



**AGENDA APPENDIX**  
**Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday 26 February 2013**

AGENDA ITEM FOR SEPARATE DISTRIBUTION TO COUNCILLORS AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM DUE TO DOCUMENT SIZE.

THE ITEM IS ACCESSIBLE VIA THE COUNCIL WEBSITE OR BY CONTACTING COUNCIL ON 03 5662 9200.

**E.1 TARWIN LOWER RECREATION RESERVE MASTER PLAN**

Appendix 1 – Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve Master Plan

# Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve



## MASTER PLAN



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# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>		<b>p1</b>
	Methodology	p1
<b>Research</b>		<b>p2</b>
	Demographic Review	p2
	Literature Review	p4
<b>Consultation</b>		<b>p10</b>
	Summary of reserve usage	p12
	Key user and community groups	p13
<b>Challenges and Possibilities</b>		<b>p17</b>
<b>Rick Management</b>		<b>p20</b>
	Risk Matrix	p20
<b>Identified Projects</b>		<b>p21</b>
	Driveways and access	p21
	Construct a formal link into town	p22
	Power upgrade	p22
	Renovation/extension of the main pavilion	p22
	Change rooms	p23
	Public toilets	p23
	Oval improvement works	p24
	Netball facilities	p25
	Equestrian facilities	p26
	General reserve landscaping	p27
	Bowls club improvements	p28
	Facilities that could be relocated	p28
<b>Grants</b>		<b>p29</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>		<b>p30</b>
	Summary of the highest priority projects	p31
<b>Conclusion</b>		<b>p32</b>
	Disclaimer of Liability	p32
	References	p32

## Appendix

### 1. Landscape Plan

## Acknowledgements

Hands on Community Solutions would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve Committee of Management, the other main users of the facilities and other key stakeholders who provided detailed input into the development of this Master Plan.

Also, to South Gippsland Shire Council staff that provided background information and support for this plan, along with the financial contribution to complete the project.

To the individuals and community members whose input and advice has been essential to the development of this report.

# Executive Summary

The Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve is located on Walkerville Road. It is a hive of sporting activity. The land on which the reserve is located is largely Crown Land; managed by a Crown appointed Committee of Management (COM). A new committee was formed in 2013 for a three year term.

A Master Plan has never been developed for this site. The new COM saw the planning process involved in the development of a Master Plan as a great way to get all of the user groups to work together and identify some shared projects that would benefit them, as well as the broader community.

The key features of the Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve are a main oval with an excellent playing surface and training level lighting, synthetic green bowling facility, two outdoor netball courts, equestrian area, club houses and main pavilion, as well as other supporting infrastructure.

Tarwin Lower is the service centre for a number of smaller surrounding towns and has a supermarket, chemist, pub, bank, health services, mechanics institute, road house and post office. The town accommodates for the needs of tourists visiting Walkerville, Sandy Point, Wilson Promontory and Venus Bay. These towns are within 10 kilometers of Tarwin Lower, but have only limited services. Venus Bay is the main beach access for the area and is the third largest community in South Gippsland Shire. Tarwin Lower provides the recreation reserve for this township. This Master Plan has been formulated by identifying a number of projects that would improve appearance, utilisation and infrastructure at the reserve over the next decade. These projects are based on a priority ranking scale from Very High to Low with the understanding that it is not practical to complete all of the projects identified. This plan allows for well thought out development as opportunities arise.



## Methodology

The following Methodology was completed for this master planning project:

- A start up meeting was conducted with the COM and key user groups (July 2013)
- Research, consultation and an industry review was completed
- A detailed site inspection was completed
- Consultation was held with all users of the reserve and other community groups to discuss the process and identify key issues and priorities
- A draft Master Plan was developed and provided to the COM, Council and the broader community for input
- The final Master Plan was adopted by the Tarwin Lower COM

# Research

The following section contains a review of relevant reports, information and plans in relation to the project. The key findings are summarised below:

**Demographic Review** South Gippsland Shire was created in 1994 from the amalgamation of four previous municipalities. It has an area of 3,300 square kilometres and a current population of just over 27,000. This is expected to reach 33,300 by 2036, which is an increase of almost 25% in 25 years. Tarwin Lower is one of many small towns throughout South Gippsland. With a population of 115, it is one of the region's smallest towns, yet as successfully self-servicing as any other. Therefore, for the purpose of this Master Plan, it is important to highlight just how self sufficient Tarwin Lower is and how other surrounding communities rely on Tarwin Lower to access services and facilities. So much do surrounding areas in the Tarwin Lower district share and co-exist that sometimes their borders can be skewed. This can make applying for funding for projects centrally based in one town problematic.

Surrounding towns have tried to overcome this when applying for funding by combining under the umbrella of the Lower Tarwin Valley Communities. Joining Tarwin Lower under this banner is Koonwarra, Meenyan, Buffalo, Dumbalk, Tarwin, Tarwin Lower, Stony Creek, Venus Bay and Fish Creek. The population of these towns varies in size from 115 at Tarwin Lower to 425 at Meenyan. Some, such as Stony Creek and Tarwin, do not even feature separately in the census collection process. Combining provides a strength in numbers approach and allows a win for all when applying for projects that benefit all communities.

The Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve, although used by communities from surrounding areas, is the only sporting facility in Tarwin Lower. The reserve's improvement and sustainability is important for the wellbeing, morale and future growth of the current population base.

With all their individual glory, each town within the Lower Tarwin Valley Communities has its own unique offering. Tarwin Lower has earned its reputation as a fisherman's paradise. Idyllically situated on the banks of the Tarwin River, the township is well resourced with a hotel, butcher, supermarket, takeaway, gift and hardware stores. As well as boasting exceptional river fishing the town is also just a few kilometres from the pristine beaches of Venus Bay. Although neighbouring towns, Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay combine in almost every aspect; the respective communities even joining together to develop a combined Community Plan for the areas. Venus Bay is very much a holiday town, with a large collection of houses and units available for holiday rental and a caravan park, all located within a short distance of the coast. The town's commercial centre, situated on Jupiter Boulevard at the Centre Road junction, features a general store, food outlets and a number of speciality shops. Venus Bay has a number of pristine surf beaches which front the waters of Bass Strait and are nestled within the foreshore reserve of the Cape Liptrap Coastal Park. This park extends along the coast to Waratah Bay, offering a number of scenic bushwalking tracks. Venus Bay is central to many natural attractions in the South Gippsland area, including Wilsons Promontory National Park.

In the 2011 Census, there were over 600 people living in Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay. The location of Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay, demographics and the population increase during holiday periods creates unique opportunities. Future development and planning for Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay is imperative to supply tourist demand.

# Research



Venus Bay



Tarwin Lower River, Tarwin Lower



# Research

## Literature Review **South Gippsland Shire Council - Recreation Plan 2007**

This plan identifies some key principles for guiding the development of recreation facilities and reserves in the region. Principles relevant to the Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve include;

- A diversity of opportunities for physical and social recreation are provided in every community.
- A hierarchy of facilities matches the range of needs, competition standards, available resources, willingness and ability of the community to support these.
- The benefits of leisure participation and all available opportunities are widely promoted and acknowledged.
- The needs and aspirations of residents are monitored, and people with a disability, older adults and adolescents are included along side all others.
- The contribution made by clubs, associations and committees are acknowledged.
- The necessary leadership and planning is provided to enhance social, economic and environmental benefits of recreation and sports for local communities.
- Land managers, clubs, committees and community organisations are engaged in recreation planning, provision and management processes.

Tarwin Lower's settlement type is classified as a Rural Hamlet/Low Density Residential. These are generally settlement types under 200 people with a limited range of land uses and community facilities, and that the community is unlikely to support a sports club. This settlement type assumes that there would be only one main social/family recreation and sport site and that further subdivision will not trigger the provision of new decentralised sites. However, the Tarwin Lower locality provides the only sports facilities that serve residents of Venus Bay. Tarwin Lower has a good range of spaces: a main sports park, flora and fauna reserve, hall, tennis courts and the Tarwin River and foreshore. The golf course at Tarwin Lower closed a few years ago. The Tarwin River offers a valuable recreation resource for walkers, picnics, boating/canoeing, fishing and visitor stopovers. An off-road trail has been provided from Venus Bay to this point. Part of the trail along the river is a boardwalk.

# Research

**Opportunities** Promote the unique and locally made picnic table, and keep it in good condition. The boardwalk along the river is in fair condition and will need to be upgraded in coming years. Market the club sporting facilities in Tarwin Lower to serve residents of Venus Bay.

**Key demand issues**

Within the existing subdivision, odd blocks are owned by South Gippsland Shire Council. Many are proposed to be or have been sold. The Association is looking at retaining these small open spaces, especially those with significant vegetation. Everything else is classified as Coastal Park and still protected.

**Recreation Reserve**

Key activities at the reserve include football, netball, lawn bowls, cricket and pony club. Participation at the reserve has increased since the sporting bodies have been brought together. Toilet facilities are the current priority for the COM. The recreation reserve also serves the needs of the Venus Bay community.

**Community forums**

The key issues raised at community forums included feedback relating to tennis in Tarwin Lower:

The location of the tennis club is suitable - the more visible sport and recreation is the more vibrant the activity is. However, it was identified that the courts need to be resurfaced and lighting is required.



# Research

## South Gippsland Shire Council - Public Open Space Strategy 2007

This strategy considers overarching issues associated with provision and planning for open space in South Gippsland.

The key information raised in consultation with sporting clubs, associations and community groups relevant to the Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve is;

- the aging population
- community groups noted that with an aging population the running of clubs and maintenance of facilities was difficult. Also filling teams in junior competition and losing kids after school age affected use of open space.
- a number of groups indicated they felt the larger towns were given more support than some of the smaller towns.
- there is a need to expand some sporting facilities in this region.

The improvement to river access has had a positive impact; however there are limitations through lack of mains water access.

### **Priorities**

1. Upgrade the boardwalk and foreshore path in the short term, and enhance accessibility of this trail and associated facilities.
2. Extend the shared path from along the river down to the Recreation Reserve, linking other community facilities.
3. Prepare a planting plan for the Recreation Reserve to provide shelter, shade and enhance amenity.
4. Continue to upgrade infrastructure at the tennis courts and Recreation Reserve, and along the river foreshore.

## South Gippsland Shire Council – Council Plan 2013 - 2017

Adopted in June 2013, the revised and updated Council Plan identifies the following key themes:

1. *Engagement with the community through an engagement strategy and development of a shared vision*
2. *Developing strategies for financial sustainability of the Shire*
3. *Strengthening economic development*
4. *Renewal of community infrastructure*

**Outcome 3 Integrated Services and Infrastructure** is most relevant to Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve with Objective 3.1 committed to delivering affordable modern community services and facilities through an integrated approach to planning and infrastructure development.

# Research

## Tarwin Lower & Venus Bay Community Plan - developed in 2011

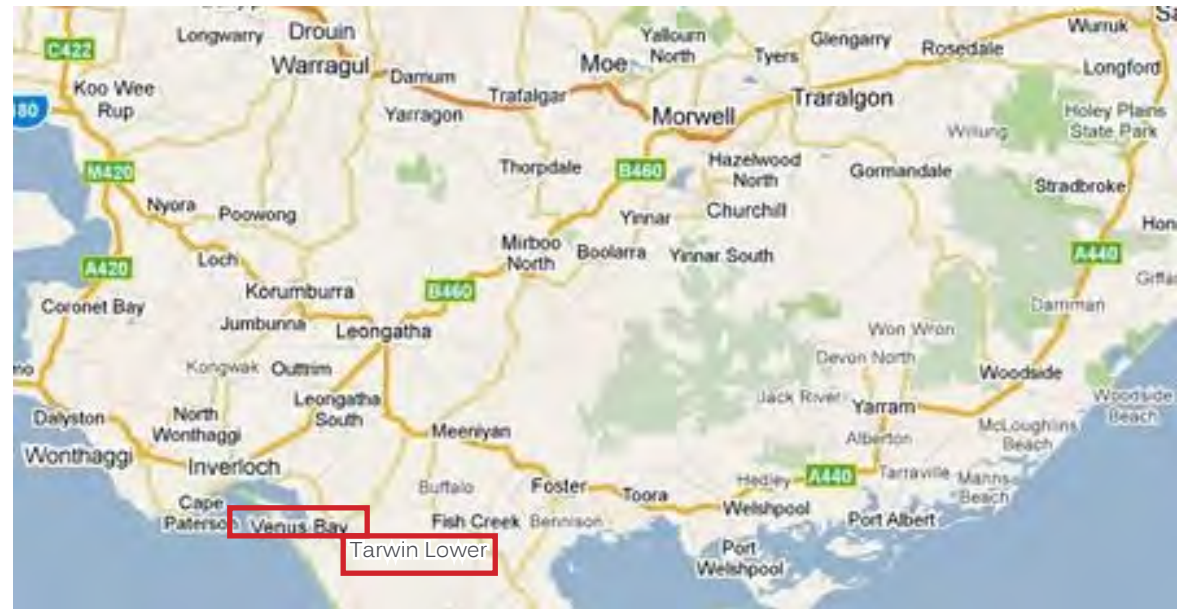
Vision statement - To be a resilient, environmentally conscious community, meeting intergenerational aspirations and infrastructure needs.

### Projects identified for Tarwin Lower

- Maintain and improve the environmental integrity of the town
- To continue to be a service centre for the area
- Encourage growth in boundaries

### Other relevant projects

- PATHS/TRAILS - More bike paths and walking trails. Improve bike track surface. Nature trails/environmental awareness. Native walking trails
- A dog off-lead section of the beach
- Outdoor cinema (Summer to Easter)
- Live music/music festival/performance
- Eradication of introduced species
- BMX Track
- Youth activity and events



# Research



## Tarwin Lower Urban Design Framework 2006

This vision has been developed from the values expressed by the community, planning policy and other relevant influences. In the future Tarwin Lower will be known as:

- A small country hamlet with a vibrant supportive community.
- A hamlet where the community will have access to infrastructure that supports community growth such as, local schools, sporting facilities, aged care and health facilities and recreation and open space areas.
- A hamlet which has a healthy commercial precinct and which provides services to Venus Bay and surrounding rural areas.
- A hamlet where future population growth will be promoted within the existing township boundaries, and clearly defined growth areas to be confirmed following detailed investigation of the extent of site constraints associated with issues including flooding and acid sulfate soils. Development will be unobtrusive and demonstrate the low-key character of the hamlet.
- A place that provides an important link for recreational access to the Tarwin River and Anderson Inlet.
- A place in which environmentally sustainable practices are promoted and widely used.
- A place for day tourists as well as being a place where residents will have convenient access by foot or bicycle to all its features and facilities.

With regard to its regional context, the role of Tarwin Lower will be as a Small Hamlet supporting a permanent population. It will be a service centre to Venus Bay and surrounding areas and will rely on Leongatha for access to major retail, industrial and commercial facilities.

# Research

## AFL Preferred Facility Requirements

The AFL Preferred Facility Guidelines provides a framework for the type and size of facilities, classified by a facility hierarchy;

- State League
- District
- Local

The way that facilities are classified can in turn have impact on future funding submissions to the State Government. The Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve is classified as a Local facility. For a local level facility the following requirements are recommended;

- Home and Away change rooms - three showers in each for local, two urinals and two toilet plans in each room. 2 X 22.5m<sup>2</sup> for amenities, 2 X 40m<sup>2</sup> for change rooms.
- External covered viewing area - the objective is to provide adequate space for viewing the playing field whilst providing protection from the weather. 50m<sup>2</sup>
- Separate umpire facilities, including toilet and showers. 20m<sup>2</sup>
- First Aid/treatment rooms - can be shared with office space but require a basin. 15m<sup>2</sup>
- Massage/strapping room - can be provided within change rooms.
- Gymnasium - optional facility component. 20m<sup>2</sup>
- Kitchen/kiosk - to comply with municipal health department. Internal/external servery is important. 20m<sup>2</sup>
- Administration space/officials areas - requires internet connection. 15m<sup>2</sup>
- Public Toilets - based on crowd sizes and Municipal town planning requirements.
- Storage - internal and external storage is required. 20m<sup>2</sup>
- Social/community room - total sizes influenced by likely crowd attendance. Local - 50m<sup>2</sup>
- Timekeepers/scorers box/scoreboard. 10m<sup>2</sup>
- Utility/cleaners room. 5m<sup>2</sup>
- Two coaches boxes - 4.8m long x 1.2m wide
- Sports Lighting (Average Minimum Lux) - Training 50, Match Practice 100, Night Competition 100.
- Oval Fencing - no specified standard.

The changeroom facilities at Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve do not comply with these guidelines.

*Note that not all information has been listed, just those items specifically relevant to this Master Plan. Please refer to the complete document for more information.*

# Consultation



Consultation was undertaken with the following groups and stakeholders;

- South Gippsland Shire Council
- Tarwin Lower Committee of Management
- All user groups of the Recreation Reserve
- Other community organisations

More detailed consultation and research information is provided in the table on the right;

Facility	Facility specifics	Utilisation
Tarwin Lower and District Primary School	Small outdoor oval. 38 student enrolments.	Active Afterschool Program and concerts in main pavilion and on main oval.
Tarwin Lower Community Health Service	Meeting/consulting rooms.	Limited older adults exercise programs, community meetings, health nurse.
Tarwin Lower Tennis Courts	Three outdoor courts - two resurfaced five years ago, one needs resurfacing.	Competition tennis operated in the past, now its just social playing. Coaching is an option.
Venus Bay Community Centre	Meeting room, gardens, skate park. An op-shop has halved meeting space available so larger events could look at using the reserve.	Limited exercise programs, school holiday activities, community garden and other activities for community.
Tarwin River - picnic facilities, fishing and viewing platforms	Various tables, chairs, fishing platforms, walking trails.	Community use which increases significantly during summer.
Shared walking and bicycle track – Tarwin Lower to Venus Bay	5km gravel sand pathway linking towns.	Community use, popular during holidays.
Venus Bay, Tarwin Lower and District Men's Shed	190 Lees Road, Venus Bay. Wednesday 10am – 1pm, Saturday 10am – 1pm. Operating for 4 years. 20 members.	Provides a place for men to meet and share in a variety of activities.
Tarwin Lower Anglican Church	Small facility on River Road, Tarwin Lower.	Limited community use. Combined Anglican and Uniting Church congregation, led alternately by each denomination. 10.30am - First and Second Sunday – Holy Communion. 10.30am - Third and Fourth Sunday – Morning Prayer.
Jetty and Long Table	Located on the Tarwin River.	Hosts the long lunch community event and other community activities, as well as for social recreation.
Tarwin Mechanics Institute (Hall)	River Road, Tarwin Lower. COM uses small reserve next to hall for 30yr old market. Hall seats 140 or 200 standing. Kitchen recently upgraded. COM managing the hall is a Crown Land COM due to re-appoint in 2014. Catering is done by the COM.	Market held on Public Holidays; 2013 - 4 Nov and 31 Dec. 2014 – 6, 13 and 28 Jan 4pm-8pm. Hall used for art and crafts/courses, funerals, electoral voting, Council and Gardiner Foundation meetings, private functions, Easter church service, disability program seminars, garage sales and school functions.

# Consultation

Facility	Facility specifics	Utilisation
Tarwin Lower Catholic Church	St Andrew's Union Church, River St.	Uniting and Anglican services alternate each Sunday, Catholic Mass on Saturday 6pm.
Venus Bay Jetty and Boat Ramp	River launch facilities.	Important facility for allowing water based recreational activities.
Ashtanga Yoga Venus Bay	Small private yoga facility.	Limited classes are available.
RV Fisher Park- Tarwin Meadows Road	Public toilet block and playground located on a small reserve.	Limited use of area reported but very close to recreation reserve.
Tarwin Lower CFA Shed	Adjacent to tennis courts on river. Not many active members.	Shed is quite small and DSE would like the shed relocated to a site away from the river.
Venus Bay Surf Lifesaving Club	Small family orientated club based on Surf Drive, Beach No.1, Venus Bay. Primary purpose of providing lifesaving services to community on weekends and public holidays from early December until Easter Monday.	Volunteer patrols on weekends from last weekend in November to Easter. Saturdays 1pm-5pm, Sundays and Public Holidays 10am-5pm. Paid lifeguards operate weekdays from Boxing Day to Australia Day. Monday-Friday 10am-6pm, Saturday 10am-1pm. Club does not require any access to reserve.
Venus Bay Angling Club	Club rooms located next to Venus Bay boat ramp.	In existence since 1979 and has 250 members, including women and children. Need access to facilities at reserve for major functions.
Tarwin River Canoe Club	Located on the Tarwin River with club boats, easy parking, refreshments nearby.	Club activities include sea kayaking, flat-water touring, recreational kayaking, flat-water, coastal water and social paddles. Club does not have a club house.
Riverview Hotel	River Road, operating 7 days a week.	Social nights, ute show and other events. Is a member of Small Business Association seeking a more coordinated approach to community event planning.
Inverloch and District Bendigo Community Bank	Located in Inverloch with satellite services out of Tarwin Lower chemist.	Provides community grants for annual bowls tournament, bowls club split system and main oval signage. Sponsorship can be pursued.



# Consultation

## Summary of reserve usage

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Pre season football training	Winter football training	Pre season football training	Winter football training	Pre season football training	Football matches	
			Netball training		Netball matches	
					Pony club events	Pony club rallies
				Junior cricket	Junior and Senior cricket	Senior cricket
	Bowls Invitation Events/ women's pennant/ Barefoot bowls in summer	Bowls Invitation Triples		Competition bowls practice	Competition bowls	Invitational Bowls

**Reserve Usage** No Auskick; Soccer has been tried in the past with some interest; On average, five other football clubs use the facilities for pre-season training; Other clubs whose ovals are subject to flooding, like Dalyston, use the Tarwin Lower oval for pre- finals training; The reserve is used for walking/dog off leash walking; Some equestrian riders use the facilities on a casual basis as the facilities at Tarwin are suitable for all year round useage due to the soil type.

**Special Events** Hosting major final for the AFNL; Several football/netball club functions each year; Club rooms hired out for special occasions; Training for league teams; Men's Shed functions; School concerts/presentation nights; Victorian Farmers nights.

**Equestrian Special Events** Short course horse trials; Mossvale Gymkhana; camps; races – Picnic Gymkhana; training days; other pony clubs use the facilities during winter when their facilities are flooded and unusable.

Discussion during the development of this Master Plan identified the following ideas for new programs and activities. These will need to be explored further by the COM:

Riding without horses; Tour de Tarwin events and activities; Re-location of tennis courts; Neighbourhood Safer Place/Emergency Relief Centre; Larger venue for the market; Patient Emergency Transport Helicopter; Live music events.

# Consultation

## Key User/Community Groups

### Tarwin Football Club

- Football and Netball Club merged in 2013.
- Ground usage approximately 10 months of the year - nine home matches per year
- 100 meals prepared on a Thursday night
- Dinner provided after home matches
- Number of members 250 every year; majority from Tarwin/Venus Bay. However, members also hail from Koonwarra, Leongatha South, Pound Creek, Middle Tarwin, Buffalo and as far reaching as Leongatha, Inverloch, Korumburra, Wonthaggi Sandy Point, Fish Creek and Melbourne.
- Participation: four teams in the AFNL, approximately 100 players
- Reformation of the club in 1988
- Senior Premiership 2004
- Finals appearances from Fourths to Seniors the past 26 years
- Alberton Football Netball League re-structure may impact on the club in the future

### Tarwin Netball Club

- Netball – Thursday night training and every second Saturday in the AFNL season. Also pre-season training approximately used 10 months of the year and practice matches.
- Memberships – 60 players and families (joint with football club)
- Six teams, coaches' umpires (6), committee (9)
- School uses courts occasionally for after school activities
- 10 players have gone on to play State Netball
- Committee members have positions on League Committee
- Won five premierships
- Girls have represented Alberton in inter league tournaments
- Finals held in conjunction with football through the AFNL
- Six games played with up to 12 teams





# Consultation

## Tarwin Lower Bowls Club

- 75 members, including social memberships
- The green is used for Pennant (Ladies and Mens), Barefoot bowls (during the summer), club competitions
- Club formed in 1989 – club house and greens were created
- Member of South Gippsland Bowls Association (16 Clubs)
- The club hosts an annual two day tournament which attracts players from all over Gippsland
- Two teams entered into Pennant – Male and Female (4 in total)
- Barefoot bowls, held during summer, attracts between 70- 80 people each week
- Healthy financial position
- Synthetic green installed three years ago at a cost of \$160,000 - paid in full by the club with \$70,000 of government grants
- Active social program
- Pennant Flags – Men 4 Women 1
- Bi monthly inter club games with representation from all of the South Gippsland Bowls Region
- Major tournaments annually attracting wide representation both summer and winter bowls

## Tarwin Lower Pony Club

- Rallies are held monthly on the third Sunday
- 10-12 members
- Adult Riding Club – 12 people
- Meeniyon Pony Club – 35 people
- Zone Camps/assess day – two per year – 15-30 participants at each
- BCPC Gymkhana annually – 100 people
- Tarwin Lower Pony Club camps
- Local pony clubs use grounds occasionally for joint rallies
- Success with State and National representation



# Consultation

## **Fish Creek Tarwin Cricket Club**

- Seniors play at the Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve to Christmas, then start playing on the turf at Fish Creek. If the club is unable to play on the turf due to weather, then matches are relocated back to Tarwin Lower
- Juniors play at Tarwin Lower for the whole season because the turf is excellent in all weather conditions.
- Looking at replacing the 10 year old synthetic pitch, which poses the biggest problems at Tarwin Lower. The sand surrounding the pitch area makes it difficult for grass to establish around the pitch. The fine sand also finds its way onto the pitch area and it's very difficult to remove. A synthetic cover is the preferred option for the club
- Mowing of the ground is a concern. The football club has done this in winter and the cricket club mows in summer. It's a gang mower and clubs need to supply their own tractor. Ideally, the COM could purchase a tractor which is permanently connected to the gang mower.
- Cricket nets should be reinstalled. They were pulled down some time ago but the concrete slabs are still there.



## **CERT-Venus Bay & District Community Emergency Response Team**

- Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) consist of ambulance volunteers who function as 'first responders' within communities where the nearest ambulance branch is at a distance.
- CERTs are located throughout Victoria and play a valuable role in ensuring sustainable emergency care, especially in communities where the number of ambulance cases each year is limited and a local ambulance station can't be provided.
- They are trained in basic life support and undertake regular training and maintenance. This is coordinated and delivered by an Ambulance Victoria paramedic manager.
- As ambulance volunteers, CERT members are not paid for their work and commitment.
- The Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve has been identified as a location that could be used for Helicopters/Emergency Patient Transport.
- Issues have been identified in particular when the helicopter has landed in Venus Bay in the past.

# Consultation

## **Tour De Tarwin**

- A fun, healthy and unique activity for families and individuals.
- During a casual walk and ride in 2006, a community minded group saw the possibilities of an event that could link Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay and bring together the local and holidaying communities in a friendly non competitive manner.
- The Tour has been held on Easter Saturday over the past four years.
- Participant numbers have grown exponentially from 270 in 2007 to over 1300 in 2013.
- Over more recent years the event has grown beyond the borders of the now traditional 6km and 9km Tour De Tarwin family walk and bike ride to encompass a series of fun and healthy family activities that are dotted across the Easter holiday weekend calendar.
- Currently the Tour De Tarwin only uses the Recreation Reserve for the Barefoot Bowls event on Easter Sunday.
- There have been discussions with the football club about the possibility of having some activities on the oval at next year's event. The reserve will be needed as the event grows.
- The overflow parking is of interest given the issues the Tour is already facing in this area.
- The event organisers have expressed support for any ongoing plan to improve the reserve, as it can only benefit Tarwin and Venus Bay community events.

## **The Tarwin Lower Venus Bay Association**

- TLVBA is made up of full-time and part-time residents, landowners and friends.
- It seeks to develop and improve facilities and services whilst maintaining a balanced concern for the natural assets of the area.
- The organisation is committed to the principle of the 'interdependence' of Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay, which would see Tarwin Lower as the main centre for commercial growth and services while Venus Bay remain essentially recreational/residential with 'low key' convenience shopping and services.

## **Grants Only Group**

- Local residents have established a grant application writers group to research and write grant applications for and on behalf of their small local clubs and organisations.
- The volunteers charge \$50 for an application submission and 10% received, or a maximum of \$400 for successful applications.
- Total grants submitted - 26 with six waiting confirmation.
- \$78,845 received in funding since October 2011.

# Challenges and Possibilities

**Oval Usage** The oval condition at the Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve is good, especially during winter as a result of the sound drainage system and sandy soil. The turf is also well maintained with volunteer time and expertise. The reserve is used by the Tarwin Lower Football Club during winter, but the committee could also market the facilities to other local sports clubs who need access to training facilities when their ovals are no longer playable in the wet season. Some of this happens already but there is more opportunity to promote the facilities on offer.

**Volunteer Effort** It requires enormous time and energy from many community volunteers to manage and maintain a recreation reserve like Tarwin Lower. The committee requires ongoing support and assistance to ensure they continue to play an important role. The annual Council maintenance grant is essential to help cover some of the expenses, but the committee is also reliant on expensive equipment and machinery or contractors to complete the many tasks that are required to keep the facility safe and in good condition. It is estimated that on average, more than 60 volunteer hours per week are spent maintaining the facilities which is often completed by a few dedicated committee members. In the past many of the capital works projects have been completed by volunteers which has been of enormous benefit for all.

**Re-location of Facilities** Consultation during this project has identified that in the future, the CFA shed, tennis courts and public toilets may need to be re-located from the river side in the town centre. This Master Plan does not seek to comment on this issue other than space could be allocated at the reserve in future for these facilities if required.

**Coordination of events and activities** Tarwin Lower and Venus Bay have many local community organisations. Because of the influx of visitors during peak holiday periods everyone is trying to maximise fundraising opportunities through events and activities. It has been identified that there needs to be some better communication to ensure that events compliment each other and that groups don't negatively impact on what other groups are already doing. As a minimum it is important that all users of the reserve communicate well and plan events and activities together to get the maximum benefit for the effort involved.

# Challenges and Possibilities

**CFA/Relief Centre** Fire authorities have assessed Venus Bay as having a Very High bushfire risk. Local residents and visitors should be prepared for fire and have a plan for when the Fire Danger Rating is Severe, Extreme or Code Red. At the time of publication, there was no designated Emergency Relief Centre at Venus Bay or Tarwin Lower. There is some concern expressed by the community that people may head to the Recreation Reserve in an emergency situation.

A few years ago, Council nominated Relief Centres and a secondary Relief Centre in each town across the Shire. Many recreation reserves were nominated. As a requirement of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) an audit of all nominated sites during 2012 was conducted and it was decided by the MEMP committee that only five venues be designated as appropriate Primary Relief Centres. At this point in time these are:

- Foster Showgrounds
- Leongatha Recreation Reserve (including Splash)
- Walter J Tuck Recreation Reserve (Mirboo North)
- Korumburra Showgrounds and Recreation Centre
- Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve and Bowls Club

As Council determines the appropriate sites, the reserves don't need to worry about facility upgrades. However, this will need to be considered when planning any developments at the reserve.

**Sports** The population of Tarwin Lower and surrounding towns is steadily growing. It is a generally ageing population but this hasn't prevented local sporting clubs from slowly building their numbers. Many clubs have adjusted to population changes by amalgamating, providing many and varied opportunities for children to play sport. The ageing population can also be embraced by acknowledging that regular physical activity can play a key role in maintaining physical, mental and social health across the lifespan. Traditional sports that are played at Tarwin Lower need to be supported so that participation numbers do not decline and that facilities remain viable. It's more about capitalising on the target audience and supplying to that demand.

Keeping fit and remaining active are the key to getting the most out of life, whatever age you are. Physical activity can help prevent some illnesses and reduce the risk of heart disease. Sport creates a real sense of community connection and a unique opportunity for the youth of the local area to develop and participate.

# Challenges and Possibilities

Participation rates The Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) was a joint initiative of the Australian Sports Commission and State and Territory Departments of Sport and Recreation conducted on an annual basis between 2001 and 2010. Below are the top 10 sports in Victoria for participation:

## Activity

Walking (excl. bushwalking)

Aerobics/fitness

Swimming

Yoga

Running

Surf sports

Soccer (indoor)

Cricket (outdoor)

Badminton

## Principles for good recreation planning

**The Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve COM, South Gippsland Shire Council and other key stakeholders should consider the following when planning for improvements to recreation facilities:**

- Recreation facilities should be planned taking into consideration national, state and local participation trends with long term projections in mind.
- The population in Tarwin Lower and surrounding districts is steadily growing and planning for this growth is important.
- The local context of the community is taken into consideration in planning recreation infrastructure such as cultural trends, social capital, the skills and interests of community leaders.
- Ensuring that sufficient space is allowed for full sized sporting facilities and associated infrastructure.
- Providing a mixture of passive and active recreation.
- Innovative use of space.
- Providing adequate facilities for both males and females.
- Providing accessible facilities.
- Provision of adequate shade for spectators.
- Risk management is taken into consideration with all sport and recreation planning.

# Risk Management

**Risk Matrix** It should be noted that some risks were identified at the reserve that may cause injury or harm to users. The COM has an obligation to address these risks in order of priority using a Risk Matrix, similar to the following table. This report has commented on areas of concern and further consideration should be given to Risk Management in the future in consultation with qualified and experienced professionals as required.

Likelihood	Consequence				
	Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
<b>Rare</b>	L	L	L	M	H
<b>Unlikely</b>	L	L	M	H	H
<b>Possible</b>	L	M	M	H	E
<b>Likely</b>	M	M	H	E	E
<b>Almost Certain</b>	M	H	H	E	E

The Master Plan Projects have been developed as a result of the issues identified and the opportunities or projects raised by the COM and user groups. The priorities have been ranked using the following scale but should be implemented as funding or resources allow:

**Very High** - Action within 12 months

**High** - Action within 1-3 years

**Medium** - Action within 3-10 years

**Low** - Works not programmed at this stage but fits into the longer term plan

# Identified Projects

## Project Area 1. Driveways and access

There is gravel parking throughout the reserve which requires constant maintenance. The driveway does not extend around the whole oval boundary which makes parking more of a challenge. The grass areas drain quite well and allow vehicle access. The dust created by the driveways causes concern for bowls members as it is damaging the synthetic surface. The ticket box was created eight years ago and is adequate.

### Identified Actions and Indicative Costs

- Create a clear access route and parking for emergency vehicles with signage. **\$500. Priority - High**
- The main entrance is not clear and the reserve is difficult to see. On-road signage as well as a general lift of the entrance is required. Gates are required at main entrance for equestrian events. Costs to be determined based on options developed. **Priority - Very High**
- Sealing of the Recreation Reserve Road from Walkerville Road to the ticket box - **\$12,320** (subject to base being adequate, costs would increase to \$61,600 for gravel replacement. Additional costs for entrance widening if required in previous point). **Priority - Medium (Sealing the driveway from the ticket box to the main pavilion would cost approximately \$200,000. Priority - Low.)**
- Security lighting of the car park areas may be helpful. This could be done from the main buildings. **\$3,000. Priority - Medium**
- Consider how a second entrance could be developed along Tarwin Meadows Road, alongside the netball courts. Works would include vegetation removal, earthworks, fencing and gates. **\$5,000. Priority - High**
- Install directional signage to assist with parking - **\$3,000. Priority - Low**
- Creation of additional gravel car park areas and driveway extensions - not costed at this time. **Priority - Low**





# Identified Projects

## Project Area 2. Construct a formal link into town

- Construct a 1.5m wide concrete path from the recreation reserve into town along Walkerville Road to enable safe pedestrian access. This will also benefit the Community Health Service. **\$67,500. Priority - Very High**
- Promotion of the reserve facilities to the broader users of the river frontage and shared pathway through signage **\$500. Priority - Medium**

## Project Area 3. Power upgrade

- It has been identified that an internal power upgrade be completed prior to any expansion of facilities.

## Project Area 4. Renovation/extension of the main pavilion

*The Main Pavilion was constructed in 1994 with an Interest Free loan provided by Council. The room can seat up to 120 people and has a small stage for presentation nights. The upgrades that have been identified include;*

- Connection of the two buildings - main pavilion and change rooms - to create a covered walkway and spectator area. **\$20,000. Priority - High**
- Kitchen upgrades - storage/stoves **\$40,000. Priority - Medium**
- Cool room. **\$20,000. Priority - Medium**
- Solar panels. **\$22,000. Priority - Medium**
- Create a new grandstand alongside the main pavilion which would provide spectator seating and a wind break. **\$80,000. Priority - Medium**

# Identified Projects

## Project Area 5. Change rooms

The change rooms are in a separate building from the main pavilion and are in average condition. The home and away teams share the toilets and showers which is not ideal.

- Replace roof on change room building. **\$30,000. Priority - Very High**
- Create separate visitor toilet and shower area. **Costs to be determined. Priority - High**
- Expand the changeroom building to create a more compliant umpire changeroom facility or include within a new toilet block. **Costs to be determined. Priority - Medium**

## Project Area 6. Public toilets

- There are public toilets located at the reserve behind the main pavilion. Both sets of toilets (male and female) need upgrading and expansion. The netballers use the change room facilities in the Main Pavilion which are not adequate. A new stand alone toilet block/change room facility that includes showers would benefit not only the netball club but also the equestrian users and increase the potential for RV visits. There is also a need for improved accessible toilets and baby change facilities.

The COM like the facility provided at the Foster Showgrounds that was built at a **cost of approximately \$170,000. Priority - High**

- Tarwin Lower is unsewered. A replacement Septic System will be required in the future. **\$20,000. Priority - Medium**



# Identified Projects

## Project Area 7. Oval improvement works

*The oval is in very good condition. The soil type lends itself to excellent drainage and good coverage all year round. A major upgrade of the oval was completed two years ago and the current turf is Kikuyu with a rye turf - a good combination.*

- The dam that is used to irrigate the oval was extended in 2006 with volunteer labour. It is important to complete maintenance of the dam enclosure and pump shed to ensure the area is still easy to access. **Volunteer labour. Priority - Very High**
- There is a need to plan for the replacement of maintenance of equipment, like mowers and slashers, used to maintain the oval and grounds as they are expensive to maintain and replace. A new tractor is required. **At least \$10,000 investment per year required. Priority - Very High**
- Ensure the oval is well set up for Emergency Helicopter access as there are limited options within the district. Consultation needs to be done to work out what improvements could be beneficial. **Priority - High**
- A detailed maintenance program should be developed and implemented to ensure cost effective maintenance, good use of volunteer time, skills and abilities. Turf works should include; Implementing a weed control regime and re-seed high traffic areas between seasons. Review turf species. **Volunteer labour. Priority - High**
- New light frames and additional lights were added onto the light towers. Lux Level testing needs to be completed to ensure that the lighting meets training standard. **Testing \$2,000. Lighting upgrades to be costed. Priority - High**
- Complete installation of ball protection fencing. **Volunteer labour. Priority - High**
- Replace the synthetic cricket pitch and consider the use of a synthetic cover to create a better playing surface. **A new cover \$5,000 and new wicket \$8,000. Ongoing surface maintenance – maintenance cost. Priority - Medium**
- The oval is irrigated using a travelling irrigation system. It would be ideal to install an automatic pop up irrigation system. This would need to be designed and costed to match the system required. **Priority - Medium**
- The coaches' boxes and scoreboard are in good condition. An upgrade to an electronic scoreboard would be ideal. **Priority - Medium**
- More seating around the oval boundary would be beneficial. **Priority - Low**

# Identified Projects

## Project Area 8. Netball facilities

*The original court was built in 1990, with a small club shed, before it was replaced in 2006 with two new courts. A scoring shed was added. The old shed was replaced in 2011 with a larger shed, including undercover areas for players. Unsafe light poles were replaced when the new shed was built. Small improvements are constantly being made. The current facilities meet the club's needs, with a few exceptions:*

- Emergency access gates on Tarwin Meadows Road. **Refer to Driveways and Access Project Area I. Priority - Very High**
- Additional lighting is required once power upgrade is sorted. A qualified lighting consultant is required to determine entire cost and lux levels. **Cost TBD. Priority - Very High**
- Create an elevated viewing area on bowls club side of courts using earthworks. **\$2,000. Priority - High**
- Toilet and shower facilities are inadequate (see public toilet section). **Priority - Medium**
- Additional Sun Smart shelters for spectators. **\$1,500 each. Priority - Medium**
- Equipment and Scoring Shed. **\$5,000. Priority - Medium**

*Please note that these priorities will be implemented and driven by the Netball Club.*



# Identified Projects

## Project Area 9. Equestrian facilities

The club came to the reserve 15 years ago and built the shed. The shed is shared with the COM. The club developed a cross country course for training. The sandy soil is a bonus for the club.

- Shed improvements - **kitchen upgrade/water tank/power supply \$10,000. Priority - Very High**
- Install a rain water tank. **\$2,600. Priority - High**
- Purchase a new trailer to transport show jumps. **\$7,000. Priority - High**
- Bottom shed storage too small to house jumps and other equipment. Additional storage is required. **\$10,000. Priority - Medium**
- Toilet facilities (see public toilet section). **Priority - Medium**
- Additional water sources throughout the reserve to be investigated. **Priority - Medium**
- Clear and level small arena. **\$15,000. Priority - Medium**
- Purchase two portable dressage arenas. **\$5,000** plus trailer to transport them - **\$6,000. Priority - Medium**
- Ongoing improvements to the cross country course - as maintenance is quite difficult. **Volunteer labour and materials. Priority - Medium**
- Extend yards/additional yards **\$5-\$20,000. Priority - Low**

Please note that these priorities will be implemented and driven by the Pony Club



# Identified Projects

## Project Area 10. General reserve landscaping

The area is quite low lying which means the water table creates excess water in certain areas of the reserve. The COM has been able to build up specific areas to ensure good drainage where access is required, including the oval. It should be noted that there is no town water supply to any of the facilities at the reserve. Water for irrigation is obtained from the dam.

- Home for re-locatable miniature golf course being developed by Men's Shed group, only open space required. **Priority - High**
- Tree works where possible should include the removal of more dangerous trees and noxious weeds. New planting will be important at the reserve to maintain appearance. **Priority - High**
- Formalise a Dog Off Leash area with signage in the fenced off cross country area. **\$1,000. Priority - High**
- Create a secure boundary fence around the reserve. Some sections are in good condition but others require significant work. These areas could be broken down into priority order. **Costs as budget allows/volunteer labour. Priority - High**
- Create a new playground area adjacent to the netball courts in the grass area with appropriate fencing. **\$50,000. Priority - Medium**
- Identify a site for a future BMX track if driven by a suitable group with the ability to maintain the area. Site to be determined with effective consultation. **\$15- \$20,000. Priority - Low**
- Consider the installation of a public access basketball ring adjacent to proposed playground. **\$5,000. Priority - Low**
- Re-installation of cricket nets if driven by the cricket club. A more suitable location would be behind the scoreboard, not in their previous location. **\$15,000. Priority - Low**

# Identified Projects

## Project Area 11. Bowls club improvements

*The bowls club built the club house and installed a grass green with interest free grants from Council in 1989. The grant was repaid in full within 10 years. In 2010, the club replaced the grass green with a synthetic green. Carpets have just been installed in the club room. There has been continued maintenance and refurbishments, like the shelter over the BBQ area. The toilets have also recently been upgraded.*

- The club has already started a reserve fund to replace the synthetic green as required. **Priority - Very High**
- Weeds need to be removed from fence line and replaced with a wind proof fence with seating and Sun Smart shelter. **\$20-\$40,000 depending on design. Priority - Very High**
- Clean up of spare block reserved for bowls club usage - spread soil/weed removal. **\$10,000. Priority - High**
- Bar facilities need improving with a new cool room. **\$10,000. Priority - Medium**
- Install solar panels onto roof. **\$16,000. Priority - Medium**
- Second green in paddock adjacent to current facilities is still being considered for the long term future. **Cost not yet determined. Priority - Low**
- Lighting to enable twilight bowls. **This project has not been costed as yet. Priority - Low**
- Water supply in summer is barely adequate, the club would like to tap into the dam supply and further investigation is required. **Priority - Low**

*Please note that these priorities will be implemented and driven by the Bowls Club.*

## Project Area 12. Facilities that could be relocated

*As discussed in the Challenges and Possibilities Section of this report, a possible location for a CFA Shed and the tennis courts has been considered at a conceptual level only as part of this Master Plan. The COM and users have agreed that there is space available, especially behind the netball courts/toilets area and that they would be welcoming of new reserve users. Something that could be considered further if the need arose.*

# Grants

**Federal Government** Various funding programs are released and information on suitable grants should be obtained from South Gippsland Shire Council as it will be required to auspice the grants.

**Department of Planning and Community Development – Sport and Recreation Victoria** The Community Facility Funding Program contributes to the provision of high-quality and accessible community sport and recreation facilities across Victoria. Building Community Infrastructure provides grants to improve places where communities meet and interact. Applications under the Minor and Major Facilities category are available for community groups, working in partnership with Council, to develop or upgrade community sport and recreation facilities.

**Regional Development Victoria** This State Government department has access to funding that supports the building of community infrastructure where economic benefit and broad community use is identified. Not ideally suited for recreation facilities, but broader aspects of reserve development may be considered, especially given the tourism benefit for the visitors to the region.

**Philanthropic Grants** There are active philanthropic organisations supporting regional Victoria through various grants programs. More information can be obtained through <http://communityfoundations.philanthropy.org.au>.

**South Gippsland Shire Council** Community Grants Program - which allows community groups to apply for project funding; Capital Works annual budget; which is developed through identified priorities in key strategic planning exercises and demonstrated need; Council employs Community Development staff and a Grants Officer to assist with the preparation of funding applications and advice should be sought on all identified funding applications.





# Recommendations

This Master Plan provides a blueprint for the future development of the Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve. Relevant industry recreation facility design trends that have been observed include:

- The design and development of facilities that can be configured to meet a variety of different needs and uses.
- The design of recreation facilities is configured to ensure that a variety of recreation or sports can be collocated.
- Ensuring that facilities meet the needs of both genders and that appropriate change rooms are provided.
- That reserves have master plans that ensure the sport and recreation facilities are appropriate to for the space and meet the diverse needs of the community.
- There is a growing recognition that the design of “meeting and social places” within sports and leisure facilities is highly important to building stronger communities.
- The design of sporting facilities are aiming to create atmospheres of sporting and community hubs.
- Consideration of energy efficiency and environmentally friendly features within the design of sport and leisure facilities.
- The design of joint-use facilities (educational and community use) at school and other educational facility locations allowing educational use during off-peak daytime periods (weekdays) and community use during the peak evening and weekend periods.
- Emergence of public-private partnerships between developers, government and sports clubs to develop sports facilities.



# Recommendations

Recommendations have been identified for Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve based on needs identified by user groups and other potential users of the site. Below is a summary of the projects identified with the **highest priority** for action. It is recommended that these are considered first, as the budget allows:

Project Area	Action and indicative costs
1. Driveways and access	On-road signage as well as a general lift of the entrance is required. Gates are required at main entrance for equestrian events. Costs to be determined based on options developed.
2. Construct a formal link into town	Construct a 1.5m wide concrete path from the recreation reserve into town along Walkerville Road to enable safe pedestrian access. This will also benefit the Community Health Service. <b>\$67,500.</b>
5. Change rooms	Replace roof on change room building. <b>\$30,000.</b>
7. Oval improvement works	<p>The dam that is used to irrigate the oval was extended in 2006 with volunteer labour. It is important to complete maintenance of the dam enclosure and pump shed to ensure the area is still easy to access. <b>Volunteer labour.</b></p> <p>There is a need to plan for the replacement of maintenance of equipment, like mowers and slashers, used to maintain the oval and grounds as they are expensive to maintain and replace. A new tractor is required. <b>At least \$10,000 investment per year required.</b></p>
8. Netball facilities	Additional lighting is required once power upgrade is sorted. A qualified lighting consultant is required to determine entire cost and lux levels. <b>Cost TBD.</b>
9. Equestrian facilities	Shed improvements - <b>kitchen upgrade/water tank/power supply \$10,000.</b>
11. Bowls club improvements	<p>The club has already started a reserve fund to replace the synthetic green in 8-12 years time.</p> <p>Weeds need to be removed from fence line and replaced with a wind proof fence with seating and Sun Smart shelter. <b>\$20-\$40,000 depending on design.</b></p>

# Conclusion

This Master Plan for Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve provides a great opportunity for planning the future development of the reserve in a comprehensive manner that acknowledges the natural attributes of the landscape as well as the economic and community benefits provided by the sporting facilities.

The Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve is the key sporting, recreation and social hub for the small but enthusiastic township. It has been timely for Council, with the cooperation and input of user groups, residents and other stakeholders, to establish a master plan for the reserve to enable a new vision to be established for the reserve.

The planning process undertaken during the study has enabled Council and the various stakeholder groups to jointly assess the adequacy of the existing sporting and recreational infrastructure to meet the 'core' needs of user groups, local residents, and visitors who may frequent the reserve and its surrounds for passive recreational pursuits.

This Master Plan provides the framework to undertake future improvements at the reserve and recommends practical solutions to a number of existing constraints and issues that might otherwise impede the growth of some of the user groups.

The progressive implementation of the Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve Master Plan will ensure that this important community space will be better utilised as a community sporting and recreation area for the ongoing benefit of the residents of Tarwin Lower and the surrounding towns.

**Disclaimer of Liability** The information contained in this report is intended for the specific use of the Tarwin Lower Recreation Reserve COM, user groups and South Gippsland Shire Council. All recommendations by Hands on Community Solutions are based on information provided by or on behalf of the management committee, user groups and Council and we have relied upon such information being correct at the time this report has been prepared.

Readers should note this report might include implicit projections about the future which, by their nature, are uncertain and cannot be relied upon. They are dependent on potential events or technical assessments, which have not yet occurred.

**References** The following references have been used in the development of this report:  
Government websites - Planning scheme data and maps, grant information

South Gippsland Shire Council - website/  
Recreation Plan/Council Plan

Australian Bureau of Statistics - population data

Recreation studies and strategies as identified in the document

# Appendices

1. Landscape Plan

