cultural events and also include a small space to integrate the visitor information centre.

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Table 22: Facility assessment for culture and tourism

Facility name	Building ownership	Inclusions/ other services	Township	Condition score	FFP score	Utilisation score
Alpine Visitor Information Centre	Council	None noted	Bright	2	Not provided	Not provided
Bright Courthouse Theatre	Private/NFP	Private facility	Bright	--	--	--
Bright Museum	State / Cth	DEECA owned facility	Bright	5	1	5
Bright Art Gallery	Council	None noted	Bright	3	1	1
Sun Cinema Bright	Council	Café, co-located with Visitor Information Centre	Bright	4	1	1
Gold Battery Shed	State / Cth	None noted	Bright	5	--	5
Mount Beauty Visitor Information Centre	Private/NFP	Mount Beauty Museum	Mount Beauty	2	1	3
Education Myrtleford Performing Arts Centre	Private/NFP	None noted	Myrtleford	--	--	--
Myrtleford Memorial Hall - Visitor Centre	Council	None noted	Myrtleford	Awaiting renovations	Awaiting renovations	Awaiting renovations
Myrtleford Museum	Council	None noted	Myrtleford	3	1	3

Note: "--" = data not available; typically these are non-council facilities

Demand assessment

Based on provision benchmarks, the number of arts facilities is sufficient (noting that several are provided by the NFP and private sector or the State), with benchmarks in Table 23 accounting for community arts facilities (smaller facilities) and centres (larger facilities).

Table 23: Supply and demand assessment for culture and tourism facilities

Facility/service	Existing supply	2041 total demand (high growth)	2041 gap/surplus (high growth)
Community Arts Facility	2	1.8	0.2
Community Arts Centre	1	0.3	0.7
Visitor Information Centre*	3	N/A	N/A

*VICs do not have industry-standard provision benchmarks

Discussion

The Alpine Shire Events Strategy points to the importance of arts and culture facilities to support both local and tourist needs, with a need for improved events space to grow the tourism industry. It also notes the lack of a contemporary indoor venue that can be used year-round. This is especially noticeable in Bright, where larger events are competing with many other uses for use of the pavilion at Pioneer Park. More recently, Myrtleford has growing activity in the arts space and is emerging as a performing arts township with projects such as the redevelopment of Memorial Hall and the delivery of the Education Myrtleford Performing Arts Centre (EMPAC).

Private facilities have been and will continue to be important providers of arts and cultural facilities in the Shire. The development of an arts and cultural strategy is needed however to better coordinate programs across the venues to ensure all facilities remain activated, serving the needs of the community as well as visitors. Council's community facilities should also continue to support arts and cultural activities by providing flexible spaces that can be used by community arts groups for casual crafting and making.

Historical/archival sites are struggling to be viable, or are already serving little to no community function. It is unlikely that these sites will return to being activated without introducing commercial uses, or repurposing/redeveloping the site for another community use. Alternatively, heritage items that are of financial or community value could be re-located to other community infrastructure sites to allow for consolidation and increase the number of people that will be able to access the items.

General recommendations

- Improve coordination of arts and cultural programming and activation of Council-owned sites to:
 - reinforce Myrtleford as the performing arts centre
 - reinforce Bright as the events and visual arts centre

- Support private arts and culture venues, e.g. Bright Art Gallery and the Courthouse to continue to offer their services/activities for residents and visitors
- Engage with school principals and state government for joint use of school arts and cultural facilities (e.g. EMPAC).
- Ensure all community centres/hubs have multipurpose rooms that support the flexible delivery of community arts practices, e.g. appropriate flooring, sinks, storage.
- For Museum sites (and the Gold Battery), engage with Heritage Victoria to discuss potential option for re-use/better activation including:
 - decommissioning, consolidation of artefacts into visitor information centres/parks/other community facilities
 - commercial use (e.g. specialised accommodation, café, shop – already in-progress for the Bright Museum)
- Under the Tourism Strategy development, review the need for the 3 VICs. Consider:
 - Potential for consolidation of one or more of these sites into a community sites (e.g. one of the new community hubs)
 - Further commercial uses (e.g. selling goods from local businesses or coffee cart from a local provider) at the Mount Beauty VIC for improved activation.

Site-specific opportunities

- Deliver a new events/venue space through the Bright Community Centre redevelopment that can accommodate larger gatherings such as weddings and conferences, as well as continue to be used for activities such as school exams.
- Investigate the potential to enhance the commercial function (e.g. selling more goods from local businesses or installing a cafe) of the Mount Beauty Visitor Information Centre.

6.4 Early Years

Early years facilities include kindergartens, long day care (LDC), maternal and child health (MCH), services, playgroups, and occasional/out of school hours care. Only kindergartens, MCH, playgroups and toy libraries are addressed quantitatively here.

While Council have traditionally provided all early years infrastructure, following reforms, the state government is now delivering kindergarten infrastructure on school sites and at new early years centres across Victoria.

Existing infrastructure assessment

There are currently five operational kindergarten facilities across the Shire, with Tawonga Kindergarten shifting its services into Lakeview Children's Centre in Mount Beauty due to staff shortages, and the kindergarten at Dederang Primary School undergoing a refurbishment. Most are operated by the not-for-profit provider Alpine Children's Services (ACS), but smaller services are run by the Dederang and Harrietville primary schools.

Early years facilities across the Shire are currently highly utilised, with waitlists for kindergarten and/or Long Day Care (LDC).

In line with best practice, MCH facilities are co-located with childcare, but some sites do not have adequate or appropriate space for other early years services such as playgroups and immunisations. ACS have also reported that there are staff safety concerns at the Lake View (Mount Beauty) Centre, the only site that currently offers OSHC.

Alpine View Children's Centre received a Building Blocks grant in 2020 that saw an expansion of that centre. Council has developed designs for a redeveloped and expanded Mountain View Children's Centre and is actively seeking funding opportunities to carry this out as a priority. In its current state, the Mountain View Children's Centre remains in poor condition, and its short-term future is uncertain.

Table 24: Facility assessment for early years

Facility name	Building ownership	Inclusions/ other services	Township	Condition score	FFP score	Utilisation score
Alpine View Children's Centre	Council	MCH, Toy library	Bright	--	--	--
Dederang Primary School Care	State / Cth	None noted	Dederang	--	--	--
Falls Creek Child Care	Private	None noted	Falls Creek	--	--	--
Harrietville Bush Kinder	State / Cth	None noted	Harrietville	--	--	--
Mountain View Children's Centre	Council	MCH	Myrtleford	4	2	1
Lake View Children's Centre	Council	MCH, Playgroup, Toy library	Mount Beauty	3	1	1
Tawonga Kindergarten	State / Cth	Playgroup	Tawonga	--	--	--

Note: "--" = data not available; typically these are non-council facilities

Demand assessment

While the benchmarks indicate an overprovision of playgroups, MCH facilities, and toy libraries, these are services that need to be provided at a local rather than a municipal catchment. Given this the current level of provision is justified for the Shire.

The Alpine Shire Draft KISP indicates that by 2032 there will be an undersupply of 42 kindergarten places in Myrtleford by 2032. As population growth across the Shire is minimal, the shortfall in kindergarten places will be driven primarily by the roll-out of kindergarten reforms. To address this demand one additional kindergarten room will be required in Myrtleford.

Table 25: Supply and demand assessment for early years

Facility/service	Existing supply	2041 total demand (high growth)	2041 gap/surplus (high growth)
Kindergarten (3+4-year-old)	365	--	-42 places*

Facility/service	Existing supply	2041 total demand (high growth)	2041 gap/surplus (high growth)
Playgroup	4	0.8	3.2
Maternal and Child Health (MCH)	3	1.0	2.0
Toy Library	3	0.6	2.4

*2032 figure: sourced from the KISP; growth would be minimal/none 2032-2041, as the growth in demand is driven by the increase in funded Kindergarten hours

Discussion

While the demand assessment indicates only one additional kindergarten room is required in Myrtleford, pressure on capacity is already present, with waitlists growing in both Myrtleford and Bright (Table 26). Most of the 76 currently listed for the Shire in Myrtleford or Bright. ACS has stated that this is largely associated with preferences for start times that cannot easily be accommodated, however the service provider noted that these children will be successfully enrolled.

Even where kindergarten service demand can be met, this may compromise the ability to meet demand for other childcare services (for 0-3 year-olds and outside of school hours care (OSHC)), as they compete for rooms at each centre. Waitlists for 0-3 childcare are significantly longer than for kindergarten, sitting at over 400 children in the Shire (most of these are in Bright or Myrtleford). This suggests that further provision may be required, via timetabling adjustments or more rooms. Rather than provide more rooms in Bright, provision of a new facility in Porepunkah, where there are no existing early years services should be considered. Labour force participation trends in this township suggest there is a greater resident need for childcare, and this is likely contributing to unmet demand in nearby Bright.

Table 26: Waitlists for early years services in Alpine Shire

Service	No. of children on waitlist (February 2025)
0-3 childcare	431
3- and 4-year-old Kindergarten	76
OSHC	7

Source: Alpine Children's Services (2025)

Even if the number of licenced places is increased to meet demand, staff shortages continue to put pressure on regional communities, including Alpine.⁵⁰ Alpine Children's Services has recently signed a workforce agreement with the Commonwealth government to attract 20 additional childcare workers to the Shire. However, other barriers to optimal service delivery persist, including the availability of

⁵⁰ Australian Childcare Alliance (2023), *Workforce crisis the biggest issue in Early Childhood Education and Care sector*, <https://childcarealliance.org.au/latestnews/workforce-crisis>, accessed 21 March 2025.

affordable key-worker housing. Council may need to play an advocacy and facilitation role to ensure these workers can be accommodated locally.

General recommendations

- Support the continued operation of ACS via use of Council early years facilities, and workforce planning.
- Support Dederang and Harrietteville primary schools to continue to run services in these more remote areas.

Site-specific opportunities

- Engage with the State Government to understand whether a new childcare centre will be delivered on a school site in Myrtleford. If not, redevelop the Mountain View Children's Centre (Myrtleford) to improve its condition/FFP and provide one additional kindergarten room by 2032.
- Over the medium-long term, refurbish the Lake View (Mount Beauty) Centre to ensure it can continue to operate. Through redevelopment:
 - Provide spaces for MCH, playgroups and other family/children's activities.
 - Improve safety so that OSHC can safely operate if there is future demand for the service.
- Continue to monitor demand for kindergarten and other childcare services in Bright (which currently also services Porepunkah) in consultation with ACS to determine if additional rooms are required. If yes, provide a new early years centre with 2 kindergarten rooms and spaces for MCH, playgroups and other family/children's activities in Porepunkah in the long-term.

6.5 Education

Education refers to schools and tertiary institutions that are provided by the state and not-for-profit/private sector.

Existing infrastructure assessment

Across the Shire there are nine government primary schools and three government secondary schools, with a further Catholic primary and secondary school (Table 27). The nearest TAFE is in Wangaratta, and there are universities in Wodonga/Albury, Wangaratta and Shepparton.

There are no existing specialist school campuses, though this service is increasingly being incorporated into general primary and secondary school campuses in Victoria. According to Council feedback, some children in the Shire with special needs are traveling to Benalla or another regional centre where a school has specific supports in place.

Table 27: Facility assessment for Education

Facility name	Building ownership	Township	Condition score	FFP score	Utilisation score
Bright P-12 College	State / Cth	Bright	--	--	--

Facility name	Building ownership	Township	Condition score	FFP score	Utilisation score
Dederang Primary School	State / Cth	Dederang	--	--	--
Falls Creek Primary School	State / Cth	Falls Creek	--	--	--
Harrietville Primary School	State / Cth	Harrietville	--	--	--
Mount Beauty Primary School	State / Cth	Mount Beauty	--	--	--
Mount Beauty Secondary College	Private / NFP	Mount Beauty	--	--	--
Marian College	Private / NFP	Myrtleford	--	--	--
Myrtleford P-12 College	State / Cth	Myrtleford	--	--	--
St Marys Primary School	State / Cth	Myrtleford	--	--	--
Porepunkah Primary School	State / Cth	Porepunkah	--	--	--
Tawonga Primary School	State / Cth	Tawonga	--	--	--
Wandiligong Primary School	State / Cth	Wandiligong	--	--	--

Demand assessment

Benchmarks for schools do not account for Alpine's highly dispersed geographic context. A higher number of schools is necessary to ensure young children do not have to leave their communities for education. Despite the surplus noted in Table 28, it is not recommended that Council advocate for a reduction in the number of school campuses, and instead ensure local access continues to be supported.

Table 28: Supply and demand assessment for Education

Facility/service	Existing supply	2041 total demand (high growth)	2041 gap/surplus (high growth)
Government Primary School	9	1.8	7.2
Government Secondary School	3	0.6	2.4
Catholic Primary School	1	1.4	-0.4
Catholic Secondary School	1	0.4	0.6
Government Specialist Secondary School	0	0.3	-0.3
TAFE campus	0	0.1	-0.1

Discussion

While there is limited demand for a TAFE campus, which would result in viability challenges, residents are currently travelling significant distances to attend higher education options.

Distance learning opportunities, such as those provided by Country Universities (see case study below), should be supported in the Shire, either in existing community infrastructure such as libraries or multipurpose community centres, or where demand is high enough, in dedicated spaces.

While a dedicated specialist campus demand is limited, Council should engage with state government to advocate for accommodating specialist needs by integrating services into existing schools.

General recommendations

- Engage with state government to advocate for accommodating specialist needs by integrating services into existing schools.
- Support distance learning by engaging with tertiary education providers to deliver courses/programs from libraries, multipurpose community centres, or secondary school campuses.
- Investigate the capacity for a Country University Centre in Alpine.

Case study 5: Country University Centre

Not limited to young people, the Country University Centre (CUC) program is an Australian-wide program of community-led, Regional University Study Hubs (RUSH) that enables people to study any university degree that they wish to while remaining in regions where higher education is more challenging to access. The model offers a physical space where students can go to study, access internet and other resources, connect with other people and build networks, and access to help from onsite staff relating to their studies or broader study experience.



Source: <https://www.cuc.edu.au/>

CUC offers services in the Ovens Murray region in NE Victoria that covers Wangaratta, Corryong and Mansfield. A newly redesigned and refurbished facility has opened in Wangaratta (and another in Southern Grampians), co-located with GOTAFE and next to the library, that has helped hundreds of students in their studies since opening in 2020. This could be a significant asset to communities in Alpine Shire by helping to nurture and develop local residents and retain more local talent. Potential locations for Alpine Shire include the Kiewa and Ovens Valley.

6.6 Young people

Spaces for young people should be intentionally designed for young people aged 12-25 years and should aim to be co-designed with young people wherever possible. These spaces can provide a range of leisure, social, training, health and education programs across a range of spaces both programmed and informal. This may include after school support services and drop in spaces, as well as activity space for dedicated youth programs and tailored services. Youth spaces are distinct from crisis intervention venues in that youth spaces focus on proactive support, prevention, and ensuring there are spaces within the community that are safe and welcoming of young people.

As identified in the Alpine Shire Youth Strategy, these spaces should provide non-judgemental and supportive environments. Importantly, they should be located in highly accessible sites by public and active transport so that young people can easily access them. Co-location with other complementary community facilities is common, such as libraries and community centre. Other co-locations convenient to young people include secondary schools, shopping centres, and open space.

Existing infrastructure assessment

There are currently no dedicated youth facilities across the Shire, however The Lighthouse is a temporary youth space run by Council at the Bright Community Centre that has proven successful. Council has plans to expand this service into additional rooms in the lower level of the Bright Community Centre that are currently used for storage and or vacant. The overall condition of the Bright Community Centre is four, however the room that The Lighthouse is hosted in has been refurbished and is in better condition.

Table 29: Facility assessment for young people

Facility name	Building ownership	Inclusions/ other services	Township	Condition score	FFP score	Utilisation score
Bright Community Centre - The Lighthouse	Council	Adult education centre	Bright	4	Not provided	Not provided

Demand assessment and discussion

Based on benchmarks and the dispersed nature of the population, the Shire requires one additional youth space. Ideally, a space would be provided in each of the service towns, however this may not be viable based on population numbers. Instead, a space should be provided in the two largest townships (Myrtleford and Bright), at a minimum, and multipurpose spaces at other community facilities used for outreach services were required.

Other providers of services that target young people (e.g. Gateway Health – refer to the case study) could also operate from these spaces, to complement Council's service capabilities/offering. Attraction of these service providers should be prioritised in Myrtleford where there is a concentration of disadvantage and greater interventions needed to ensure young people have the support for their personal wellbeing and employment/training pathways.

Table 30: Supply and demand assessment for young people

Facility/service	Existing supply	2041 total demand (high growth)	2041 gap/surplus (high growth)
Youth space (as part of community centre)	1	2	-1
Youth Centre (dedicated facility)	0	0.4	-0.4

General recommendations

- Engage with Headspace and other service providers to provide local satellite services from youth spaces/community centres, especially in Myrtleford.

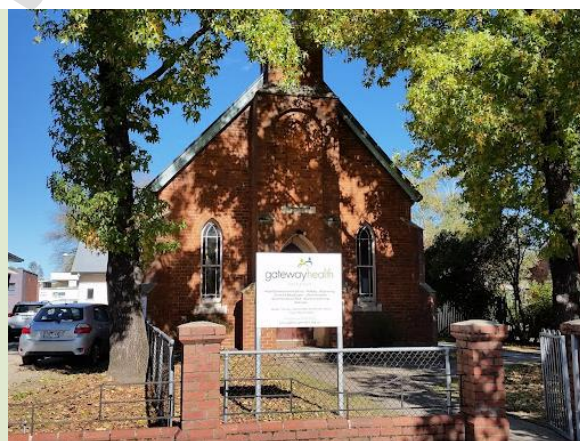
Site-specific opportunities

- Deliver a dedicated youth space in Bright:
 - In the short-term, as a pop-up at the Bright Community Centre (the Lighthouse – this is already active).
 - Overtime, this should become a dedicated space with the redeveloped community centre (see multipurpose community centres).
- Deliver a dedicated youth space in Myrtleford within the new multipurpose community centre, and attract other youth support service providers to run services from this site.
- Provide services for young people who cannot travel to Bright or Myrtleford via outreach youth programs in Mount Beauty/Tawonga from multipurpose rooms at existing and future facilities.

Case study 6: Gateway Health

Gateway Health is a not-for-profit community health and wellbeing provider formed in 2014 from the merger of two pre-existing local health providers. They currently have locations in Shepparton, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Benalla and Myrtleford, and offer outreach services to more remote locations.

Gateway Health offer a wide range of services from NDIS and allied health, to general practice, healthy aging, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, and child and family, but also offer youth health, youth counselling (including Headspace services), youth alcohol and drug outreach services for 12-25yo, and school focused youth work for years 5-12.



Source: Gateway Health

This is the kind of outreach service that could be valuable across more locations like Mount Beauty where there is not enough demand for a dedicated youth facility or space, or in Bright where there is a youth facility but where more specialised youth services are desired on a regular basis.

6.7 Seniors and aged care

Seniors refers to traditional senior citizens centres, U3As, and other spaces that host activities and programs tailored for older persons. Often, they are still under exclusive use by a community group or association. With the transition to community hubs/multipurpose centres that are more adaptable and inclusive (and therefore have greater longevity, and typically, activation), seniors groups can be, and are often, regular users of these spaces. Given the service shift of seniors, under best practice principles for community infrastructure, these facilities are no longer benchmarked for future provision, rather considered as a key user group of multipurpose community centres.

Residential aged care, also known as nursing homes or aged care facilities, provides ongoing care and support for older people, including assistance with daily tasks and healthcare needs. The level of care varies from independent living to high-care beds, with many facilities offering a combination of care levels so that older people can transition into a more supportive environment on the same site as their abilities decline. The services themselves (in the unit of 'beds') are funded by the Commonwealth government, while facilities are provided and run by state government and the private/not-for-profit sectors.

Existing infrastructure assessment

There are four senior citizens centres across the Shire, located in each of the main service towns of Bright, Myrtleford and Mount Beauty. Three are Council owned facilities operated by U3A groups and a fourth (Lakeside Community Centre) is operated by Alpine Health and located in Mount Beauty, offering consultations, health education, and some social and recreation programs.

There are four residential aged care facilities across the Shire. Two of these are located in Myrtleford with one being a private facility and the other a State government facility (Alpine Health), providing a combined total of 116 beds.

The remaining two are in Bright and Mount Beauty, both operated by Alpine Health, and providing 45 and 25 beds respectively. One of these, Hawthorne Village in Bright, recently received a Federal grant to upgrade the facility.⁵¹ While this will improve the quality of the facility it does not increase its capacity.

Table 31: Facility assessment for seniors and aged care

Facility name	Building ownership	Inclusions/ other services	Township	Condition score	FFP score	Utilisation score
Hawthorn Village	Private / NFP	45 beds	Bright	--	--	--

⁵¹ Alpine Health (2024), 'Alpine Health secures \$214K grant for Hawthorn Village refurbishment', <https://www.alpinehealth.org.au/news-events/news/news-2024/hawthorn-village-secures-funding-for-refurbishment>

Facility name	Building ownership	Inclusions/ other services	Township	Condition score	FFP score	Utilisation score
Kiewa Valley House	Private / NFP	25 beds	Mount Beauty	--	--	--
Barwidgee Lodge	Private / NFP	35 beds	Myrtleford	--	--	--
Myrtleford Lodge Aged Care	Private / NFP	81 beds	Myrtleford	--	--	--
Lakeside Community Centre	Private / NFP	None noted	Mount Beauty	--	--	--
Bright and District Senior Citizens Centre - Centre	Council	Meeting space - small (x2), Meeting space - Medium	Bright	3	1	1
Mount Beauty & District Senior Citizens Centre - Centre	Council	None noted	Mount Beauty	5	2	1
Myrtleford Senior Citizens Centre - Senior Citizens Centre	Council	Meeting space - Medium, Toy Library, Playgroup	Myrtleford	3	1	1

Note: "--" = data not available; typically these are non-council facilities

Demand assessment

Around 520 beds will be required to support the ageing population, and currently supply levels are meeting approximately one-third of that demand. Over 330 additional beds are forecast to be required by 2041 based on Commonwealth aged care benchmarks.

As noted earlier, the provision of seniors spaces are no longer benchmarked separate to multipurpose community centres.

Table 32: Supply and demand assessment for seniors and aged care

Facility/service	Existing supply (beds)	2041 total demand (high growth)	2041 gap/surplus (high growth)
Residential Aged Care (beds)	186	520	-334
Senior citizen's centres	4	N/A	N/A

Discussion

Spaces and groups that support healthy ageing will be increasingly important as the population ages in Alpine. Seniors are already very active across the Shire, largely under the organisation of U3A. The three existing Council centres are highly utilised and generally fit-for-purpose. While the sites are under exclusive lease to U3A, these groups have activated the Myrtleford and Mount Beauty facilities in particular with a wide range of programs and activities that target various age groups or are open to the

public, such as church services, yoga classes, and immunisations. In many respects, these facilities are already running effectively as vibrant and inclusive community centres. However, their host buildings are ageing, reaching maximum capacity, are in moderate to poor condition, and two of the three are recommended for consolidation once new community hubs are delivered (refer to multipurpose community recommendations).

It is recommended that Council engages with the existing U3A organisations to explore transition opportunities new hub facilities under arrangements that will enable them to continue to run programs and activities alongside other community user groups. As these new facilities will be larger, rather than exclusive leases to a single group, Council should facilitate partnerships between user groups to form joint management committees and consult extensively with these groups in the planning and design stages of a new facility to ensure their needs can be met. There is great potential for partnerships between U3A and Neighbourhood House services, youth services, and other providers focussed on community development, recreation, and connection-building, effectively extending the benefits of the leading U3A groups to other generations in Alpine.

Beyond this, Council can continue to advocate for other service providers such as Alpine Health to continue to deliver support to older people via Meals on Wheels, Home and Community Care, and other programs/initiatives. This includes residential aged care, where Council can support providers to grow their capacity and deliver new facilities in the service towns. These sites are increasingly incorporating multipurpose rooms and other communal facilities as part of their offering. These also have a role to play in meeting some demand for spaces for activities and programs for older people.

General recommendations

- Where new community hubs in Bright, Myrtleford and Mount Beauty are developed, Council should adopt universal design principles to ensure that facilities are accessible, and provide spaces that can accommodate the existing programs and activities offered at senior citizens centres
- Support existing U3A/ senior citizens groups in the Shire to continue providing activities/programs.
- Over time, encourage and support partnerships between Neighbourhood House, U3A, and other community service providers at multipurpose centres.
- Engage with residential aged care providers to advocate for an increase in residential aged care beds.
- Consider developing an investment prospectus or similar to attract additional residential aged care and retirement services to the Shire.

6.8 Sport and recreation

Sport and recreation refers to both indoor and outdoor activities.

Indoor recreation centres cater for a range of more informal court-based activities such as basketball, netball volleyball, badminton, indoor soccer, and other sports. These facilities can be council-run, not-for-profit run, or ones that operate under a shared agreement such as with schools.

Aquatic centres are also considered within sport and recreation. Depending on size and infrastructure, aquatic centres can offer a range of services such as: public lane swimming, competitive swimming pathways, water play, learn to swim, fitness centres, food and beverage, events and activities.

Outdoor sport and recreation are concentrated around an oval/pitch/field or courts, is typically supported by a pavilion, and provides infrastructure to enable organised active recreation. Active recreation reserves may also include lighting, and spectator seating along with other amenities. This supporting infrastructure is important for increasing accessibility and utilisation.

Existing infrastructure assessment

The service towns in the Shire all have some indoor and outdoor sport and recreation facilities, with sites supporting a range of activities located in Bright, Mount Beauty, and Myrtleford.

- Pioneer Park Recreation Reserve in Bright contains a bowls club, croquet club, skate park, indoor aquatic and fitness centre (Bright Sports Centre, though squash courts are currently closed for repairs), mountain bike park, and an indoor stadium that has recently been upgraded to competition level at the Bright P-12 College, though the overall facility remains in poor condition. Bright also has a skate park central to the township, which is highly utilised but in poor condition. Council have reported there is community support for refurbishing this site. They recently consulted on potential concept designs and are now pursuing funding for the project.
- The Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve also contains multiple facilities supporting sports and other activities, but many of them are currently poorly utilised.
- Myrtleford has three sites that support a range of activities at Cep Park, RC McNamara Recreation Reserve and the Myrtleford Showgrounds.
- Porepunkah has a central recreation reserve, but no formalised pavilion. The Hall on this site is partly used by the sporting clubs at the reserve. This facility recently received funding for “a new multi-use clubhouse and community disaster refuge”.⁵² The project is expected to include accessible change rooms, toilets, showers, kitchen and multifunctional social spaces, with outdoor lighting for the baseball field.”⁵³ Current plans depict a multi-use space of 51m², a second room of 16m², accessible toilets, and a canteen.

Of the facilities with poor utilisation, only the Mount Beauty Sports Stadium is both an Emergency Relief Centre and a Bushfire Place of Last Resort, meaning that any changes to this facility will need to consider these additional uses.

Scoring was not undertaken for the Bright P-12 Indoor Stadium (as it is state owned and managed), however according to Council feedback the facility is in poor condition and in need of renewal. It is currently available for community use (e.g. basketball).

⁵² King, C, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, ‘Albanese Government strengthening communities in regional Victoria’, Media release, Wednesday 22 January, 2025, <https://minister.infrastructure.gov.au/c-king/media-release/albanese-government-strengthening-communities-regional-victoria>

⁵³ The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (2025), Growing Regions Program—Round 2 projects, <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/victoria-growing-regions-program-round-2-projects-january-2025.pdf>

Table 33: Facility assessment for sports and recreation

Facility name	Inclusions/ other services	Township	Condition score	FFP score	Utilisation score
Bright Alpine Shire Council Gardens - Bright Bowls Clubhouse	Bowls greens, Meeting space - Medium	Bright	2	1	1
Bright Croquet Club	None noted	Bright	--	--	--
Bright P-12 College Indoor Stadium	None noted	Bright	--	--	--
Bright Skate Park	None noted	Bright	5	--	1
Bright Sports Centre	None noted	Bright	3	2	3
Pioneer Park Recreation Reserve - The Pavilion	Outdoor netball courts, Active open space (Oval)	Bright	2	1	1
Pioneer Park Recreation Reserve - Bright Tennis Club	Meeting space - Small, tennis courts	Bright	--	--	--
Mystic Mountain Bike Park	None noted	Bright	--	--	--
Dinner Plain Mountain Bike Park	None noted	Dinner Plain	--	--	--
Harrietville Skate Park	None noted	Harrietville	--	--	--
Big Hill Mountain Bike Park	None noted	Mount Beauty	2	2	3
Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve - Clubroom	None noted	Mount Beauty	5	1	3
Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve - Mount Beauty Tennis Clubrooms	None noted	Mount Beauty	5	1	3
Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve - Mount Beauty Tennis Courts	None noted	Mount Beauty	--	2	3
Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve - Netball Court	None noted	Mount Beauty	--	2	3
Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve - Oval	Two ovals	Mount Beauty	--	2	3
Mount Beauty Sports Stadium	Outdoor swimming pool	Mount Beauty	3	1	1
Memorial Park - Cricket Clubroom	None noted	Myrtleford	5	5	1

Facility name	Inclusions/ other services	Township	Condition score	FFP score	Utilisation score
Myrtleford Showgrounds - Stadium	Two indoor courts in two separate facilities.	Myrtleford	3	3	1
RC McNamara Recreation Reserve - LG Ablett Pavilion	Active open space (Oval)	Myrtleford	3	3	1
RC McNamara Recreation Reserve - Netball & Tennis Court Toilets & Clubroom	Netball/Tennis courts, Meeting space - Small	Myrtleford	1	2	1
RC McNamara Recreation Reserve - Canine Clubrooms	Meeting space - Medium	Myrtleford	5	--	--
RC McNamara Recreation Reserve - The Gym	Indoor gym	Myrtleford	5	3	1
Cep Park - Myrtleford Swimming Pool	None noted	Myrtleford	3	2	3
Cep Park - Myrtleford Bowls Club	Bowls greens, Meeting space - Medium	Myrtleford	3	1	1
Cep Park - Myrtleford Lawn Tennis Club	Tennis courts, Meeting space - Medium	Myrtleford	3	1	1
Savoy Sporting Club Reserve - Soccer Complex	Football pitch, Meeting space - Medium	Myrtleford	1	1	1
Porepunkah Recreation Reserve	Active open space (Oval)	Porepunkah	--	--	--

Note: "--" = data not available; typically these are non-council facilities

Demand assessment

Provision levels for most sport and recreation facilities are adequate or in surplus. Smaller pavilions are forecast to be undersupplied by 1-2 facilities.

The clubrooms at the Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve lack change rooms which are a key element of pavilions. Though the clubrooms are primarily used by sports clubs, it has been classified in this report as a multipurpose community space (see section 6.1).

Table 34: Supply and demand assessment for sport and recreation facilities

Facility/service	Existing supply	2041 total demand (high growth)	2041 gap/surplus (high growth)
Indoor Recreation Centre / Stadium (Hard Court) - Lower Order (2 courts)	4.0	0.6	3.4
Indoor Recreation Centre / Stadium (Hard Court) - Higher Order (4-6 courts)	0.0	0.3	-0.3
Indoor Aquatic / Leisure / Fitness Centre (25m pool)	3.0	0.4	2.6
Outdoor Netball Facility – Small (2 courts)	3.0	1.0	2.0
Outdoor Netball Facility – Large (8 courts)	0.0	0.3	-0.3
Tennis Facility – Small / Low-Order (2 courts, no pavilion, free to public)	1.0	0.5	0.5
Tennis Facility – Higher Order (6-10 courts, with pavilion)	3.0	0.5	2.5
Lawn Bowls Facility (4 greens)	2.0	0.4	1.6
Synthetic Athletics Track	0.0	1.0	1.0
Pavilion - Level 1	1.0	2.6	-1.6
Pavilion - Level 3	1.0	0.3	0.7

Discussion

While most sport and recreation facilities well supplied, there are some gaps. In two of the service towns, Porepunkah and Mount Beauty, the active recreation reserves are without a pavilion. Both of these sites require a facility with changerooms, toilets, and other spaces to support sport clubs and community use of the reserve. In addition, major recreation reserves in the largest townships of Bright and Myrtleford should also have higher-quality, durable grounds/playing surfaces to support their long-term use around the year, as well as supporting infrastructure (e.g. lighting).

According to a 2024 analysis of aquatics and indoor sports facilities provided by Council, while there is reasonable access to basic indoor recreation facilities in Bright, Myrtleford, and Mount Beauty, aquatic

facilities lack warm water for aqua aerobics and swimming lessons. The Mount Beauty and Myrtleford pools also lack winter access. These facilities will be increasingly important as the population ages.

Bright has an identified gap for indoor sport opportunities, with significant competition for existing spaces. Councils feasibility study recommends that upgrades/ redevelopment of an indoor sports site in the town, with the top option being Councils' existing sports centre. A redeveloped Bright P-12 indoor stadium could instead address this need depending on what was provided, however joint use for the community outside school hours would also need to be secured over the long-term.

The needs assessment notes that the Shire does not have a synthetic athletics track. Council is currently in talks with Marion College and has prepared preliminary designs to incorporate a two-lane track around the oval at the school site. Ongoing community access to this track following development will be required if it is to address demand beyond just the student population.

Master planning was recently undertaken for key township reserves, identifying upgrades and new facilities at Pioneer Park in Bright, Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve, RC McNamara, Memorial Park, Jubilee Park, and the Myrtleford Recreation Reserve in Myrtleford.

Upgrades to the Ablett Pavilion in Myrtleford are nearly complete (early 2025), with upgrades to community spaces to host larger events, a new meeting room, increased storage, and a new disabled toilet. In 2020, the adjacent netball/tennis courts were provided a clubhouse facility that includes toilets, change rooms, storage, and small kiosk.

General recommendations

- Continue to engage with school principals and state government for joint use of school sport and recreation facilities.
- Provide lighting and durable play surfaces at major reserves in the two largest townships (likely Memorial Park in Myrtleford and Pioneer Park in Bright) to support longevity and increased use.

Site-specific opportunities

- Advocate to state government to upgrade the sports stadium at Bright P-12, and for continued joint use of this facility.
- If redevelopment of the Bright P-12 Stadium does not progress and long-term community access cannot be secured under a joint use agreement, consider redevelopment of the Sports Centre to include an indoor stadium.
- Refurbish/ upgrade the Canine Clubrooms at RC McNamara Reserve in Myrtleford (noted in the existing master plan). Consider opening this facility up to wider community use.
- The Gym at RC McNamara Recreation Reserve is in very poor condition and has poor fitness for purpose - this can be consolidated and replaced by the delivery of an outdoor gym, as per the existing masterplan.
- Refurbish/ upgrade the Memorial Park Pavilion in Myrtleford to improve condition/FFP and ensure it is female-friendly (noted in the existing master plan).
- Continue to engage with Marion College (Myrtleford) for delivery of an athletics track, and secure community access outside school hours under a joint use agreement.

- Redevelop the tennis clubroom facility at the Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve, if this group cannot be accommodated at the new multipurpose community facility at this site.
- Develop a masterplan for the Porepunkah Recreation Reserve. Consider upgrading play surfaces and providing a facility to support sport and recreation at the site, with a multipurpose community space (pending outcome of the Hall redevelopment).
- Upgrade the Bright, Mount Beauty, and Myrtleford aquatic facilities to accommodate warm water activities, and provide winter access in Mount Beauty and Myrtleford.
- Refurbish the Bright Skate Park (Council is currently pursuing funding for this project).

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6.9 Community health services

Community health services include hospitals and clinics that provide the community with a range of primary healthcare services that include general medical, specialist health services, home and community care, community nursing, drug and alcohol services, disability services, allied health services, and mental health services.⁵⁴

These services are currently provided in Alpine Shire Council by Alpine Health, with facilities in Bright, Myrtleford and Mount Beauty. Provision levels based on population benchmarks are in excess of what is required for the future population. However, like other services such as childcare and emergency services, the dispersed nature of the population means that a community health service in each of the three service centres is warranted. Furthermore, the benchmarks used in this assessment are broad in nature and Alpine Health would have a much stronger understanding of service needs.

There is not a full-service public hospital in Alpine, nor is one viable given the population. Stakeholder feedback indicates that the Bright Hospital (which offers urgent care, limited surgical procedures, general medical care, and compassionate palliative care) is in need of upgrading. There are plans being discussed around upgrading the facility and amalgamating the hospital and GP services in Bright.

Mental health outreach services travel into the region however stakeholder feedback notes that they lack spaces for regular and consistent drop in services. There is a need for a small, discrete space to be consistently available in the main service towns.

General recommendations

- Continue to advocate for the provision of adequate health services via Alpine Health, and for an upgrade to the Bright Hospital.
- Consider opportunities for the co-location of mental health services in community facilities, especially those that include youth services.

6.10 Emergency services

Emergency services are distinct from emergency management. Emergency management is about how Council responds to emergency events and facilitates relief and recovery efforts for the community. Emergency services include external service providers such as fire, police, ambulance, and SES services. Service planning for emergency services is undertaken by the respective state government bodies.

In dispersed, lower populations contexts like Alpine emergency services are especially unique when judging their provision relative to population benchmarks. Where people's lives are at risk accessibility becomes paramount.

⁵⁴ Department of Health (2024), Community health services, <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/community-health/community-health-services>

Currently there are a range of emergency services located across the Shire. Based on feedback the level of service provision is generally able to meet requirements, however this should be regularly reviewed as the population continues to grow.

General recommendations

- Continue to liaise with the respective state agencies to ensure services are sufficient for increasing population.

6.11 Justice

Justice services are provided by Courts Services Victoria. Alpine Shire is serviced by a Magistrates' Court in Myrtleford, which hears criminal, civil and family matters, as well as intervention orders. The nearest legal aid services (in person) are located in Wangaratta and Wodonga. While some of these services can be accessed online, face to face services can be a barrier to access for those without a vehicle.

Supporting justice services, such as legal support, can be an effective service to be integrated into a community centre. Council should consider opportunities to partner with the Court and legal services to enable the delivery of legal support services in community facilities.

General recommendations

- Liaise with Court Services Victoria and legal aid services to further understand service demands and opportunities to deliver additional local services through council community infrastructure.

7. Opportunities by township

This section provides a summary of the above findings across the main service towns of Bright, Myrtleford, Mount Beauty (and Tawonga South), and Porepunkah. This includes opportunities in these locations for provision of new facilities, redevelopment/ refurbishment, or consolidation. These findings should be used to inform future structure planning processes for each town.

7.1 Bright

As the second-largest centre in Alpine, Bright contains a broad cross-section of community facilities. It currently functions as the service and tourism centre of Alpine.

Based on the assessment, there are opportunities for improvement of existing facilities as well as consolidation where facilities may be reaching the end of their service life, underutilised, surplus to need, no longer fit-for-purpose, or a combination of these.

Opportunities for Bright (depicted in Figure 7) include:

- Redevelop the Bright Community Centre as a multipurpose community hub to include:
 - A range of flexible multipurpose rooms
 - A larger events/venue space that can accommodate larger gatherings such as weddings and conferences, as well as continue to be used for activities such as school exams
 - A Neighbourhood House/U3A service (relocated)
 - A dedicated youth space
- Redevelop Pioneer Park Netball & Pony Clubrooms in Bright as a multipurpose clubhouse space capable of accommodating multiple user groups (pony club, netball, cycling club, scouts) and public toilets to support groups, general park users, and use of the adjacent outdoor events space. In the longer-term, explore whether equestrian activities can be consolidated at the Myrtleford Showgrounds.
- If Scouts cannot be accommodated in the redeveloped multipurpose clubhouse noted above, refurbish this site to improve its condition.
- Provide lighting and durable play surfaces at Pioneer Park to support longevity and increased use.
- Refurbish the Bright Library with an upgraded multipurpose room, and consider a 24-hour access model.
- Refurbish the Bright Skate Park (Council is currently pursuing funding for this project).
- Advocate to state government to upgrade the sports stadium at Bright P-12, and for continued joint use of this facility.
- If redevelopment of the Bright P-12 Stadium does not progress and long-term community access cannot be secured under a joint use agreement, consider redevelopment of the Sports Centre to include an indoor stadium.

- Upgrade the Bright Sports Centre aquatic facilities to accommodate warm water activities.
- Consolidate/ repurpose:
 - 5 Elm Court, Bright (dance activities can be relocated to a private studio or accommodated at the new community hub)
 - Bright Senior Citizen's Centre (accommodate U3A group at new multipurpose community hub)
 - Pioneer Park Bright Scout Hall (if the group can be accommodated at the redeveloped netball & pony clubrooms site)
 - Bright Museum (investigations already underway to introduce a café or repurpose as a bike workshop)

Additional opportunity:

As a medium-to-long-term opportunity, the Bright Croquet Club is on Government Road Reserve and is located adjacent to the Bright Community Centre. Council could enter into discussions with the State government to use this land for extending a redeveloped community centre or utilising the additional space for hosting outdoor events, but further analysis of utilisation of the site is needed to better understand if there is community demand for croquet.



Figure 7: Bright community infrastructure opportunities



7.2 Porepukah

Community access to local services and facilities will be increasingly important as Porepukah emerges as a service township in its own right. In addition, with increased population additional community infrastructure will be required.

Porepukah currently has a primary school, oval, and a community hall, all co-located at the town's central recreation reserve, presenting an opportunity for reinforcing this site as a community hub. Masterplanning for this site is recommended to achieve this. Council has indicated that it may be included as part of the Bright River Precinct Master Plan. The future of this site will also be dependent on outcomes from the grant recently awarded to the Porepukah Hall.

Site-specific opportunities for Porepukah (depicted in Figure 8) include:

- Subject to masterplanning, redevelopment of existing facilities at the Porepukah Recreation Reserve to deliver more multipurpose community spaces and supporting infrastructure for sport and recreation – *subject to outcomes from the Porepukah Hall's redevelopment*
- Potential delivery of a new early years centre with 2 kindergarten rooms and spaces for MCH, playgroups and other family/children's activities, subject to consultation with ACS to determine whether this is needed in the long-term to supplement the existing provision in Bright.

Masterplanning for the Porepukah Recreation Reserve site should consider whether this early years facility could be accommodated. Alternatively, this facility could be provided in the residential growth area to the northeast of the town centre, identified under the LDS.

Figure 8: Porepukah community infrastructure opportunities



7.3 Myrtleford

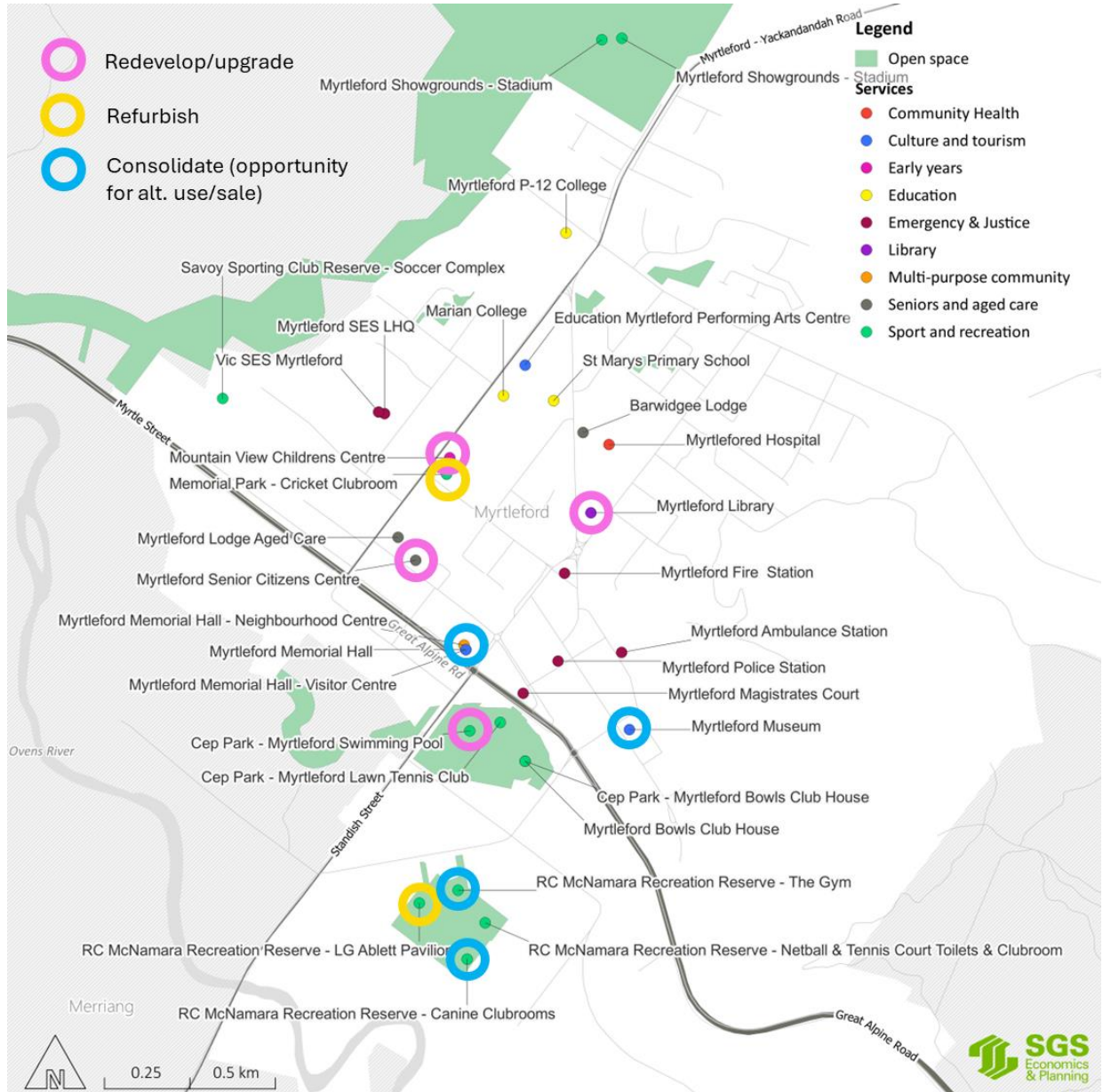
The centre with the largest population in Alpine, Myrtleford contains many existing community facilities. The town is also challenged by disadvantage more than other areas of the Shire. These characteristics mean that Myrtleford should be the priority for investment in new and redeveloped infrastructure, including provision of community support and development services.

Site-specific opportunities for Myrtleford (depicted in Figure 9) include:

- A new community hub in Myrtleford, likely at the existing Senior Citizens Centre site. This should include:
 - A range of flexible multipurpose rooms
 - A dedicated youth space, ideally with its own entrance (or this could be co-located with the library)
 - A neighbourhood House service/ U3A service (relocated)
- Alternative sites:
 - *Myrtleford Museum*
 - *Memorial Hall (likely at capacity with other uses following planned redevelopment)*
 - *Myrtleford Library*
- If the revised heritage controls allow for redevelopment, consider upgrading Myrtleford Library as the main 'regional' level library which could include a higher level of service offering and resources (e.g. specialised collections), and more spaces to accommodate remote work and study. Also look to consolidate other complementary services/activities at the library site through redevelopment/expansion if they cannot be located the hub – particularly a youth space.
- Engage with the State Government to understand whether a new kindergarten will be delivered on a school site in Myrtleford. If not, redevelop the Mountain View Children's Centre (Myrtleford) to improve its condition/FFP and provide one additional kindergarten room in Myrtleford by 2032.
- Refurbish/ upgrade the Canine Clubrooms at RC McNamara Reserve in Myrtleford (noted in the existing master plan). Consider opening this facility up to wider community use.
- The Gym at RC McNamara Recreation Reserve is in very poor condition and has poor fitness for purpose - this can be consolidated and replaced by the delivery of an outdoor gym, as per the existing masterplan.
- Refurbish/ upgrade the Memorial Park pavilion to improve condition/FFP and ensure it is female-friendly (noted in the existing master plan). Also provide durable play surfaces here to support longevity and increased use.
- Continue to engage with Marion College (Myrtleford) for delivery of an athletics track, and secure community access outside school hours under a joint use agreement.
- Upgrade the Myrtleford Swimming Pool to accommodate warm water activities and provide winter access.
- Consolidate/ repurpose:
 - Myrtleford Memorial Hall Neighbourhood Centre (integrate into a new multipurpose community hub)

- Myrtleford Museum (seek to integrate artefacts into visitor information centres/parks/other community facilities)

Figure 9: Myrtleford community infrastructure opportunities



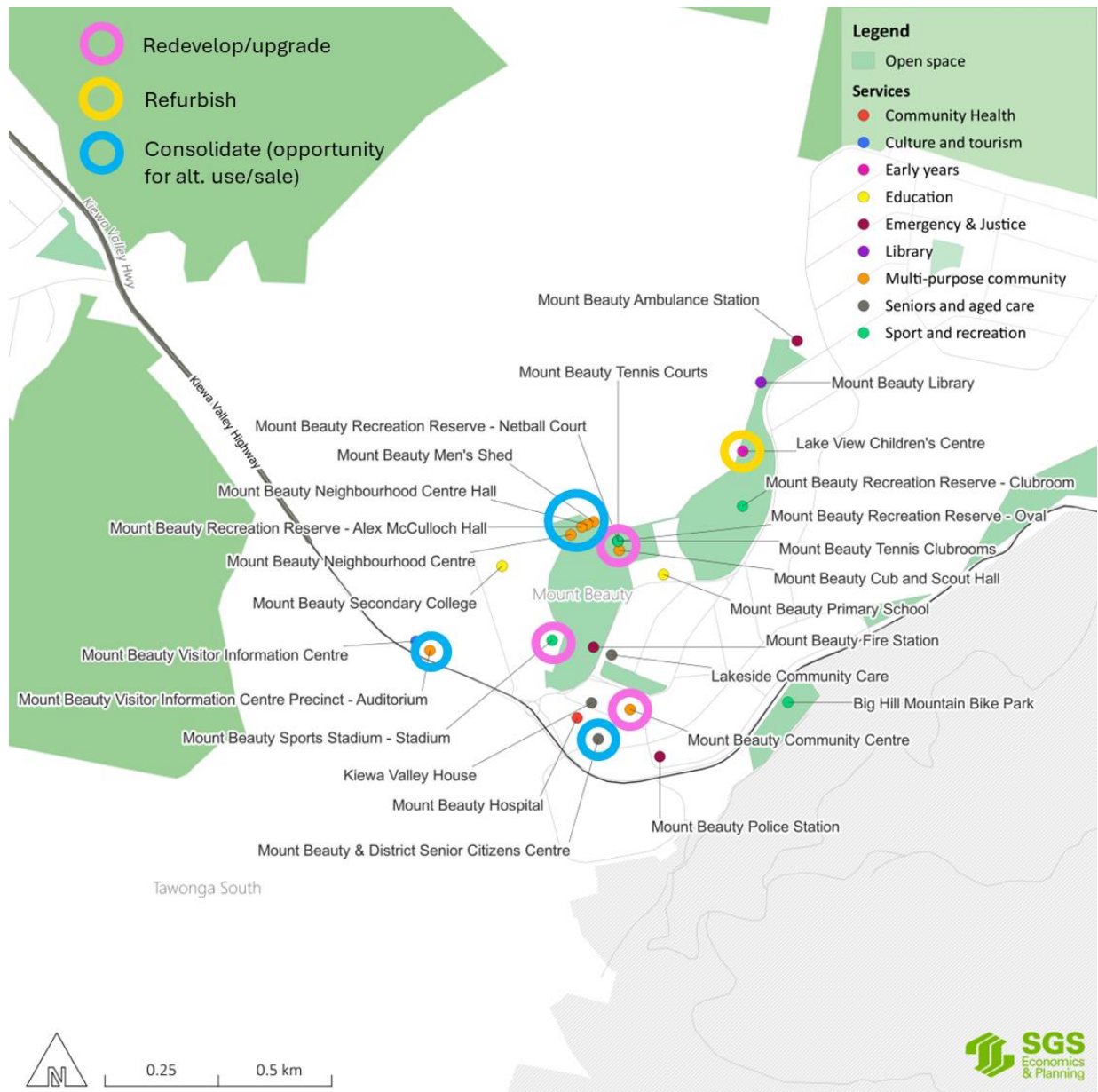
7.4 Mount Beauty

Mount Beauty is the smallest of the service towns, with approximately 900 people as of 2021 but with a large number of community facilities, relative to the population size. A rebalancing of resources is needed to improve the fitness-for-purpose, condition, and capacity of sites, allowing for the consolidation of others.

Site-specific opportunities for Mount Beauty (depicted in Figure 10) include:

- Redevelop the Mount Beauty Community Centre as a multipurpose community hub. Include:
 - A range of flexible multipurpose rooms, including some smaller flexible rooms that can be used for service consults or office space
 - Neighbourhood House service/ U3A (relocated)
- Provide services for young people who cannot travel to Bright or Myrtleford via outreach youth programs in Mount Beauty/Tawonga from multipurpose rooms at existing and future facilities.
- Look to consolidate other complementary services/activities at the Mount Beauty library site if they cannot be located at the new hub.
- Redevelop Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve community facility (redeveloped tennis clubhouse/scout hall) to be integrated into the new community facility at this site. In doing so include a multipurpose room and shed space with storage to accommodate multiple user groups and allow for consolidation of other community buildings on site.
- Redevelop the tennis clubroom facility at the Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve, if this group cannot be accommodated at the new multipurpose community facility at this site.
- Over the medium-long term, refurbish the Lake View (Mount Beauty) Centre to ensure it can continue to operate. Through redevelopment:
 - Provide spaces for MCH, playgroups and other family/children's activities.
 - Improve safety so that OSHC can safely operate if there is future demand for the service
- Investigate the potential to enhance the commercial function (e.g. selling more goods from local businesses or installing a cafe) of the Mount Beauty Visitor Information Centre.
- Upgrade the Mount Beauty Swimming Pool (at the Sports Stadium site) to accommodate warm water activities and provide winter access.
- Consolidate/ repurpose:
 - Mount Beauty Senior Citizen's Centre (integrate into the new multipurpose community hub)
 - Mount Beauty Neighbourhood Centre & Hall (integrate into the new multipurpose community hub or new community facility at the reserve)
 - Mount Beauty Men's Shed (integrate into a new multipurpose facility at the reserve)
 - Mount Beauty Cub & Scout Hall (integrate into a new multipurpose facility at the reserve)
 - Alex McCulloch Hall(integrate into a new multipurpose facility at the reserve)
 - The Auditorium, Mount Beauty (integrate into the new multipurpose community hub)

Figure 10: Mount Beauty community infrastructure opportunities



Appendix A: Detailed policy review

State policy

Victoria's Infrastructure Strategy (2021-2051)

This Strategy provides a practical roadmap for action over the next 30 years, identifying the top infrastructure priorities for the State. While much of the Strategy is focused on transport and energy infrastructure, it also includes a number of general recommendations relevant to social infrastructure, including:

- Adapting existing infrastructure for modern needs
- Aligning social infrastructure with better service delivery
- Updating, repurposing or retiring outdated community infrastructure
- Prioritising and overseeing infrastructure delivery in growth areas
- Work with Aboriginal Victorians to develop a plan to guide investment in Aboriginal community-controlled infrastructure

Regional Victoria is a key focus area, and a direction of the strategy is to foster regional Victorians' health, wellbeing, and inclusion. For regional Councils, it acknowledges the unique growth pressures, limited budgets, and the tyranny of distance that limits access to services which all require a flexible and tailored response. It makes the following additional recommendations for social infrastructure in regional areas:

- Deliver multipurpose shared social service facilities in the regions
- Update community infrastructure (to address the poor fitness for purpose and condition of existing facilities)
- Create climate-adapted facilities for rural communities
- Build regional residential alcohol and drug rehabilitation facilities
- Fund more Youth Foyers in regional Victoria

Note: This strategy is currently being updated.

Plan for Victoria

Plan for Victoria provides the overarching planning direction for metropolitan Melbourne and the regions. This was released in 2025, and supersedes both Plan Melbourne 2050 and the 12 Regional Growth Plans. The pillars by which the Plan is organised are:

- Self-determination and caring for Country

- Housing for all Victorians
- Accessible jobs and services
- Sustainable environments
- Great places, suburbs and towns

Under the ‘accessible jobs and services’ pillar, there is a commitment to ensuring ‘communities have the public transport, facilities and services they need to lead healthy, productive lives, including schools and kindergartens, TAFEs, emergency services, health care, active transport and open space.’ Beyond this, the Plan does not make any specific commitments or actions relevant to community infrastructure provision in the regions.

Municipal policy

Alpine Shire Land Development Strategy (2023)

SGS Economics and Planning were engaged to prepare a Land Development Strategy⁵⁵ (LDS) for the Alpine Shire Council. The Draft LDS provides an integrated approach for accommodating and guiding future population and employment growth and change in the municipality to 2041. As such, it does not provide direct guidance on the provision of community infrastructure or services.

The key purpose of the LDS is to prepare the Shire to accommodate forecast growth over the next 15-20 years. The LDS defines Bright, Myrtleford and Mount Beauty-Tawonga South as the Shire’s ‘service towns’, and Porepunkah as an ‘emerging service town’. These locations are supported as the primary areas for future residential and employment growth, as well as the provision of community infrastructure. Of relevance, the proportion of older adults is expected to increase at a higher rate than other age groups across the Shire, which may create further implications for community infrastructure and services planning.

The LDS outlines seven Strategic Directions which support the Alpine Shire’s vision (as set out in the Council Plan and Alpine Planning Scheme): *Our people, places and environment enrich our area’s resilience, prosperity and sustainability*. These directions provide the framing for objectives, strategies and actions of the LDS, and those with most relevance to this assessment are outlined in Table 35, below:

Table 35: LDS Relevant Strategic Directions, Objectives, Strategies and Actions

Objective	Strategies (for planning scheme) and Actions (for further work)
SD3: Compact Towns and Settlements	
O4: To direct residential, commercial, industrial and community infrastructure growth to safe, suitable and well serviced locations, in an orderly manner.	S4.1: Direct residential, employment and community infrastructure growth to locate within Service Towns as shown on the Service Town Framework Plans.
SD4: Residential growth and housing diversity	

⁵⁵ SGS Economics and Planning (2023), *Alpine Shire Land Development Strategy*

Objective	Strategies (for planning scheme) and Actions (for further work)
SD3: Compact Towns and Settlements	
O6: To encourage increased diversity in housing supply to meet the needs of people of all ages and lifestyles.	S6.3: Encourage medium density housing, retirement villages and aged care in General Residential zoned areas of Service Towns with easy access to essential services. S6.5: Review the existing use of Council owned land assets which are underutilised or leased to private and community organisations, and determine the preferred future use of the land for the greatest benefit to the community once leases expire.
SD7: Infrastructure to support growth	
O9: To provide development that supports preferred patterns of development and planned growth.	A9.1 Identify development and community infrastructure to be funded by the anticipated growth in Service Towns and implement a sustainable infrastructure funding system.
O10: To provide community and economic infrastructure to support the local community and build the capacity of the local workforce.	S10.1: Support development of community infrastructure including education, health services, emergency management and recreational facilities to meet demand locally and minimise the need to travel to access services.
	A10.2: Prepare a community infrastructure needs assessment based on the existing and projected population growth that identifies what community infrastructure will be required, and when it is likely to be required.

Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2025)

An adequate provision of community infrastructure is required to support the ongoing liveability and growth of the Alpine Shire until 2041. In addition, increased pressure is being placed on existing public amenities in the face of continuing population growth and demographic shifts.

Alpine Shire Economic Development Strategy (2021)

The Alpine Shire Economic Development Strategy combines community/stakeholder consultation with independent research and analysis to establish a direction for Council to maintain and develop the local economy into the future. The Strategy outlines a framework which incorporates five key themes, each supported by targeted objectives. Of greatest pertinence to this assessment is Theme 3 and its supporting objectives:

- **Theme 3: Enhanced Liveability and Resident Attraction**
 - 3.1: Maintain and improve amenity of the Alpine Shire
 - 3.3: Support for an ageing population

The Strategy encourages prioritising township amenity improvements to Bright, Myrtleford and Mount Beauty – three of the most populated centres in the Shire. Such improvements can include small-scale projects, in addition to public realm and infrastructure upgrades that improve access, amenity, wayfinding and safety. While focusing on these populated centres is important and should be

prioritised, providing good quality and accessible community infrastructure and facilities to smaller, less populated centres is equally critical for the health and wellbeing of residents.

With an older population that continues to age, there is an increased demand for specific services such as aged care, health care and social assistance across the Alpine Shire. It is essential that this support is provided for the ageing population – however, this will be challenging in the face of labour shortfalls and constraints. Outside of the provision of healthcare services, the Strategy acknowledges the importance of providing community facilities and programs to support the engagement of retirees and senior residents.

The Strategy also states that, alongside a growing ageing population, there is evidence that the Shire's age profile is shifting to a younger demographic – shown through increasing enrolment rates in local schools. As a result, it is important for Council to increase their provision of quality community facilities and infrastructure, amenity improvements, job opportunities and education services that collectively attract young families to the Shire. This will sustain the local economy over time and support long term growth. This assessment will consider the importance of balancing the needs of the ageing population with the infrastructure necessary to attract young families to the Shire.

Alpine Shire Sport and Active Recreation Plan (2022-2033)

The Alpine Shire Sport and Active Recreation Plan (2022-2033)⁵⁶ provides a strategic framework to guide Council's investment in sport and active recreation from 2022-2033. Doing so, it aims to ensure that new and existing resources can positively contribute, to the greatest extent possible, to the overall health, wellbeing and liveability of the Alpine Shire community. This is reflected in the Plan's vision: *"Active, connected and liveable communities"*.

The Plan is supported eight planning principles which were identified through research and community consultation. From these principles, and of relevance to this assessment, four key pillars were established, each containing objectives and supporting actions. The pillars include:

- **People:** to encourage and support increased participation in physical activity by the community.
- **Places:** to provide a diversity of quality and accessible sport and active recreation places and spaces for the community.
- **Partners:** to work in partnership with community organisations, government agencies and the private sector to facilitate sport and active recreation opportunities for the community.
- **Processes:** to provide a strategic framework to guide Council's decision making and investment in relation to sport and active recreation.

Table 36~~Error! Reference source not found.~~ outlines the relevance of key pillars through a community infrastructure lens, and highlights any actions with pertinence to this assessment:

⁵⁶ Alpine Shire Council (2022), *Sport and Active Recreation Plan 2022-2033*

Table 36: Relevant Pillars and Supporting Actions

Relevant Pillar	Relevance to assessment and key actions (where applicable)
People	The Alpine Shire has a higher proportion of older adults compared to the rest of Victoria. Additionally, survey data from 2017 states that combined, 85% of local residents aged 18+ years are either overweight or obese, compared to 70% of Victorians. The key to increasing physical activity amongst local residents is to address several barriers to participation, such as: – Cost of activities, – Inadequate facilities and areas of open space; or lack of suitably located facilities, – Lack of public transportation, – Lack of inclusive policies and practices; or a lack of information about available opportunities. Council also need to ensure that infrastructure provision encourages physical activity, particularly for older adults. This could include a greater provision of walking and cycling activities, aquatic activities, softer playing surfaces (instead of asphalt), specific fitness programs designed to maintain health and wellbeing or gentle outdoor exercise classes. Key actions and directions to increase participation include: – Activating places and spaces: providing shaded areas in active areas; providing more rest areas in parks and shared trails; providing greater lighting and signage at key sporting facilities or along shared walking/cycling trails; better utilisation of existing sportsgrounds. – Improving accessibility: this can include improving physical access – e.g., disability ramps and braille signage. It can also include lowering the cost of activities, providing transport options to facilities, or providing childcare supervision options. – Increase female participation: by encouraging facilities to be more accommodating for female participation, and providing equitable access to sports facilities for training and matches.
Places	Council provides a diverse range of sports and recreation facilities to the community, and in addition, there are a variety of recreational programs and activities undertaken by community organisations. However, a mixed method approach comprising of a community survey and existing facility audit identified several issues to be addressed – particularly: – Ageing facilities; facilities that will require considerably expensive upgrades in the future, – Lack of change facilities and toilets, – Lack of infrastructure that could help to further activate sites. – Trail path upgrades; aquatic facility upgrades; skate park upgrades. Of significance, the Plan outlines that the focus for council should be on improving existing assets, rather than developing new facilities. This is because large, single-purpose facilities are more likely to be developed in proximity to major centres with larger population catchments, such as Wodonga and Wangaratta.
Partners	Across the Alpine Shire, various sport and active recreation opportunities are facilitated by a range of partners including: council, community organisations, government agencies and health agencies and more. Of particular relevance, the Plan acknowledges the role that Schools can play in promoting healthy lifestyles amongst young people, and also the broader community. Insights from the community revealed that where shared school and community facilities are located on land owned by the Department of Education, there is a lack of clarity around access and maintenance responsibilities. Providing greater access to school facilities for the community, and community facilities by schools

Relevant Pillar	Relevance to assessment and key actions (where applicable)
	can reduce the duplication of facilities while simultaneously maximising the usage of existing assets.

Source: Alpine Shire Council (2022)

Alpine Shire Events Strategy (2021)

Urban Enterprise were engaged by Council in 2021, following the harsh impacts of COVID-19 and bushfires, to prepare the Alpine Shire Events Strategy⁵⁷. This Strategy identifies the needs and priorities of the community and provides a framework for Council to guide the future delivery of events in the Shire. As of 2021, the Shire hosted an average of 107 community/tourism events per annum, collectively attracting ~170,000 attendees. While this is largely beneficial to the local economy, it can also present challenges for the community, such as reduced amenity for residents, safety issues, a lack of suitable facilities and poor supporting infrastructure.

Community infrastructure and event infrastructure are deeply interconnected, as both contribute to the overall social, economic and cultural vitality of a community. The Strategy outlines a number of strategic directions and supporting strategies to respond to issues and needs of the sector. Of significance to this assessment is *Strategic Direction 2: Deliver improved event facilities and supporting infrastructure*, which aims to improve the diversity and quality of event infrastructure (both indoor and outdoor) to accommodate a variety of events.

Though the region's event calendar is strongly aligned with the region's natural strengths, namely, nature-based, sport and outdoor recreation activities, the strategy identifies two other 'regional product pillars' that present opportunities to diversify the events calendar: *Arts and Culture* and *Food and Beverage* events. While food and beverage events could be supported by a diversity of facilities (or even outdoors), libraries and arts and cultural facilities are important community infrastructure assets to support the growth of arts and cultural events, and will help to draw visitors to high-time events and beyond the peak tourist seasons. The strategy identifies these event types as having particularly high relative impact per event.

The Strategy suggests that the Shire's existing stock of event infrastructure acts as a barrier to sector development. This is because there is a lack of venues outside of Bright, which restricts the dispersal of events to other local townships. There is also a lack of contemporary indoor venues (which are often utilised in winter) and an absence of contemporary large-scale accommodation to support visitor capacity for large tourism events. To address such barriers, the following strategies are suggested:

- **Strategy 2.1 - Improve existing event infrastructure:** including enhancements to the safety of existing venues (e.g., installing fencing), amenity improvements (toilets, lighting, water), and accessibility.

⁵⁷ Urban Enterprise (2021), *Alpine Shire Events Strategy*

- **Strategy 2.2 - Promote utilisation of event infrastructure:** consultation identified underutilisation and an overall lack of awareness around existing event infrastructure. In response, Council created a venue directory⁵⁸ to showcase available facilities.
- **Strategy 2.3 - Develop new strategic event infrastructure:** the strategy identifies a need for more indoor venues and provision of outdoor venues with supporting infrastructure.

Alpine Shire Youth Strategy (2022-2024)

Council's Youth Strategy 2022-2024⁵⁹ identified the top concerns voiced by young people (aged 12-25) in the Shire. The key issues that the youth population are impacted by include substance abuse, social isolation, mental health and wellbeing problems, and family conflicts. Young people also highlight that having a place where young people can meet for information and support is necessary. Community infrastructure that is accessible, and provides non-judgemental and supportive environments for young people are key pieces of infrastructure to support younger members of the community with these challenges.

The strategy is focused three priority areas:

- Supporting the health, wellbeing, safety and empowerment of young people
- Supporting recognition and opportunities for young people to flourish
- Supporting self-advocacy and an ability to have a voice in the community

Council will either directly provide services and programs, or work with community health providers *Alpine Health*, Partnership Broker and Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) member *Nellen*, and *Nesay* (North East Support and Action for Youth).

Alpine Shire Access and Inclusion Plan (2021-2024)

The Alpine Shire Access and Inclusion Plan (2021-2024)⁶⁰ promotes the inclusion of community members and visitors with disabilities and tackles barriers to social and recreational exclusion. The Plan details a range of objectives and actions to increase participation for people with disabilities and embeds inclusivity and accessibility into programs, policies, activities and processes.

The Plan outlines four key focus areas and twelve objectives for Council to pursue. Those most directly relevant to this assessment are summarised in Table 37, below:

Table 37: AIP Relevant Focus Areas, Objectives and Outcomes

Relevant focus area	Relevance objectives and outcomes
Focus Area 1: Promoting positive community attitudes and behaviours	– To ensure that events and programs are accessible to residents and visitors with disabilities. – To improve the community awareness and understanding of barriers for people with disabilities.

⁵⁸ Alpine Shire Council (n.d.), *Facilities*, <https://www.alpineshire.vic.gov.au/community/facilities>

⁵⁹ Alpine Shire Council (2022) *Youth Strategy 2022-24*

⁶⁰ Alpine Shire Council (2021), *Access and Inclusion Plan 2021-2024*

Relevant focus area	Relevance objectives and outcomes
Focus Area 2: Creating liveable communities	– Creating a connected and accessible community for residents and visitors with disabilities. – Increased social connection and participation for people with disabilities.
Focus Area 4: Improving access to Council services through better systems and processes	– Increase access to information and available services. – Increase community participation for people with disabilities.

Source: Alpine Shire Council (2021)

Community engagement highlighted that Council's largest priority should focus on promoting and educating local businesses on access and inclusion. The provision of community infrastructure can play a meaningful role in doing so. For example, community facilities can be utilised to host workshops and training programs for teaching businesses the relevant standards, inclusive design elements, and best practices for accommodating community members with disabilities.

Council's Youth Strategy 2022-2024⁶¹ identified the top concerns voiced by young people (aged 12-25) in the Shire. The key issues that the youth population are impacted by include substance abuse, social isolation, mental health and wellbeing problems, and family conflicts. The youth also highlight that having a play where young people can meet for information and support is necessary. Community infrastructure that is accessible, and provides non-judgemental and supportive environments for young people are key pieces of infrastructure to support younger members of the community with these challenges.

Alpine Shire Asset Plan (2022-2032)

Local Councils in Victoria are the custodians of infrastructure and other assets on behalf of their communities. The Alpine Shire Council's Asset Plan (2022-2032)⁶² sits under the *Local Government Act 2020*'s legislative framework, representing the status and operational activities of six main asset classes: Roads & Car Parks, Buildings, Open Space, Drainage, Pathways and Bridges. Of greatest relevance to the delivery of community infrastructure are the 'buildings' and 'open space' assets.

At the time that the Asset Plan was prepared, Council's building portfolio comprised 392 buildings including public halls, libraries, swimming pools, public toilets, minor structures and the like – equating to a total replacement cost of \$74.9 million. In addition, open space assets including sporting infrastructure (tennis and netball courts, sporting ovals, playgrounds, park furniture etc.) equated to a replacement cost of \$7.3 million.

Community infrastructure assets are essential to wellbeing of the community and the delivery of basic public services – particularly in an evolving urban landscape. The Plan identifies several key areas with the potential to significantly impact Council's ability to meet the community's need. However, these challenges concurrently provide opportunities:

⁶¹ Alpine Shire Council (2022) *Youth Strategy 2022-24*

⁶² Alpine Shire Council (2022), *Asset Plan 2022-2032*

Table 38: Community Infrastructure Asset Challenges and Opportunities

Challenge	Implication for asset management and delivery
Demographic change. The Alpine Shire has a considerably older age profile, with a median age of 49 – compared to the statewide average of 37.	Council needs to ensure that community infrastructure, facilities and services are suitable for the increasingly older demographic.
Ageing infrastructure. Renewing ageing infrastructure is extremely costly, which provides a great challenge for council. A vast majority of assets were constructed many years ago.	As assets continue to age, increased investment into maintenance and renewal expenditure will be required to ensure that current levels of service can be enjoyed by the future community.
Increasing cost of providing services. The cost of providing and maintaining assets continues to increase for council – such as electricity and utility bills, raw materials, construction etc.	Council needs to aspire to balance the affordable provision of services against the needs of the community.

Source: Alpine Shire Council (2022)

Council is committed to asset management practices that maximise service delivery potential from its asset portfolio in the most cost-effective manner while meeting community expectations and regulatory requirements. Adopting a 10-year strategic approach in the management of assets, through the Asset Plan, ensures the cumulative effects of short- to medium-term operational decisions achieve the best outcomes for the Alpine Shire community and users of assets today and into the future.

Over the next eight years (until 2032), Council plan to spend a total of \$122.3 million on the renewal and replacement assets reaching the end of their lifecycle (47% of total), the acquisition of new assets to meet growth or future demand (25% of total), and the maintenance of existing assets (28% of total).

Alpine Shire Aquatics and Indoor Stadium Feasibility Study – Background Report (2024) (Commercial in Confidence) and Options Analysis Report (2024)

A feasibility study was conducted for Alpine Shire’s aquatic and indoor stadium facilities in 2024. The background report considered five sites across Myrtleford, Bright and Mount Beauty: Myrtleford Swimming Pool, Myrtleford Indoor Sports Centre, Mount Beauty Stadium and Swimming Pool, Bright Sports Centre, Bright P-12 College Indoor Stadium. These facilities are noted as likely to be increasingly utilised due to the Shire’s ageing population and demand for hydrotherapy and increasing interest in non-competitive indoor sports. They currently attract approximately 10,000 patron visits each year.

The existing facilities were all built from 20-35 years ago, requiring \$1.7 million in maintenance costs over the next 10 years and have an operating cost of approximately \$400,000 per year. The Myrtleford Stadium underwent redevelopment in 2023 and added a second stadium to the site.

Stakeholder feedback found that the community uses these facilities heavily. The pools are felt to be in good shape (apart from the plant rooms) but the indoor stadiums less so. Both aquatic and indoor sports facilities suffer from insufficient availability due to their popularity, further hampered by the lack of year-round lap swimming access. In contrast to how stakeholders felt, the facilities should be able to accommodate future growth and demand going by industry provision benchmarks, though this will require modifications to development and programming.

While the majority of the townships can reach their respective facilities within a 20-minute drive, provision gaps result from a lack of lap swimming in winter, a lack of warm water facilities, and a lack of teen play, while indoor stadiums do not support futsal, gymnastics, calisthenics, handball or table tennis. The highest priority gaps are identified as:

- Access to aquatic facilities throughout winter in Mount Beauty and Myrtleford
- Access to warm water for aqua aerobics and swimming lessons
- Indoor sport opportunities in Bright.

The Options Analysis report built on the Background report by adding community survey results and an options analysis. The online community survey received 232 responses and 42% of respondents visited an indoor sport facility in the last 12 months (primarily to play basketball), and 90% had visited an aquatics centre (primarily to swim or attend swim classes). Key barriers to visitation are the facilities being closed or in use for other activities. Secondary barriers for aquatic facilities are poorly maintained facilities, and for indoor sport facilities the cost of access or being involved. Priorities include the development of indoor pools and improving the condition of existing facilities, and improving supporting infrastructure of indoor sport facilities and increasing parking.

Whereas the gaps include access to aquatic facilities throughout winter in Mount Beauty and Myrtleford, the top options for both locations are to redevelop the existing facilities. Bright has identified gaps for indoor sport opportunities and the top options here are to redevelop the existing sports centre closely followed by relocating it to Pioneer Park, where it would have more room to expand but is less accessible.

Creative Workers in the Alpine Shire – Preliminary Arts Audit (2024)

This takes stock of the creative community across Alpine Shire both in terms of artists and the venues that support the creative industry. It finds that there is a lack of coordination and infrastructure to support the industry and its economic role, which is suited to Alpine due to a large population of local artists, a robust tourism and hospitality industry but a limited number of indoor activities, and the local environment and scenery.

Relative to this CINA, the audit includes performance venues and galleries. It finds that arts infrastructure is concentrated in Bright, and while there are a number of small-scale performance venues, at the time of the report there were no professional-grade facilities across the Shire.

Recommendations include the facilitation of small group artist meetings in each region of the shire, developing a creative industries strategy, and funding for the above.

Alpine Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2021-2024

This outlines Council's responsibilities around emergency management planning and, importantly to this work, discusses and identifies locations and facilities that are identified as bushfire places of last resort, staging areas, and emergency relief centres.

"A staging area is a designated area where emergency response/service personnel, vehicles, resources and equipment are assembled in an emergency. CFA has given advice for certain locations may be utilised as staging areas for fire incidents in Alpine Shire: It should be noted that Alpine Shire Council

does not manage any of these facilities and the controlling agency may choose a different location to support any operational incidents” (p.39)

Table 39: Staging areas

Town	Location
Myrtleford	McNamara Reserve Oval, Lewis Avenue
Ovens	DELWP Ovens Office, Great Alpine Road
Mt Beauty	Mt Beauty Secondary College, Pool Rd
Dederang	Dederang Football Ground, Kiewa Valley Highway

Regarding bushfire places of last resort (BPLR), it makes clear that they are not part of shelter in place or evacuation strategies; *they are places of last resort* where other plans have failed or cannot be followed. BPLR are places or facilities designated and signposted that meet guidelines issued by the CFA and the criteria in the Municipal Neighbourhood Safer Places Plan. (p.41)

Table 40: Bushfire places of last resort (BPLR)

Town	Bushfire places of last resort
Bright and Wandiligong	Pioneer Park Oval, 64/72 Coronation Avenue, Bright
Harrietville	Harrietville Hall, Great Alpine Road
Porepunkah	Porepunkah Hall and oval
Dederang	Memorial Hall Kiewa Valley Highway
Myrtleford	Ablett Pavilion Lewis Avenue
	RC McNamara Reserve oval Lewis Avenue
Mount Beauty	Mount Beauty Sports Stadium Pool Road
Tawonga	Memorial Hall Kiewa Valley Highway

Mount Beauty Community Facilities Strategy – 2013

Council developed a **Community Facilities Strategy for Mount Beauty** in 2013. At the time, Tawonga and Tawonga South were the areas experiencing the most growth, which is no longer the case, however the key drivers of the review are still relevant today and include:

- the pattern of settlement and the related access to community facilities;
- changes in activity choices;
- increasing economic constraints; and

- the capacity of existing facilities to continue to support community participation.

The key recommendation was a move to consolidate standalone facilities into more flexible and multi-purpose facilities that combine activities into hubs, with a review of the management framework required to support this. Also still relevant was that storage for community groups was identified as a core issue and the strategy recommends that using community facilities primarily for storage is not sustainable.

Though the strategy is now out of date, recommended community activity hubs for Mount Beauty include a:

- Central community hub at the Mount Beauty Community Centre and surrounding area
- Sports hub at the Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve including the pavilion
- Tourism hub at the Alpine Discovery Centre (i.e.: Alpine Visitor Information Centre)
- Children's hub at the Lakeview Children's Services

Appendix B: Literature review – community facilities and tourism in council strategies

Council strategies	
Document	Summary
Barossa Valley, SA Infrastructure Asset Management Plan 2020-2030 (2021)	The Nuriootpa Centennial Park Authority (NCPA) manages a tourism, recreational and sporting precinct (Nuriootpa Centennial Park) on behalf of The Barossa Council that includes playing fields, community and sporting buildings, reserves, and the Barossa Valley Tourist Park (comprising of cabins and a range of sites). For the sporting and recreation reserve: Maintain sporting and recreational facilities and infrastructure in partnership with stakeholder user groups to attract visitors to the Barossa region and for sustainable (and increased) utilisation by the Barossa regional community by maintaining and renewing existing assets and developing new infrastructure to meet emerging and future needs. (p.43) Similar expectations of the Coulthard Reserve. Includes an asset priority classification for tourism from 0 (No tourist importance) to 10 (Critical tourist importance). Any upgrade to transport assets i.e. sealing of unsealed roads, construction of new footpath or intersection upgrade will be determined based on the social, tourism and freight importance of the road and projected demand for future traffic. (p.26)
Shire of Campaspe Economic Development and Tourism Strategy – Issues and Opportunities Discussion Paper (2024)	Does not explicitly connect community infrastructure and tourism, focusing on supporting businesses and events, but under the heading of Visitor and Event Economy, lists ‘recent achievements’ that include: - Major capital works in the Kyabram Fauna Park, including entry, café and animal enclosures utilising \$2.75m of grants - New play space ‘Wirima’ in Rochester - Gargarro Botanical Gardens, Girgarre including introduction of an outdoor amphitheatre and café

	▪ Rail trail between Girgarre and Stanhope ▪ Murray River Adventure Trail – cycling/walking trail between Barmah and Cohuna ▪ The Art Depot in Rushworth
McLaren Vale, SA City of Onkaparinga Strategic Asset Management Plan (2021)	Goals and objectives: Our economy benefits everyone - Support our tourism industry by providing safe and efficient assets that complement our tourist destinations. KPIs: Condition of assets that experience high levels of tourism; Visitation at our McLaren Vale and Fleurieu Coast Visitor Centre. (p.8-9) Passive open spaces to provide for nature tourism, among other purposes. (p.20) The plan prompts consideration for the levels of service provided in constructing and maintaining assets around our tourism precincts so our assets support visitation and meet the expectations and needs of visitors. (p.27)
Kangaroo Island, SA Kangaroo Island Regional Plan – Draft (2024)	During the peak tourist season, the Island’s population increases by as much as 17% (p.15) and expected to grow (p.25). Adaptive reuse of buildings is desired for cultural or heritage buildings and can increase a town’s attractiveness as a year-round tourist destination... (p.46) The Island’s tourism is impacted by the seasons with 32% of overnight stays occurring over summer, compared to just 16% recorded in winter... The Island is in a strong position to exceed (visitation income) figures, underscoring the need to provide an appropriate level of services, accommodation and other land uses to support this visitor demand. (p.53) Reliable telecommunications and data is noted as an important asset for the tourism industry (for businesses in particular) (p.94)
Southern Midlands, Tasmania Southern Midlands Community Infrastructure Plan (2024)	Oatlands is regionally important and seeing significant economic activity as a result of successful tourism ventures. Implementation of the Oatlands Structure Plan 2021 is part of ongoing work to support the community and pursue further development opportunities. In response to 2006 action plan targets, Council developed Callington Park as a Destination Playground that is very popular among tourists and the regional community. (p.32) Visionary Direction: Continue to improve and upgrade community infrastructure based on identified need, priority and stakeholder consultation with an outlook for enhanced passive and active recreation opportunities and tourism. (p.32)

Moreton Bay Regional Council Community Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2031	Among the list of facility types discussed, the strategy includes visitor information centres (to provide local knowledge and information, bookings and information distribution for the region's tourism industry), and Council provided caravan parks.
Serpentine Jarrahdale Tourism Strategy (WA) (2018)	With tourism being a key economic input for the Shire, one of the aims of the strategy is to "identify the need for new investment and infrastructure that supports the development of tourism in the Shire" p.8 This strategy draws attention to the importance of 'trailhead facilities': <i>"Natural assets will continue to be sought out and appreciated by self-sufficient nature enthusiasts in their natural form with little need for development. However, to attract a broader market (including international and interstate visitors) infrastructure such as cafes, accommodation and camping facilities need to be provided at highly appealing and strategic locations (such as at the Falls) and elsewhere along the key trails (Munda Biddi) and within the National Park.</i> <i>Where this has been facilitated at other locations, it has served as a key visitor attraction drawing a new demographic of soft adventurers and other visitor types to participate and appreciate/enjoy all that a region has to offer. The flow on effect of increased visitation will facilitate the development of new tours, attractions and food and beverage/ tourism retail businesses further adding to the destination appeal of the region."</i> P.74 Campgrounds are repeatedly identified as important facilities for retaining more visitors in the area. Key findings that can apply to Alpine: - Consistent and attractive branding and wayfinding are important - Food tourism (e.g., 'long-table dinner in the forest', pop-up dinners in spectacular and unusual dinner events at iconic tourist destinations). - Events - regular and occasional events will help attract large numbers of special interest tourists
Draft Bayside Tourism Strategy 2013	Community infrastructure will support/be used by visitors, including transport and trail routes, access to information, and public conveniences. P.17
Mornington Peninsula Economic Development and Tourism Strategy (2023)	For the visitor economy, important assets include underutilised heritage tourism assets and other Shire owned assets, transport linkages, cultural infrastructure and services
Indigo Shire Council Tourism Strategy (2018)	Tourists may make use of: swimming pools, skate parks, and other active spaces; art galleries;

	Recommends moving away from standalone visitor information centres to co-location with museums, libraries, art galleries are now common.
Academic sources	
Document	Summary
“Library + Tourism”: A New Direction for the Sustainable Development of Libraries Li, Y, Liu, X, (2019) (Conference paper)	Proposes four ways that libraries can play an increasing role in tourism (in China, noting this all sounds like high-visitation contexts): - Information services: include collecting, displaying and recommending tourism collections, building tourism-themed libraries, building local tourism databases, hosting tourism exhibitions and promotion activities, etc. Location-specific specialised collections (perhaps an alpine-focused collection for the high country). - Humanistic landmarks: Where the facility itself is the destination. The article mentions libraries with striking design and/or in locations of interest, which can include unusual places like a secluded beach, and parks. - Integration of study tours: primarily an interregional audience of primary and secondary school children - Industrial cooperation: on-location libraries at tourist locations that provide a range of material of interest to tourists. Would likely require a high-traffic location. Integration with tourist accommodation, museums, souvenirs, etc. Libraries can function as a location for multiple services/attractions such as lecture hall, audio-visual area, a retreat, information, cafes, shops, etc. Principles to apply to Alpine: - While serving the local community, libraries can act as important nodes of information, entertainment, and refuge for tourists and other visitors. They can tailor their collection to reflect the local characteristics of the community (e.g., mountaineering, winter sports, Traditional Owners, early explorers, etc.), show collections of local artists, host talks and other events, and offer services for tourists passing through (café, souvenirs, etc.) or seeking refuge (inclement weather or a quiet place to take a break). - Libraries can integrate the above, and as a logical extension of this perform the functions of a tourist information centre.
“Role of Public Library in Tourism Development” Sarmistha Adhikary, Basudeb Adhikary (2021), International Journal of Research in Library	Libraries can serve the role of information and education, cultural function, and tourist attraction, and facilitate interaction between tourists and locals. The article proposes the idea of a ‘local history collection’, arguing that a library should collect, preserve and share its diverse local cultural

Science (IJRLS), Volume 7, Issue 2 (April-June) 2021, 157-164, DOI: 10.26761/IJRLS.7.2.2021.1400	heritage. The collection can include everything from a wide range of written material (e.g., books, newspapers, travel guides, manuscripts, maps) and visual media (photographs, audio/video, etc.). Libraries perform well as cultural centres, whether as part of their permanent/ongoing collection, or through special events/festivals that can attract visitors. This can include art and artifacts as well as talks, or films. Libraries can both promote tourism and provide information for tourists, both in person and online.
The library – now a tourism hotspot (La Trobe University) Or, “Friday essay: the library – humanist ideal, social glue and now, tourism hotspot” Kells, Stuart (2019), The Conversation, Published: May 31, 2019	Libraries can be a focus of travel as they are safe and welcoming places and provide insight into a location’s past and future story, giving a voice to a diversity of perspectives. Libraries can attract large numbers of visitors, both local and from outside of the community, but need to be able to successfully facilitate large numbers of visitors without crowding out local users. *no suggestions as to how this should be done in the article.

Existing masterplans

Council currently has masterplans in progress for public spaces in Bright, Mount Beauty, Myrtleford, Harrietville, and Tawonga. Many of the masterplans involve improving existing facilities but have no impact on net provision of facilities such as additional courts or new/expanded community facilities. Where new or expanded community facilities are proposed and these are designated as *very high* or *high* priority, these outcomes are summarised in Table 41 below.

Table 41: Alpine Shire Sports and Active Recreation Masterplan priorities

Location	Asset	Improvement
Bright, Pioneer Park	Community building	Proposed Pony Club and Adult Riding club house with integrated public toilet and event space
Bright, Pioneer Park	Community building	Integrated club house facility with public toilet for the Cycling Club, including Mystic Park users. Existing trail head for Mystic Park to be upgraded
Bright, Pioneer Park	Club house	Upgrade tennis clubhouse amenities to be accessible and gender inclusive

Location	Asset	Improvement
Bright, Pioneer Park	Criterium track	950m criterium track to be integrated into existing internal road (6m wide track, except for the finishing straight, which shall be 8m wide for the last 200m)
Myrtleford, Recreation Reserve	Myrtleford Indoor Stadium	Upgrade toilet / change rooms
Myrtleford, Recreation Reserve	Myrtleford Indoor Stadium	Stadium upgrades including exterior face lift, insulation and sound proofing, air-conditioning, fixed spectator seating, additional storage, meeting room, additional power supply. Surface line marking to be redone.
Myrtleford, RC McNamara Reserve	Ablett Pavilion	Ensure all player and umpire toilet & shower areas are compliant and female-friendly
Myrtleford, RC McNamara Reserve	Netball / tennis courts	Extend court area towards the north-west to enable a proposed netball show court to be converted from the existing netball and tennis court arrangement (one tennis court removed).
Myrtleford, Memorial Park	Club house	Upgrade Memorial Park club house - potential to relocate clubhouse within the grounds to allow for more car park space near the childcare centre. Upgrade change rooms and toilets to be accessible and gender inclusive. Increase storage at Memorial Park, including ground maintenance equipment.
Mount Beauty, Sports and Education Precinct	Community building	Demolish existing Tennis Club house and Scout Hall and rebuild new community facility to cater for Tennis Club, Scout Hall and users of Les Peart Oval, with toilet facilities and storage
Mount Beauty, Sports and Education Precinct	Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve Pavilion	General club house upgrades, including kitchen area

Appendix C: Masterplan excerpts

DRAFT

Figure 11: Bright - Pioneer Park masterplan

IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- ① Existing Oval
 - Resurface oval and upgrade drainage
 - Upgrade irrigation
 - Replace sections of the oval perimeter fence to make good
 - Replace home and away interchange benches
 - Upgrade goal posts to be 10m and 6.5m
 - Increase width of cricket pitch to be 28m x 2.8m and rotate pitch for optimum playing
 - Provide spectator seating around the oval
- ② Cricket Nets
 - Upgrade enclosure fencing
 - Provide power access to allow for bowling machines
- ③ Netball / Multi - courts
 - Hanger type roof over the courts
 - Install a second netball court with basketball line markings
 - Include spectator seating
 - Storage for Cricket and Netball
- ④ Informal Grassed Area / Village Green
 - Level grassed playing surface as required and resow to enable usage for training / junior / practice matches.
 - Removable goals in sleeves.
 - Retain existing power supply and hard stand for events and equestrian use.
 - Open area to enable flexible use by the community.
 - Lighting for events and sports practise/training.
- ⑤ Tennis (Private ownership)
 - Provision for 2 additional courts with upgraded lights
 - Convert Hotshot courts to Pickleball Courts
 - Relocated hit wall
 - Ensure accessible entry to clubhouse and courts
 - Upgrade tennis clubhouse amenities to be accessible and gender inclusive
- ⑥ Equestrian
 - Consolidate horse arenas to the northern area of Pioneer Park
 - Partition large arena to include small arena
 - Proposed club house with integrated public toilet and event space
 - Additional horse yards + shade
 - Improve perimeter fencing
 - Concrete bay at wash bay
 - Screening along boundary
- ⑦ MTB/Cycle Area
 - 950m criterium track to be integrated into existing internal road (8m wide track, except for the finishing straight, which shall be 8m wide for the last 200m)
 - Jump track to be maintained
 - Pump track to be capped
- ⑧ Proposed Cycling Club house
 - Integrated clubhouse facility with public toilet for the Cycling Club, including Mystic Park users. Existing trail head for Mystic Park to be upgraded



Figure 12: Mount Beauty masterplan

IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- ① Mount Beauty Reserve
 - Resurface oval and install new drainage and irrigation systems
 - Upgrade home and away interchange benches to include a detachable shelter at existing location (at the request of the Dederang Mount Beauty Football Netball Club)
 - Upgrade size of goal posts to 10m and 6.5m
 - Upgrade sports lighting to LED 100 lux
 - Upgrade spectator seating
 - Replace sections of the oval perimeter fence to make good
- ② Les Peart Oval
 - Add AFL posts for recreational use only
 - Increase cricket pitch size to meet competition standards (28m x 2.8m)
 - Replace sections of the oval perimeter fence to make good
 - Resurface oval and upgrade drainage
 - Upgrade irrigation system
 - Provide power access
 - Provide drinking taps near to the oval
 - Provide additional storage to cater for the user groups of Les Peart Oval
 - Add two junior soccer fields line marking to both sides of the cricket pitch - sitting parallel
 - Develop athletic tracks such as long jump, adjacent to the CFA training strip
 - Provide spectator seating / mound at Les Peart Oval
- ③ Cricket Nets
 - Upgrade cricket nets
- ④ Mount Beauty Recreation Reserve Clubroom
 - Upgrade toilet and change room facilities to provide DDA amenities
 - Potential for DDA compliant toilet to be public facing
 - General club house upgrades, including kitchen area
- ⑤ Tennis
 - Upgrade enclosure fencing
 - Repair ditch on court 2 and 3 to improve drainage
- ⑥ Club house
 - Demolish existing Tennis Club house and Scout Hall and rebuild new community facility to cater for Tennis Club, Scout Hall and users of Les Peart Oval, with toilet facilities and storage.
- ⑦ Netball court
 - Provide benches at the netball courts
- ⑧ Mount Beauty Pool
 - Upgrades to pool subject to aquatic analysis
 - Provide free standing storage
- ⑨ Bicentennial Park Playground
 - Explore opportunities to include additional play options to cater to all abilities.

- ⑩ Neighbourhood Centre
 - Provide shade trees near car park area
 - Include a reflection garden at the Neighbourhood Centre
- ⑪ General upgrades
 - Increase tree planting
 - Develop and implement a wayfinding strategy including signage to facilities and areas, and safety signage
 - Add viewing platform along the pondage
 - Upgrade roads and pathways for visitor safety and improve connectivity
 - Provide outdoor gym equipment
 - Provide shaded areas for spectating and gathering
 - Upgrade/provide seating around the park
 - Provide more bins



Figure 13: Myrtleford - RC McNamara masterplan



Figure 14: Myrtleford - Memorial Park masterplan



Figure 15: Myrtleford - Jubilee Park masterplan



Figure 16: Myrtleford - Cundy Park masterplan



Figure 17: Myrtleford - Myrtleford Recreation Reserve masterplan



MELBOURNE

Level 14, 222 Exhibition Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
+61 3 8616 0331
sgsvic@sgsep.com.au

CANBERRA

Level 2, 28-36 Ainslie Avenue
Canberra ACT 2601
+61 2 6257 4525
sgsact@sgsep.com.au

HOBART

PO Box 123
Franklin TAS 7113
+61 421 372 940
sgstas@sgsep.com.au

SYDNEY

209/50 Holt Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
+61 2 8307 0121
sgsnsw@sgsep.com.au



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