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Shire of Northam

Wundowie Community Hub Feasibility Study

April 2019



ANNA DIXON CONSULTING



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1 Background

The Shire of Northam has, in consultation with the community, identified a need for a community hub within the Wundowie townsite. To allow the Shire of Northam to understand the requirements and considerations of such a facility, Anna Dixon Consulting, in partnership with Slavin Architects, was engaged to prepare a feasibility study and initial concept designs for a community hub. In addition to a community hub, the scope includes consideration of the incorporation of a café as well as a short-stay caravan park facility into the precinct.

2 Overview of Findings

As part of the development of the Wundowie Community Plan, the Wundowie community has identified a need for a multi-purpose community and recreation hub within the townsite, driven by a desire to see more social and recreation activities occurring locally.

There is currently no purpose-built facility of this nature in the townsite. There are a number of buildings that cater to some elements of this type of facility:

- town hall with activity areas, storage, kitchen and bathrooms (Shire owned and managed);
- library with various meeting areas (Shire owned and managed);
- football clubhouse and change rooms (club managed on land leased from the Shire – note that the buildings are in poor condition);
- Wundowie Workers Club (privately owned building owned and managed by the Wundowie Workers Club Association.)

There are also a number of sporting and recreation facilities, including two sports fields, tennis courts, skate park, playground and swimming pool.

Currently there are no organised sports offered in the Wundowie townsite, although informal recreation including swimming, tennis, walking and children's play-based activity takes place. The community consultation process indicated strong community interest in re-activating recreation and social activities within the community.

In determining the feasibility of a hub for Wundowie, it was an unusual situation to have a comparatively large community (for the Wheatbelt region) being in a position of having very few sporting and community groups. In most other communities, the study would look at how best to collocate a range of groups and activities into one facility, whereas the Wundowie community is in a position of needing to project what they perceive they would like to have happening locally. As a result, this feasibility study has endeavoured to capture these aspirations and provide guidance on how these could be met (and how the eventual facility could be funded and operated). It is suggested that the next stage of this process be

the investment of funds (potentially via grant funding) in supporting the initiation of community and recreation activities that utilise existing facilities. This would have several benefits, including but not limited to:

- building community cohesion and local leadership;
- identifying 'what works' in this space, and where the challenges are;
- provide evidence to grant funders of actual, rather than anticipated, need.

With regards to the caravan park, the development of a small-scale facility seems feasible although is unlikely to generate significant income for the community as there are currently very few opportunities for visitors to spend money locally (although increased visitor numbers would be likely to benefit existing local retailers). The development of a park may catalyse the development of micro-tourism operations.

3 Strategic Document Review

A review of relevant Shire of Northam plans was carried out, along with the results of the most recent Community Perception Survey results.

3.1 Wundowie Community Plan 2016-2026

The Wundowie Community Plan was adopted by Council on 15 February 2017 as a formal planning framework. It identifies opportunities, initiatives and priorities for Wundowie to achieve a vibrant and sustainable future.

Under the median scenario population projection used in the Wundowie Community Plan (sourced from WA Tomorrow) the Shire of Northam will grow to 14,800 people by 2026, a population increase of 34% from 2011. By 2026, the Shire is planning for a population of 1,820 in Wundowie. The projected population growth in Wundowie was an influencing factor in the development of this Plan.

The vision for Wundowie is: "Wundowie will be a vibrant local centre offering a quality rural lifestyle whilst meeting the needs of a diverse and growing community". The Plan sets out four strategic goals of: Community & Liveability, Services, Infrastructure, and Economy.

A hub could help achieve the 'Community & Liveability' goal by providing the necessary facilities to enable a vibrant, family-friendly, healthy lifestyle with opportunities for community participation. A key task priority identified in the Plan is 'consolidating a range of sporting and recreational activities into a hub where the football club currently stands.'

The provision of quality sporting and recreation facilities has flow-on effects into other goals:

- Economy - recreational facilities can help retain and attract population.

- Services – enables the provision of accessible public services that support the needs of all age groups within the local community, to facilitate population growth.
- Infrastructure – provides infrastructure to meet the needs of growth and lifestyle.

3.2 Strategic Community Plan

A potential community hub in Wundowie links to theme area two, Community Wellbeing, and could contribute to outcomes 2.1 and 2.2.

Outcome 2.1 People in the Shire of Northam feel that their community is caring and inclusive. Assuming universal design principles are used, the hub could enable the provision of services for disabled people to live a fulfilling life in their local community. It could also contribute to the services and facilities available for youth who are constrained by lack of independent transport and require local facilities.

Outcome 2.2. There are a variety of recreational and leisure activities available to all ages across the Shire of Northam. A hub could allow the Shire to maintain facilities in the Wundowie community, which is an objective in this area. Furthermore, through effective consultation, a hub could be designed that allows for a range of activities to take place, suiting a range of demographics.

3.3 Community Perception Survey 2014

The survey was completed by 631 people in the Shire of Northam, with weighting applied to match the sample with the ABS Census population profile.

Overall, 37% of respondents were satisfied with services and facilities for youth, 62% were satisfied with facilities, services and care for seniors and 67% were satisfied with sport and recreation facilities.

The top priority area for Wundowie was safety and security, followed by how the community is consulted and informed about local issues. The Wundowie Community Plan was developed after this survey, and the potential hub was proposed through this consultation process. Community engagement through the feasibility and (potentially) further stages of the hub will be crucial to meeting the identified priority area.

There are potential linkages between crime and safety, with sport and recreation facilities providing space for potential diversionary programs for crime prevention (a direct action and indirectly by strengthening community connections).

3.4 Corporate Plan

The Corporate Business Plan is the Shire of Northam's 5-year service and project delivery program. It is aligned to the strategic direction and priorities set within the Strategic Community Plan 2022.

Two key opportunities highlighted in the 18/19 Corporate Business Plan which relate to the hub are:

- Land development opportunities in the western edge of the Shire, particularly Wundowie and Bakers Hill; and
- Realising the benefits of proximity to the metropolitan area.

The Shire is also responsible for developing an annual program of active recreational activities, including a seniors' activity program around active ageing.

3.5 Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

It is estimated that there are around 2,066 people living with disability in the Shire of Northam and the Shire is committed to ensuring the community is accessible for and inclusive of people with disability, as well as their families and carers.

People with disability and their families and carers have the same rights as other people to access services within the community and these rights are built into State and Commonwealth legislation which makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person with a disability. There are a range of legislative requirements around access and inclusion:

- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- Disability Services Act of WA (1993) (as amended 2004)
- Building Codes of Australia
- WA Equal Opportunity Act (1984, amended 1988)

In 2015, the Shire of Northam conducted a comprehensive, independent access audit of buildings, facilities and public spaces through the Age Friendly Community program, to determine where improvements could be made. The three priority projects emerging from this audit are based within the Northam townsite.

All new buildings in the Shire must comply with AS1428.1 Disability Standard and the Shire will ensure that all new or redevelopment works provide access to people with disability where practicable. They will ensure that all recreational areas are accessible and address specific building and facility issues raised during public consultation process.

Furthermore, opportunities must be provided for people with disability to participate in public consultations, grievance mechanisms and decision-making processes.

4 Social Profile of Local Context

4.1 Demographic Snapshot

Wundowie is located on the western boundary of the Shire of Northam and borders the Perth metropolitan area. The population in 2016 was 1,352¹ and based on WA Tomorrow forecasts the Shire is planning for a population of 1,820² by 2026 although it could exceed this due to availability and demand for affordable land.

Compared to Western Australia, the current demographic of Wundowie is an older population with a high proportion of home buyers or owners. There is a larger proportion of one parent families (13.8% of all households) and lone person households (27%). While median rents and mortgage repayments are lower than WA, median income is also lower.

Census data suggests two 'streams' of household: 45.7% of the labour force are working in excess of 40 hours per week and nearly 25% of couple families have both parents not working.

The predominant occupation type is trades and manual labour, with the nearby abattoir and immigration detention centre important employers. Wundowie is less multicultural than the wider state and country with the only significant ancestry being Filipino.

4.2 Full Demographic Profile

Wundowie is located on the western boundary of the Shire of Northam and borders the Perth metropolitan area. The population in 2016 was 1,352¹. Based on WA Tomorrow median forecasts the Shire of Northam is projected to increase its population by 34% to 2026, representing a population of 1,820² for Wundowie by 2026. However, Wundowie's proximity to Perth, relative affordability and available land makes continued development of rural residential opportunities a considerable strength of the area and growth drivers may accelerate development beyond current expectation. There are no immediate constraints and current land availability could see Wundowie support another 2,462 people. The Mauravillo Estate is one of the key drivers of population growth in the area, with this lifestyle block estate providing country living with close proximity to the metropolitan area.

¹ 2016 Census Quick Stats: Wundowie. ABS.

http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC51634

² Wundowie Community Plan 2016 – 2026 Shire of Northam

The overall population has more females at 51%, yet the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander population has more males at 58.3%. Wundowie has a median age of 42 years, older than both the Western Australia (36) and Australia (38) medians. The proportion of those aged 0 to 5, 25 to 39 and 45 to 49 years was lower than in Western Australia (WA), representing less babies, pre-schoolers and young workforce. All ages 50 to 84 years were higher the WA average, representing more pre-retirees, empty nesters, retirees and seniors.

Wundowie is not as multiculturally diverse as WA and Australia. 70% of residents were born in Australia; and Australian, English and Scottish are the main ancestries. 86% of families speak only English at home, again higher than WA and Australia. Filipino ancestry is notable at over three times the WA average and features evenly in country of birth for fathers and mothers, indicating families have emigrated. Tagalog and Filipino are the only languages other than English spoken in a notable number.

The predominant education level is Year 10 or Certificate III, with university education attainment (Bachelor degree) a quarter of the WA average. The most common occupations in Wundowie are Technicians and Trades Workers 19.3%, Labourers 18.6% (double WA), Clerical and Administrative Workers 13.3%, Community and Personal Service Workers 12.4%, and Machinery Operators and Drivers 11.4%. Top industries of employment are Meat Processing 7.5%, Correctional and Detention Services 6.7%, Iron Ore Mining 3.5%, Supermarket and Grocery Stores 3.3% and Road Freight Transport 3.3%. This reflects nearby employers such as the abattoir in Wundowie, the Immigration Detention Centre just outside Northam and the two prisons in nearby Wooroloo.

There are two streams of employment evident in the labour force: 58.5% of people in the labour force work full time and 45.7% of the labour force work in excess of 40 hours a week; and 24.9% of couple families have both parents not working. The population who work from home is around half the WA and national average at 2.6%. Median weekly personal income for people aged 15 years and over in Wundowie was \$592, compared to \$724 in WA.

In the 2016 census, Wundowie had 603 private dwellings with 3 to 4 bedroom standalone homes the predominant housing stock. Internet access is low compared to WA and Australia, with 20.4% of dwellings without internet connection. The proportion of people renting in Wundowie is lower than WA and Australia; and weekly rents are more affordable, even when assessed against the lower median incomes. Although mortgage repayments are also lower than WA, lower median incomes mean 10.7% of households in Wundowie have mortgage repayments greater than or equal to 30% of household income, a possible signal of mortgage stress.

Nearly 70% of households in Wundowie are family households, comprised of 40.6% couples without children and 39.7% couples with children. A further 19.7% are one parent families, which is higher than WA and Australia and nearly 86% of single parents are female. Wundowie also has more lone person households than WA and Australia at 27.7% and a

higher proportion of widowed people, reflecting a need for connectivity to prevent social isolation.

5 Leisure Trends Review

Trends around sport and recreation preferences and participation rates specific to Wundowie will be established through community engagement, however broad leisure trends and challenges that are relevant to Wundowie are explored in this review.

5.1 Informal, Lifelong Participation

Considering the varying needs of people across life course is important to encourage sustained participation. This means tailoring services and programs to respond to these different needs, addressing barriers to participation and evolving interests over time. In line with this, the Department of Sport and Recreation's Strategic Directions identifies an emerging trend for informal participation in accessible, low cost activities geared around social networks³.

This informal participation type brings a range of social and wellbeing benefits to a local community. Wundowie has a larger proportion of those aged 50-84 compared to both Western Australia and Australia, so the participation needs of this diverse group need to be considered, particularly with the Shire of Northam's commitment to a program of 'active ageing' activities. Furthermore, the prevalence of lone person households also highlights the need for social and community networks to prevent social isolation.

5.2 Adventure and Outdoor Recreation

Into the future, Western Australia will continue to be a local and international destination for adventure and outdoor recreation, in part driven by increasingly urban lifestyles⁴. Flexible outdoor activities such as bush-walking and mountain biking are appealing⁵, as well as activities with a 'thrill seeking' component, particularly among younger people.

³ Department of Sport and Recreation. (2016) *Strategic Directions for the Western Australian Sport and Recreation Industry 2016-2020 (SD6)*. April 2016. www.dsr.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/file-support-and-advice/file-research-and-policies/sd6-booklet_for-screen.pdf?sfvrsn=2

⁴ Outdoor Industries Association UK and Sport England (2015) *Getting Active Outdoors: A study of Demography, Motivation, Participation and Provision in Outdoor Sport and Recreation in England*, London, England; Sport England. 22 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011)

⁵ Australian Social Trends 2011: Sport and Physical Recreation Catalogue no. 4102.0, Canberra, Australia. Retrieved in October 2015 from www.abs.gov.au.

Abundant space and natural environments are also seen as drawcards⁶ to grow the tourism sector in this area, with the western ward of the Shire abundant in both of these and in close proximity to Perth. A key element of this offering is the eco-tourism aspect, where the conservation of these natural spaces is secured in conjunction with tourism helping to ensure the longevity of the attraction. The Department of Sport & Recreation emphasises the need for public, private and community sector stakeholders to collaboratively deliver high-quality activities, services and facilities to meet this demand while also protecting the environment^{Error! Bookmark not defined.}.

5.3 Public Open Space and Urban Form

Continued development of rural residential opportunities in the Shire's western ward is anticipated with Wundowie's proximity to Perth, relative affordability and available land growth drivers. Under WA Tomorrow median forecasts, 34% population growth is projected to 2026 in the Shire, representing a population of 1,820² in Wundowie, yet current land availability could see Wundowie support another 2,462 people. Urban expansion also requires the preservation of key locations for community recreational use, particularly important with the Wundowie townsite heritage listed as an example of a 'garden town'⁷.

Parks and green space will become even more important under climate change projections. A 2018 Senate inquiry into the current and future impacts of climate change on housing, buildings and infrastructure found that overall the "duration, frequency and intensity of heat events have increased significantly"⁸ and this will continue to intensify into the twenty-first century. As a regional and inland town, the most likely impact to Wundowie is from extreme weather (higher and more extreme temperatures), with vulnerable groups being the elderly, infirmed and very young⁹. Some direct impacts may include: the need for more indoor sports programs, increased demand for water-based recreation, increased exposure to UV radiation, reduced participation in outdoor fitness during summer daytime, rescheduling of sporting events to night-time fixtures, increased funding requirements for lighting and air conditioning, and increased bush fire risk in parks and bushlands⁹. If these impacts are not understood and planned for, climate change may effect low-cost, regular

⁶ Tourism Western Australia (2015) Tourism Western Australia: Fast Facts Year Ending June 2015, Perth, Western Australia; Government of Western Australia.

⁷ inherit State Heritage Office. Wundowie Place No. 23525

<http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/Details/32c0883f-f28d-4f3c-a1fa-32b3c26c5284>

⁸ Commonwealth of Australia (2018) Senate: Current and future impacts of climate change on housing, buildings and infrastructure. P13. August 2018.

⁹Department of Sport and Recreation (WA), Climate change: Climate change is no longer a just a concept—how climate change could affect sport and recreation now and in the future. www.dsr.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/file-about-us/file-plan-for-the-future/climatechange.

community-based sport and recreation participation, reducing both physical activity and involvement of people in sport and recreation clubs⁹.

To address the drying climate in south-west Western Australia, greater efficiency of natural resources such as water^{Error! Bookmark not defined.} is required. Recreation spaces must be strategically planned to maximise function and provide equity of access, including giving consideration to shared facilities and functional upgrades. Buildings also need to address energy efficiency standards. Climate change planning undertaken by the Department of Sport and Recreation highlights that water used to maintain urban green spaces is considered necessary as it underpins the fabric of sport and leisure industries and can mitigate some impacts of climate change⁹ such as urban heat island effect.

5.4 Barriers to Participation

Many Western Australians lead sedentary lifestyles and some barriers to participate include being time-poor, reluctance or inability to participate due to social or economic circumstances or unwelcoming environments¹⁰. Strategies to overcome unwelcoming environments (sometimes culturally based) include training for staff and volunteers, and building communication and partnerships over time with community organisations.

Initiatives such as KidSport can assist with the cost of participation, however more opportunities to make sport and recreation inclusive should be explored. For Wundowie residents, the main sporting facilities are a 50-minute return car trip to Northam or Mundaring and the cost of regular travel may be prohibitive to some residents as well as unsuitable for those who are time-poor (including those working long hours or caring for children).

Increasing sport and recreation participation can have many benefits, such as a positive contributor to inclusivity as well as broad social objectives like crime reduction and improvements in mental and physical health³. According to the World Health Organisation, lack of sport and recreation facilities is a major factor of urbanisation that discourages people from being more active and such facilities are required to ‘provide opportunities for everyone’¹¹.

¹⁰ Australian Sports Commission (2015) Play.Sport.Australia: The Australian Sports Commission’s participation game plan, Canberra, Australia; Government of Australia.

¹¹ WHO. (2018). *Physical Activity*. World Health Organization. Accessed at: <http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>

6 Analysis of Current Facilities and Services

Wundowie residents have access to a range of facilities and services provided by local and state government, including:

- Wundowie Primary School (State)
- Wundowie Health Centre (State)
- Wundowie Emergency Services – police, fire, ambulance (State)
- Wundowie Library, including meeting rooms (Shire of Northam)
- Wundowie Town Hall, including kitchen (Shire of Northam)
- Fluffy Ducklings Day Care (Shire of Northam building, peppercorn lease to third party provider)
- Town Hall (Shire of Northam)
- Recreation area including sports fields, skate park and children's playground along with clubrooms held under lease by the Wundowie Football Club (Shire of Northam)
- Wundowie Swimming Pool (Shire of Northam)
- Transperth bus service – 3 services Wundowie – Midland, 4 services Midland – Wundowie weekdays only (State)
- Wundowie – Northam Community Transport – trial only (Shire of Northam)

Commercial services include:

- Wundowie Supermarket, Liquor Store and Post Office
- Wundowie Hardware Store
- Wundowie Worker's Club
- Masala Corner Restaurant

Active clubs and organisations operating in Wundowie include:

- Wundowie Progress Association
- Silver Wings Over 55s
- Wundowie Primary School P&C
- Wundowie Playgroup
- Wundowie Men's Shed
- Wundowie Golf Club
- Wundowie Harmony Taekwondo
- Hurricanes Go Kart Club
- Wundowie Swimming Club
- Wundowie Tennis Club

7 Site Investigation Findings

7.1 Commentary on Garden City Town Planning

The Wundowie community is in an unusual position, in that the town site layout is of historical significance and decision-making about development should be made with consideration to this heritage feature. The townsite has been developed using the Garden City town planning philosophy and the townsite was granted Heritage Status by the National Trust of Australia (WA) in 2011 in recognition of the cultural significance of the town plan. The National Trust's findings that supported this decision encompassed:

- The place has aesthetic significance arising from its Garden City design.
- The town has high landscape aesthetic Significance and the design sits appropriately in a shallow valley.
- The residential development within the town is of a consistent vernacular architectural style and is of high aesthetic significance.
- The community of residents and workers have initiated public artworks based on town design themes of aesthetic significance.
- The success of its design and viability of its economic foundation is a model of achievement and aesthetic significance.
- The town has aesthetic significance through its intact street scape values of the original design approach.
- The town has historic significance as a wartime initiative to address post-war industrial development.
- The transfer of Garden City design principles from Britain and the metropolitan area to a rural industrial site is of historic significance.
- Wundowie has historical significance through being the first twentieth century purposely dedicated industrial town.
- Through the high standard of products and techniques, Wundowie has historical significance.
- The town has scientific value due to its potential to demonstrate the history of iron and rare earth materials plus the industrial technology in Western Australia.
- The town demonstrates social significance through the vitality of its community organisation.
- Wundowie is rare as it retains a cohesive urban form demonstrating life in a Garden City designed rural industrial town.
- The town and the industry demonstrate representativeness as a beginning of the iron industry in Western Australia.

- Wundowie is a town specifically designed for the iron industry and set the pattern for the later industrial towns in the Pilbara Region and thus demonstrates Representativeness.¹²

To further appreciate the significance of this approach to development, an understanding of the Garden City planning philosophy is useful. Developed by Ebenezer Howard in his 1898 work *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, the following principles for planning were proposed:

- Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.
- Land value capture for the benefit of the community.
- Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets.
- Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are affordable for ordinary people.
- Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens in healthy communities.
- A strong local jobs offer in the Garden City itself and within easy commuting distance.
- Opportunities for residents to grow their own food, including allotments.
- Generous green space, including: surrounding belt of countryside to prevent unplanned sprawl; well-connected and biodiversity-rich public parks; high quality gardens; tree-lined streets; and open spaces.
- Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable neighbourhoods.
- Integrated and accessible transport systems.¹³

Notable in the Wundowie town plan is the use of a civic core in which community services and commercial enterprises are centralised, providing a physical separation between the residential area and the industrial area of the foundry. This centralisation of core services is consistent with the principles of Garden City design and allows for a vibrant community area to be developed through proximity of services.

In the Conservation Plan developed as part of the Heritage Listing process, the following constraints of development are listed and should be considered in moving forward with any development within the townsite:

¹² National Trust of Australia (WA), (16 October 2011), *List of Classified Places: Heritage Assessment: Wundowie*.

¹³ The International Garden Cities Institute. *Garden City Principles*
<https://www.gardencitiesinstitute.com/advocacy/garden-city-principles>

CONSTRAINTS ARISING OUT OF THE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following policies are appropriate actions to conserve the heritage significance of Wundowie. They arise out of the discussion of the Assessment of Significance (Section 5.0) and the items raised in the Statement of Significance (Section 6).

- Land uses should remain as existing within the townsite unless there is no adverse impact on the cultural significance of the town.
- The Garden City street pattern of the original stage of town development should not change.
- Any redevelopment of the public domain should be under the direction of a recognised heritage consultant with planning qualifications.
- Future town expansion beyond the townsite should be in consultation with a recognised heritage consultant with planning qualifications.¹⁴

7.2 Proposed Site Investigation Findings

The Shire of Northam's brief specifies the current Wundowie Football Club buildings (Eastern Sporting Grounds Site) as the preferred site for any development. This preference reflects findings of the current Wundowie Community Plan.

On visiting the Wundowie townsite, the initial reactions of both Anna Dixon Consulting and Slavin Architects was that further consideration should be given to this. It would be important to establish whether or not this preference was reflective of the wider community and what activities and services they would like to see happening in such a hub.

Once these threshold questions have been explored, consideration to the most suitable site should be given. While the football club location has merits, it is worth considering other options, in particular within the town centre civic precinct or the Western Sporting Grounds Site.

7.2.1 Existing Services

A desktop review of the existing site infrastructure to the area has been undertaken to determine the extent of services. The following outlines our understanding of the existing services on site:

Existing Electrical Services

The Sporting Grounds site is flanked by low voltage overhead powerlines to the north along Banksia Avenue and high voltage overhead power to the southern boundary along Hawke

¹⁴ Relix & Fiona Bush Heritage and Archeology. Wundowie Garden Town Conservation Plan

Avenue. It appears power to the sporting grounds is supplied from a Wester Power pillar on Banksia Avenue near the intersection of Hovea Crescent.

While it is unlikely an upgrade of the existing power supply to the sporting grounds would be required to service the proposed Community Hub, further investigations would be required to determine the existing electrical demand and capacity of the site.

Existing Telecommunications

Access to the existing clubrooms for inspection was unavailable on the day of the site visit so the availability of data and communications is unknown.

Existing Water Services

An overview of the existing water connections show that the site is serviced by a 200mm Water Corporation main along the southern side of Banksia Avenue.

Existing Sewer Services

The sporting ground site has a Water Corporation asset running between the football and hockey fields. The asset is 150mm diameter vitrified clay sewer main. The existing toilet block is connected to this service.

7.2.2 Existing Assets

There are three existing structures located between the football and hockey playing fields at the Wundowie sporting grounds. These include what we believe to be a steel and timber framed sporting clubroom, a masonry toilet block and a masonry store room. Without internal access to the buildings, the inspection was limited to external observations of readily accessible and visible building fabric. No invasive investigations were undertaken and conclusions on the condition of the existing structure are based on observation only.

Brick Store Room

The southern-most building is a small masonry store room in poor condition. The walls are a patchwork of various clay brick types as a result of repair work and closing over of openings over the years. Brickwork pointing is severely eroded in places and missing in some locations. The condition of the pointing is worst on the eastern and northern elevations. Weather has removed the fair face finish from some bricks leaving a rough and uneven finish. The roof is supported by two timber wall plates with no intermediate rafters or battens. The span of the wall plates is inadequate for the existing steel roofing profile as evidenced by the visible sagging of the roof sheeting. The structure is potentially dangerous if the low walls (2100mm) were ever scaled and the roof was subjected to the weight of a human.

Brick Toilet Block

The masonry toilet block is in poor condition. Settlement of foundations in the south-east corner of the site has caused severe cracking and separation of the bottom 6 courses of the wall from the rest of the structure. External tiles window sills are damaged and, in some cases, missing. Brickwork pointing is suffering from erosion. The steel lintels above the windows have expanded due to corrosion and blown out adjacent brickwork. The steel roof sheeting on the western eaves is severely corroded and probably no longer capable of providing a secure fixing between the roof and fascia. There is a visible sag in the roof which indicates structural settlement of some roof members. Any remedial work to the building would trigger the requirement to upgrade the internal layouts to comply with current accessibility standards. Without seeing inside the ablution block, if internal conditions are similar to external, replacement rather than repair of this building would be recommended.

Clubroom

The existing timber framed clubroom is in fair condition. Settlement in the corners of the brickwork plinth to the concrete slab verandahs is evident. Gutters and downpipes are not connected to soakwells and the settlement in the corner of the buildings can be attributed to the softer ground where downpipes discharge directly onto the ground in the corners of the building. The roof sheeting and wall cladding appear in good condition. The timber framed walls could be modified relatively economically to provide additional windows and access to the eastern side of the building facing the hockey fields. There is also room to extend the building to the north if a larger facility was required. The main structure is transportable and could also be relocated to accommodate future development. The in situ concrete access ramp and handrails do not meet current universal access standards.

7.2.3 Site

In considering the most suitable site for locating a Community Hub, the strengths and weaknesses of three potential sites are tabled below:

Eastern Sporting Grounds Site (between football and hockey fields)

Opportunities

- Power, water and sewer is provided to the site
- Existing clubroom could be re-used/adapted/extended
- The site is isolated from other facilities in town and could activate the recreational precinct
- A new building in this location could service both the football and hockey fields as well as the skatepark

- The clear, flat, underutilised hockey fields would be an ideal location to establish serviced short-stay caravan and camping amenities for recreation or major sporting events on the oval
- The site has existing vehicular access and parking provided although it is difficult to tell how the relatively low-lying unsealed surfaces perform under very wet conditions.

Constraints

- The site is isolated from the townsite and could be vulnerable to vandalism
- Proximity from the street may present safety concerns for users accessing the building by foot at night
- The north-south orientation of the playing fields is not ideal for solar passive design however could be mitigated by deep verandahs on the east and west of a new building
- The site feels distanced from communal activity occurring at the town centre when a case could be made for it to be closer to the town hub

Western Sporting Grounds Site (between football oval and hard courts)

Opportunities

- Synergy with all recreational infrastructure including hardcourts (tennis and basketball), football oval and possibly school
- Proximity to town centre with existing raised crossover providing an established pedestrian link
- Land is clear and flat
- Off-street parking could easily be provided with reciprocal use for community hall and library
- Existing ablution block suggests existing sewer connection in the area, although we do not have information confirming this

Constraints

- Distanced from skate park and hockey fields (and possible future camp site)

Town Centre (carpark to the south of Community Hall)

Opportunities

- Potential to share existing facilities with community hall
- The site lends itself to a north facing building
- A community building in this location would reinforce the heart of the garden city street pattern

Constraints

- Perceived physical barrier of road between Hub and recreational space at the sporting grounds
- Loss of parking

8 Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholders were provided the opportunity to discuss their needs, along with any issues and opportunities, through three mechanisms – stakeholder group interviews, an online discussion forum and a community workshop.

Although all of these mechanisms were well utilised by those who participated in them, we hold some concern that sections of the community had not been heard from. This perception is reinforced via a number of concerns from Wundowie individuals and groups, who told the Shire of Northam that they felt excluded and/or not informed about the opportunities to have input following or towards the end of the consultation period. It would be fair to say that the Shire of Northam adopted a similar communications approach that would be utilised to good effect in other engagement processes undertaken in the Shire (Facebook posts, flyers around the townsite, emailing groups in Wundowie, asking influencers to ‘spread the word’), so it is difficult to say that the Shire was remiss. However, there are clearly issues with communication in Wundowie, as evidenced at the community workshop (see discussion in Section 8.1 Community Workshop).

Despite some people expressing concern they were not heard, it is considered that a representative sample was gathered. If the project progresses beyond the feasibility study stage, it would be important to consider how to engage with those community members who felt overlooked or excluded, as well as the community in general.

The overriding theme in terms of what the community is seeking is that there is no consensus. Many of the functions the community are looking for in a facility already exist locally but are not utilised for this purpose, in large part because there are not groups and individuals to drive the implementation of activities. There was something of a theme of a keenness to build or retain facilities with an idea that their presence would generate an activity (for example, a suggestion not to encroach on to hockey field with a caravan park facility so as to not rule out hockey returning in the future, or that by developing indoor courts more sport could be played) – whether there is the critical mass of interested potential players is questionable.

In light of this lack of consensus it is recommended that the Shire of Northam agree to adjust the scope of the Feasibility Study to explore the viability of a range of options, rather than continue with the original brief (to look only at the re-development of the existing football club building) as it is considered this would not present good value for the Shire of

Northam as the Wundowie community is not currently in a position to make a collaborative decision.

A number of issues outside the scope of this study emerged but it would be remiss not to note them as, if they are not effectively addressed, they are likely to impact on the sustainability of any facility developed in the community.

There is obvious tension and conflict between groups and individuals in Wundowie. From the perspective of an ‘outsider’, the Wundowie community has lost the resilience it may have had in the past. Looking at the rapid economic decline, coupled with a shrinking, ageing population and social problems identified by some workshop participants, such as drug use and anti-social behaviour, it is easy to see how conflict has emerged out of this environment.

The community (or sections of it) may have identified the ‘need’ for a community hub, however we would suggest that a physical building is not the core requirement here (although may be useful). Rather, some serious work to support the community to build relationships, skills and resilience would be vital to reduce the risk of the further disintegration of the community fabric.

A further concern is the lack of a sustainable economic driver for the community. Currently, the foundry (which does not seem likely to expand again) along with a limited number of small businesses and government roles form the core of employment opportunities within Wundowie. There are no strong pull factors for visitors other than the Iron Festival and there are limited opportunities to leverage the buying power of visitors. Without addressing the economic structure of the community, it seems likely to continue to struggle with growth (or even sustaining the current population).

The Shire of Northam is to be acknowledged for their renewed commitment to the community with the development of a Community Plan and assigning financial and human resources to support the community to achieve the objectives in the Plan.

8.1 Community Workshop

A community workshop was held on the evening of 25 February 2019, with 27 community members in attendance (including five people who attended as ‘observers’ – an elected member of council, an interested member of the wider Wheatbelt area who is intending to stand at the next federal election and three other people who wanted to observe discussions but declined to participate). Some people arrived late and some left early, but the majority of participants were in attendance for the duration of the workshop.

The workshop was structured to facilitate community members to identify the functions required of a facility, rather than ‘designing’ a facility, and they were encouraged to

consider the requirements of a hub from their personal needs rather than trying to project their perception of what ‘the community’ needed.

The workshop primarily focused on three topics which attendees explored:

- What activities (sporting, social, cultural) are currently working well in Wundowie and what makes them successful?
- What are the functions (sporting, social, cultural) that you would use in a hub and what would need to happen to make them successful?
- Based on the functions needed, what location would be most suitable for a hub?

The ideas and themes that emerged out of this discussion are explored below, however, it is important to note that other issues were identified during the workshop that are likely to be a barrier to the success of any hub and need to be proactively addressed. The key issues identified by the participants included:

Retention of Youth Population From primary school age, there is a drain of children to surrounding schools (some Wundowie families choosing to attend Bakers Hill or Mundaring area schools). With no high school, teenagers are then travelling or boarding and less inclined to return to Wundowie after completing their studies (exacerbated by a lack of work opportunities and amenities). Some felt that of all the age profiles in Wundowie, teenagers were least catered for in terms of provision of services and facilities which actively encouraged participation and engagement with the community.

Community Communication Lack of effective communication strategies to reach all sections of the community (this includes communications from/with the Shire of Northam and government agencies to groups within Wundowie) was identified as a real issue and a source of tension (with feelings of exclusion). Suggestions were made around increasing the frequency of information via unaddressed mail (with challenges being the cost of this mode of communication and that people with ‘no junk mail’ status cannot receive this correspondence). The Progress Association advised of the imminent installation of a digital noticeboard for the town centre and offered workshop participants the opportunity to join their email news list.

Economic Barriers to Participation in Recreation Workshop participants noted that many families in Wundowie are not able to meet the cost of participating in organised sporting activities and this was thought to be a contributing factor to many sporting groups folding up or going into recess. The cost of swimming pool entry and opening hours were also identified as barriers to participation for many families.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

The workshop groups identified a range of activities and services that were operational and important to the community.

Recreation	Social and Cultural	Services
Skatepark Oval (mostly used for independent leisure activities and community events) Basketball courts Swimming Pool Go-kart track Taekwondo Barbeque area Playgrounds Townhall Football club rooms Golf course Netball (not played locally) Darts Horse Riding Trotting track (in disrepair)	Library Iron Festival (Progress Association) Australia Day event (Progress Association) Motor Mania (P&C Association) Quiz Nights (P&C Association) Workers' Club Silverwings Seniors Men's Shed Movie nights ANZAC Day Service School performances	IGA Emergency Services Childcare Transperth bus service Primary School P&C Association Progress Association Medical centre Community bus

COMMUNITY NEEDS

The groups then worked together to discuss the needs and opportunities with regards to a sport and recreation hub. A variety of ideas were presented, although not all workshop attendees agreed with the perspectives presented.

The core themes of building functions were a place to connect and a place to be entertained. Sporting activities (other than darts) were not core functions in the space but the building seen as needing to support participation (for example, provide change room facilities, the ability for sporting groups to gather for meetings). There was some discussion around the need for an indoor sports facility (similar to the existing hall which is set up for smaller scale sports such as badminton) - a suggestion of indoor basketball courts was proposed. Connectivity with existing ovals, skate park and barbeque area was also considered important during the discussion. There was a consensus that any new facility must be capable of providing for all age groups - from young families, to teenagers, adults and the elderly.

In terms of the core purposes of a place to connect and a place to be entertained, a range of ideas were proposed, encompassing:

Kitchen Facilities, Cafe and Bar

Attendees were keen for good standard kitchen facilities to enable a 'community cafe' arrangement, or for a cafe facility that could be leased on a commercial basis. They identified a gap locally for a place to meet for a coffee or light meal and felt this was a real disadvantage for the community. It should be noted that over the years, a range of café and small restaurant ventures have been opened in Wundowie but none have survived – without knowing the specifics of each business it is only possible to speculate about reasons for this but the viability of such an enterprise may be questionable based on previous ventures however a town of this size would generally be able to support at least one hospitality business, with many Wheatbelt towns of a similar size supporting a café and/or a roadhouse with dining options.

Ideas of community meal nights (either as fundraisers for local groups or a 'bring a plate' type night) were suggested. Currently, the existing hall is not used for this purpose although it has a well-appointed kitchen and plenty of tables and chairs.

There were also discussions regarding more of a bar-style facility. Some community members felt this was needed as there is not a modern, family-friendly hotel in the area (current options are the Wundowie Workers Club, the Loose Foot Tavern in El Caballo or the Bakers Hill Tavern). Some attendees were concerned that another option for consuming alcohol locally would lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour. Other participants suggested that a bar facility could be available but only utilised on an occasional basis for events.

Recreation Facilities

The workshop participants identified a range of recreation facilities that they would appreciate access to, including:

- Multi-use space (a flexible area that could be used for meetings, functions, workshops and other activities such as bingo, darts, book club, youth group, computer gaming and children's indoor games).
- Auditorium/mini cinema/seminar room (note that an outdoor movie screen is currently used in the summertime to occasionally screen films on the oval).
- An outdoor amphitheatre or sound shell (currently the school has temporary staging that is used on the oval for school presentations, but sound carries poorly in the large open space).
- Changerooms may encourage established sporting clubs to play exhibition matches in Wundowie.

- Community garden (note that there was a suggestion that this was already planned for the townsite centre, so it would be important to avoid duplication and dilute the number of people available to keep the gardens viable - potentially edible plantings rather than a community garden might be a consideration at the hub site).

The standard range of amenities was identified as needed - Wi-Fi, security measures, administrative area, toilets, storage and change rooms.

Operations

How a hub could be effectively operated was touched on during the workshop. Ideas proposed included a 'community-run' cafe/kitchen (noting the potential burnout of volunteers); forming a new governing body with representatives from key associations within the town that had an interest in the club to govern it; forming or attracting a social enterprise to run the facility on a commercial basis but with a social purpose; or leasing part of the facility (for example, the cafe) to a commercial business to offset the costs of operating and renewing the building.

Caravan Park Facilities

The idea of a short-stay caravan park facility was well received by the attendees, with the idea having been floated on numerous occasions in the past. Some of the workshop participants identified that the end of the lower oval could be a good place for the park, with the option to access amenities at the hub. The Progress Association would prefer the caravan park is located away from the hockey fields - amongst a stand of trees to the south of both ovals - so all ovals can be retained for sports.

LOCATION OPTIONS

The initial brief from Shire of Northam was to consider the site where the current football clubrooms are located, as this had been identified in the Community Plan process as the best option. Given that this consultation process was for a very broad plan, it was thought prudent to explore all the options to check the most suitable location was determined.

The discussion was had both as a whole group and then with interested individuals who gathered around a map of the townsite. Options explored included:

- Replacing the existing football club and toilet buildings, which would give the benefit of being next to sporting fields if team sports were played again, close to skatepark and playground, and far enough away from town not to impact with noise. It is less strongly connected to the centre of town which might dilute the sense of a town centre. Walking distance was also important for some and this location

looks sufficiently central although some workshop participants said they would still drive as it was considered easier. Some felt this was the most suitable location as a hub facilitating functions/events should be located away from housing to mitigate noise/disruption to the community.

- Developing the area on the other side of the oval near the tennis courts was discussed (and had originally been proposed many years ago). The general consensus was that while it would have been a good location, now that the skatepark and playground have been placed on the other side of the oval, this was a less desirable location. Other comments were that it was adjacent to the road and roundabout (although there is not heavy traffic in the town), the proximity to the school which is not fenced, and that noise could impact on the houses opposite the area.
- The existing hall was suggested as an option by the architectural team - with the potential to open up the wall facing the oval and improve the usability of the space and leverage off the existing good facilities (kitchen, meeting space, storage, toilets) and potentially strengthen the 'heart' of the townsite. This idea was not particularly popular, as those that commented felt the hub should be right next to the sports grounds, rather than separated by a road.
- Some discussion of the use of the existing Workers' Club was floated, but comments were made about distance from sporting facilities and the ageing nature of the building.

8.2 Loomio Forum

Loomio is an online platform that allows for discussion and decision making. The forum allows for the discussion of specific questions, with participants able to interact very similarly to Facebook – with comments, opting to like/heart/dislike comments, add files and photos as well as being able to tag other people who've joined the forum.

Community members were invited to participate in the forum where, initially, four questions were posed in individual discussion areas:

- Tell us about the sport and recreation facilities and activities in Wundowie that are working well, and why you think they are effective.
- Tell us about the community and cultural facilities and activities in Wundowie that are working well, and why you think they are effective.
- What sport and recreation facilities or activities are currently missing locally that you would like to be able to access? Remember, we're interested in what you (and your family) would like to access, rather than what you think other members of the community might want.
- What community and cultural facilities or activities are currently missing locally that you would like to be able to access? Remember, we're interested in what you (and

your family) would like to access, rather than what you think other members of the community might want.

After the forum had been open for several days, only a small number of people had joined the forum and only one had made a comment. In the interest of ascertaining if perhaps those who joined did not feel a hub was needed, a further discussion thread was added:

- Are you keen on the idea of a Community and Recreation Hub? It was identified in the Wundowie Community Plan as wanted but locals but is it important to you? Let us know your thoughts.

A total of 19 community members joined the forum, along with facilitators from Anna Dixon Consulting, two architects from Slavin Architects and the Shire of Northam's Community Development Officer and Manager of Community Services. Of those 19 community members, 10 posted at least one comment. There was a total of 85 comments, of which 47 were from the community and the remainder from either the facilitator or architects – either encouraging discussion or asking clarifying questions. The Shire of Northam has been provided with a transcript of the forum discussion.

No strong themes or positions emerged during the discussion, however a range of ideas and opportunities were proposed. Each of these are outlined below, where more than one respondent either discussed the idea or endorsed a suggestion, a count at the end of the point indicates the number of people who supported the position:

- A community hub providing the opportunity to encourage more activity within the community and to attract tourists and members of neighbouring communities. Potential to leverage local attractions (bush walking, Noble Falls, Avon Valley National Park etc) to attract caravan visitors. (3)
- Caravan park facilities useful to attract visitors. (4)
- Opportunity to leverage of the 'iron town' history in both building design and in marketing the community to potential visitors. (2)
- Incorporating public art and/or interpretive signage around a hub. (2)
- A space for services (activities and therapy) for people with disabilities. Current services considered insufficient and that travel to Northam or Perth is often required to meet needs of those with disabilities. (3)
- Re-establish activities for young people – previous 'Lego Club' had been popular. (3)
- Wundowie Club as a good place for local people to meet and socialise – suggested as a good, family-friendly place for meals and social activities such as band performances, darts, pool etc.
- Wundowie Club as a place that should be invested in by Shire as it is already in existence.
- Wundowie Club as not being viewed as family-friendly, particularly by people not interested in drinking. (2)

- Wundowie Club as a private venture [note, it is a not-for-profit rather than typical commercial enterprise] and therefore should fund its own improvements and maintenance.
- Consolidation of Wundowie Club and a 'hub' into one new shared facility.
- Suitability of area where football club is currently located for a hub. Need for toilets to service park area as road considered unsafe for children to cross to access toilets in library (when it is open) and there is no option when the library is closed.
- A hub could be useful but no point if there are no sporting clubs and/or clear purpose for use of the building.
- Opportunity to organise scratch matches at newly refurbished basketball courts. (2)
- A community hub with indoor courts (multi-purpose rather than dedicated for a single sport – example given of another location with indoor cricket facility that was also used as a roller-skating rink).
- A community hub as a location for a café. (3)
- A community hub with spaces that can be used for workshops and activities, with the potential to hire out space to those wishing to run events. Emphasis on importance of affordable pricing for hiring.
- Community Hub to have a kitchen/canteen but avoid competing with business for Wundowie Club's bar and meals. Hub to focus more on community events and activities rather than a regular place for evening meals and drinks.
- Development of walk trails for locals and visitors alike. (2)
- Improve amenity around creek near hockey field.
- Existing hall as a good facility both in terms of sport/recreation activities and community gatherings.
- Hub could include gym facilities to allow for 'health and fitness' activities, rather than just team sports.

8.3 Stakeholder Interviews

As part of the engagement process, interviews opportunities were offered to key stakeholder groups in Wundowie. These interviews were undertaken by Michelle Blackhurst, the Shire of Northam's Community Development Officer. The following notes were provided as a summary of the key points made by those groups who chose to have representative/s meet with Michelle.

Wundowie Police Station

- The prospect of having a bar is not an issue with it being across the oval from the school. They already hold events at that location with alcohol and it is outside of school hours.
- One of the barriers that they see is that there is no one to organise the sport and so no sport is organised. There needs to be a central figure to organise the sport.
- There is already a reasonable facility there that is not being used to its full potential.

Fluffy Ducklings Day Care Centre

- The community has no programs for kids, and we have to travel to access all kids' sports. This puts our kids at a disadvantage because they don't attend training sessions.
- The skate park is good, but it is missing toilets. Kids have to cross a busy road to go to the toilets and that is not suitable for safety reasons.
- The town has two completely separate classes of people. It is not likely that a facility will attract both of them.
- We would not like to see a bar there. There is enough of an alcohol issue here without providing more opportunity to drink.
- We would like to see a gym in there. A place for exercise classes.
- Retaining young people in town is a huge issue.
- There is nowhere to go in town for a coffee.

Progress Association

- We have developed our own Feasibility Study and basic designs¹⁵. We would like these to be considered when you develop your study and concept designs.
- We need to sort out the communication strategy for Wundowie. Perhaps with a newsletter.
- Some sports that are already here are not accessible to everyone (for example, tennis courts key is privately held). We need to improve this.

Other stakeholder comments

- We are a low-income community and need affordable sporting options.
- Community garden capacity would be beneficial.
- Our population is ageing, and our infrastructure does not consider this.

9 Benchmarking

As part of the initial research process, the Shire of Northam requested some benchmarking be undertaken to understand what types of services were available in comparable communities – both in terms of a community hub and in caravan park facilities.

It was not possible to identify communities that were directly comparable with Wundowie (see demographic profile in Progress Report 1), efforts have been made to compare with communities of a similar size where possible and at least some other shared characteristics (for example, aging populations, being larger sized communities that are not the

¹⁵ The Wundowie Progress Association were able to provide copies of their initial concept drawings but did not forward their feasibility study so this information has not been able to be incorporated into this study.

administrative centre, relatively proximity to Perth area or a regional centre etc). The following facilities were studied:

- Darkan Sports and Community Complex
- Lancelin Sports Complex
- Dowerin Community Club
- Bindoon Transit Park
- Quairading Caravan Park
- Koorda Caravan Park

Given that any facility in Wundowie would be driven by a combination of budget and community need, less emphasis was placed on the facilities at each site, and rather a focus on the success factors for each was explored in more detail as it is considered that the operational model is as important as the function of the facility.

9.1 Darkan Sports and Community Complex

Current Chairperson of the Darkan Sports Complex, Karlene, shared her perspectives on the complex and its operations. The complex was built in the 1970s to replace an old weatherboard golf club room. The football club and the golf club decided to combine and share the building, before co-locating was popular.

The club spent around \$60,00 on a feasibility study a number of years ago, prepared by an independent consultant. This was an invaluable investment as it was recommended that they cut costs for their initial plan by one-third. It meant having outdoor rather than indoor facilities and multi-use courts, but it meant it was viable for the community.

Karlene believes that the community and the Shire originally committed \$1 million between them over five years to build the centre, however they secured a Royalties for Regions grant and it was completed in 18 months rather than five years.

Karlene says the club works well because there aren't multiple buildings to take care of, and that it helps bring the community together. She feels it's very important to have the word 'community' in the name to make it more inclusive, as some people would not consider themselves to be 'sporty' and so might not be encouraged to utilise the facilities if it was just called a 'sports club'. She also feels that it works well to rotate volunteer committees so that fresh ideas are shared around.

The existence of a community centre also serves to bring members of the community together who might not ordinarily socialise. Karlene believes it has promoted multiculturalism in a town that is primarily Caucasian as the significant Maori population use the centre.

Problems that the club has encountered include a declining population, which means that memberships aren't being sustained. Karlene emphasises the need for such a centre to be multi-use so it is not just relying on sporting clubs to stay afloat. The Darkan Complex is used by other community groups as well as sporting clubs.

Another downfall was the need for a succession plan, as the main people driving the upgrades and improvements got a bit burned out after a while. Communication is crucial as any mis-communication or rumours quickly spread and can cause conflict.

Despite being a good source of revenue, the bar can cause issues because parents are spending their time there rather than watching their kids play sports. Also, Karlene thinks that in the future a lack of volunteers could be a problem. At the moment the bar is run on a rotating roster of volunteers from various sporting clubs and community groups. But she feels there is a trend in the younger generation just coming out of school that they should be paid to work.

The club is fully run by volunteers except for the gardener and cleaner. It is also difficult to find cleaners in particular because they don't want contract work and the club is not looking to have direct employees.

The Shire is not heavily involved except for a dollar for dollar renewal schedule. The club has a 20-year renewal schedule and has a trust fund into which money is deposited, and the Shire matches the amount saved each year. But they do not contribute anything beyond this.

Karlene suggests making any building and floor plans adaptable for what the community might need in the future, as well as the present. For instance, lots of open spaces, meeting rooms, storage space etc. Some of the committee also wanted a one-fee payment system for the complex, where members would pay one fee to use all the facilities, rather than paying lots of smaller separate fees to use various things. But this did not eventuate, so members still need to go through each club to pay separate memberships.

9.2 Lancelin Sports Complex

Lancelin Sports Complex is a volunteer run facility that is owned by the Shire of Gingin. The complex manager, Sandy, and bar manager, Anita, were interviewed for this case study. Based on their perspectives, it would be fair to describe their relationship with the Shire as 'complex'.

Both the complex manager and bar manager roles are unpaid, as the complex is completely run by volunteers. The cleaner position is the only paid role at the club, and this position is funded by the profits made from the bar and membership fees paid by the club members.

The land that the complex is built on Crown Land and vested in the Shire of Gingin. The Shire own the building, and in turn lease it to the Lancelin Community and Sporting Club, which is the overarching body managing the Complex. The Lancelin Community and Sport Club pay for ongoing costs such as insurance and utilities.



There is a recreation hall, a club room and a function room inside the club. The complex is used for indoor sports such as basketball, volleyball and netball. There is also an 18-hole golf course, lawn bowls, badminton, hockey, football and a gun club (clay shooting). The clubs are all independent and have their own structure, but every member must also be a member of the Lancelin Community and Sporting Club, which is \$25 per annum. The Complex is also used by community groups such as the Lions club, camping and caravan groups for meetings etc. These groups pay as they go for each use.

Sandy acknowledged that if there was someone being paid to run the complex (rather than being completely volunteer-driven), it could possibly make more money, but that as a community organisation they are not aiming to make a profit. She also said that staying relevant into the future could be an issue, as all the clubs are predominately volunteer run, and that younger people are less motivated to volunteer or have the same level of time to volunteer.

Although the Shire own the building, they do very little maintenance and do not contribute financially to its upkeep which is the responsibility of the Lancelin Community and Sporting Club. Since the complex has multi-million-dollar facilities, the upkeep is huge. The committee constantly need to fundraise to help maintain the facilities.

Anita felt another problem was the conflicting points of views of many different clubs in one venue.

According to Anita, the income from the bar and membership fees provide enough money for the complex to remain financially viable. Sandy feels that the Shire should offer a lot more support and it should be more of a partnership.

The Shire of Gingin was contacted by phone on four occasions but unfortunately no one was available to provide comment on the facility.

9.3 Dowerin Community Club

The Dowerin Community Club is only open limited days and hours, so Shire of Dowerin officer, Misty, provided information about the Club on their behalf. Around 2009, the community identified it wanted a 'co-mingled' facility - one that could be used by many different sporting groups. Several grants were applied for and a few were won, allowing for ground to be broken in 2011 and the club was opened in 2013.



There is a function room, a bar, a commercial kitchen, meeting room and bathrooms. The building has large windows awarding an almost 360° view of the adjacent 10 rink bowling green, 4 tennis courts and the football/cricket oval.

Misty identified the Club's best feature as being very inclusive with lots of different sports played, which brings all different members of the community together. She said that there are other events held there as well, such as community dinners on a Friday night, seminars and conferences in the function and meeting rooms, as well as members of the community holding celebrations such as birthdays and engagement parties there.

The only real problem they have encountered regarding the running of the club is retaining a reliable manager. The manager is the only paid employee of the club and is responsible for ordering stock, overseeing events, paying invoices and general administration. This manager does not have anything to do with any of the sports or clubs that use the facilities, there is a separate committee for the community club. All the committee members are volunteers.

The only issue with the committee is that the town is a rural, farming/agricultural area, at certain times of year the committee, many of whom are farmers or similar, are very busy. Also, being a small town, sometimes the membership can be quite low, and some effort goes into encouraging community members to come and use the club as their meeting place, or watering hole, rather than only coming along when there is a specific event happening.

In terms of local government involvement, the Shire is only responsible for the building and maintenance, such as rates, water and any repairs. If the committee or any of the sporting clubs need anything beyond this, it is up to them to fundraise or come up with their own

solution. The Shire has MoUs in place with the sporting and community clubs involved with the Community Club.

As mentioned above, the primary challenge in remaining financially viable is that Dowerin is such a small town and it can be hard to get people involved. The bar at the club does represent a significant part of the takings but again, sometimes there are issues with getting people to come down and use the facilities.

Misty suggests having lots of consultations and meetings in the planning phase. It is tricky to address the needs of everyone, but most people were happy knowing that their voices were heard and being able to contribute. She highlighted the importance of involving all the different groups within the community, as well as all the sporting clubs.

9.4 Community and Sports Facilities - Discussion

With regards to the sport and community complexes studied (those based in Darkan, Lancelin and Dowerin) it seemed that strong community relationships and proactive communication was vital for success. The clubs in Darkan and Dowerin seemed to function well and their inclusive and collaborative approach to managing their facilities seemed to underpin this success. Lancelin appeared to have a more difficult situation, with what seemed like a strained relationship with their local government as well as newcomers joining the club. Unfortunately, the Shire of Gingin was not able to make an officer available to discuss their perspectives on the operations at the club (based out of a building owned by the local government) so it is not possible to comment on whether to local government could see opportunities to operate the club more effectively.

All of the clubs found revenue generation a challenge, with reliance on bar sales and events to be able to continue operating. Dowerin was the only club with a paid manager and while this was considered an important aspect of the facility's success, it was costly to engage one and difficult to retain them over the longer term. Darkan and Lancelin relied exclusively on volunteers to operate the clubs (other than Lancelin engaging a paid cleaner) which created challenges at both locations with dwindling populations and volunteer burnout.

The funding of the construction of each of the facilities was community driven, combining fundraising, grants and in-kind contributions. The buildings have been vested in their local governments and each have arrangements of varying levels around maintenance and renewal (largely with the community groups being responsible for long-term renewal and the Shire assisting with maintenance).

9.5 Bindoon Transit Park

Bindoon Transit Park is small, basic facility with six powered bays that have gravel pads. There is a dump site for waste on the site, as well as toilets and showers, but there is no kitchen or laundry available for campers.

The Park is managed by the post office on behalf of the Shire of Chittering and post office staff member, Kristy, provided some insights into operations. The post office manages the park because they are open every day, whereas the tourist centre is not.

The park is mostly self-managed meaning that they often run off an honour system. If the post office is open when visitors arrive, they can come in and pay the \$20 for the night and pick up an information pack. If the post office is not open there is a sign out the front instructing people to leave their \$20 in the box out the front. Kristy feels that this system works very well but admits there often isn't any way of telling how often people abuse it. She feels most people are generally honest and the majority do come and go during business hours. There are also signs in the public toilets informing visitors of how the honour system works. Although the system is casual, Kristy feels it is pretty clear to visitors what the expectation of them is and they do not have any plans to change the approach as it is working well.



They do not keep records of things like car or caravan registration, but they do record where people come from and how long they stay for the tourist centre.

Although quite basic, the park is appreciated by visitors and is quite well utilised. Kristy believes it definitely improves visitation to the town. January and February are usually the quietest months but this year they have had at least 1-2 people in there each day, on average staying for about 4 nights a week. This is busier than usual at this time of year, Kristy thinks it might be because people are less worried about the heat because more people have better caravans with good air conditioning.

Tourist season is the busiest and usually runs from winter to spring and into the start of summer. During this period the park will be full every day and they need to remind people to leave by 10am because there will be more people arriving later in the day. There is no option to pre-book a site which may put some people off planning a stopover as there are no other options in the Shire and its possible they prefer an option where they can be certain of obtaining a bay, especially if they have had a long day of travelling.

She also said that as Swan Valley becomes more popular, they are getting the overflow. The area has had access to camping facilities for a long time, but the transit park has been there for about 4 years. It is good for the town as the visitors who stay patronise local businesses such as IGA, the pub and bakery.

Charges

\$20 per night for two people, max. 4-night stay

9.6 Quairading Caravan Park

Quairading Caravan Park was completely gutted out and revamped about three years ago. It used to be more 'traditional' style with lines of bays but is now a sort of 'wonky roundabout shape' with two large bays at the front for 'drive throughs' that are only staying one night or very big vans; a section in the middle of the 'roundabout' that has concrete bays plus a kitchen, laundry and male and female toilets, a fire pit and seating area; and the back area which has bigger bays with gravel pads for longer stays. These are for vans staying more than a week, to a maximum of two months. There are around 20 bays in total. There is also an overflow area if the park is full.

There is no dump site in the actual park, the dump site is situated on the outskirts of town so it can be accessed by vans that are not staying at the park.

The Shire of Quairading officer, Michelle, who was interviewed for this study advised that the park receives very positive reviews particularly in relation to neatness and effectiveness of the set up. She also said their best asset is the amazing caretaker. Her observation was that it does not matter how nice the park is, if you don't have a good caretaker then it doesn't matter because the facilities are not taken care of well and visitors do not have the same positive experience.



When asked about management of the site such as taking bookings and payments, Michelle said they are actually talking about changing their process completely as their current system does not work effectively.

Any bookings or payments are done through the Shire, but it is only open Monday – Friday. If there are visitors on weekend or arriving after hours, they have the option to pay cash to caretaker, but he doesn't take any names or numbers, so they have no record of who has been there (the Shire usually has a diary of bookings). The caretaker is also not constantly in attendance. If guests arrive at night, the caretaker will take their payment in the morning.

The Shire also has no way of allocating bays to particular people and will not be aware of which guests are in which bays. They are unsure yet of how their processes will change and in fact are planning on exploring what other Shires do for their facilities.

In terms of utilisation, Michelle said it is well utilised and that a fair amount of their business comes from caravan clubs who often book up to 12 months in advance. They will often have

one every month, each club might have 15-20 vans. The clubs provide repeat business and keep coming back not so much because there is a lot to do in the town, but because the park is very nice and provides a spot to relax.

The park does also get quite a lot of drive throughs (one-night stay) of vans stopping en route to Perth. Quairading also holds a community event once a year – a community camp out, and a lot of the locals will stay in the caravan park on this night, just in tents and swags.

They do experience quieter periods, such as immediately after school holidays, but it is usually on and off with no real pattern.

Michelle thinks that the revamped park has improved visitation to Quairading, with the improvements being a big part of it. The park was ‘pretty ordinary’ before but now that it is nicer people are returning – people are always commenting on how nice the park is.

Also, if the Shire gets a big booking – like a caravan club, they will inform the Community Resource Centre who will put a notice in their newsletter to inform local businesses. If a club is coming some businesses (such as the IGA) that are not usually open on weekends might open for a couple of hours on a Saturday to accommodate the extra people. The pub needs the notice that it might need to serve 20+ extra meals during that period so they appreciate the advanced notice.

Charges

Powered Caravan Site - 2 persons - \$30/night (stay four - pay for three)

Caravan Clubs - \$28.50/night

Cottage Charges (\$200 bond applies)

1 night - \$125; 2 nights - \$118/night

9.7 Koorda Caravan Park

Koorda Caravan Park is a long-established park, with old and very basic facilities but that are always kept very clean and tidy. The Shire hires cleaners who clean the park every day. The Shire of Koorda officer, Debbie, who was interviewed for this study, identified the most important feature of the park as its clean, tidy facilities.

The site has one dump site located in the park. There are approximately 20 powered sites with dirt or gravel pads. There is also room for other vans around the outside area, but these are unpowered sites. There is also a lockable unisex toilet/shower room with access ramp, separate men’s and ladies’ bathrooms, scheme water, undercover camper’s kitchen with electric BBQ facilities, and a pay-per-use washing machine with clothesline. Generators are

allowed so long as they don't disturb other campers, pets are also allowed but must be on a leash at all times.

As previously mentioned, the Shire hires cleaners who clean the site every day, they also take money and bookings during office hours. After hours and on weekends, payments are managed via an Honesty Box. Debbie said there are no real issues with the honesty box, both in terms of theft and people using the site but not paying. If people stay longer, they will usually pay at the Shire office. There are envelopes available for campers to leave their payment in for the Honesty Box, this includes space for their name and other details, which are recorded by Shire staff on a spreadsheet and kept for tourism purposes.



The caravan park is quite well utilised, especially during Wildflower Season. The hottest months tend to be the quietest time. Debbie says despite being quite old, the park has improved visitation to Koorda, especially since the Wheatbelt Way was improved. They also get visitors through word of mouth as their facilities are so clean and well-maintained.

One difference to many other parks is they do not have any self-contained units for people to stay in – it is just a caravan site with powered and unpowered sites. There are self-contained units in the town but not at the caravan park.

Koorda also has a drive-in movie theatre (opened in 1965, closed briefly in the 1980s, then renovated in the 1990s), owned by the Shire and operated by the Community Resource Centre (with the canteen run by community groups as a fundraiser), that screens a double feature once a month. Prices are \$12 per adult, \$6 per child, with under 3s free. It was updated to a digital system in 2015 with a 20x22



metre screen. Koorda is one of three drive-in cinemas still operating in Western Australia. It has a capacity for 110 cars. The presence of both the drive-in theatre and the caravan park

in the one town means that visitors from other areas are attracted as they can watch the features, have dinner at the canteen and have an inexpensive but comfortable place to stay overnight.

Charges

Caravans per night \$27.00

Caravans per week \$110.00

Non-powered Site \$11.00

Tents per night \$6.00

9.8 Caravan Park Facilities - Discussion

The most important feature of the parks reviewed was their presentation and maintenance. Each varied in terms of size and level of amenity but all ranked having a very clean and well-maintained facility as being very important to maintain visitor numbers.

Each park clearly made a positive difference to the local economy in varying ways - in Quairading with the leveraging of caravan club visits, in Koorda through the added attraction of the drive-in cinema and in Bindoon by capitalising on their proximity to the Swan Valley. All locations considered that the caravan parks provided extra income for businesses in town, making them more viable.

At a minimum, sites with power and water, an amenities block (although not necessarily with laundry features if the site was not staffed) and a dump point were required to service visitors. The honesty system seemed to work well for payment. Having a fair number of bays (20) made the two larger parks an attractive option for caravan clubs.

10 Overview of Options

10.1 Facility Requirements

10.1.1 Community and Recreation Hub

Based on the Shire of Northam's Long Term Financial Plan, which allocates of a budget of \$1.6m, and in light of feedback from the community about their anticipated needs, the concept design have allowed for the considerations below:

- A building less than 500sqm
 - 500sqm is the maximum permissible fire envelope for a building as prescribed by the National Construction Codes

- A building exceeding 500sqm requires sprinkler systems, fire detection systems and fire rated walls and doors which will escalate costs beyond what is achievable for the Shire's budget
 - The budget cannot realistically support a building larger than 450sqm
- 2 changerooms, player's amenities, first aid and umpires' room in accordance with the preferred facility guidelines for Local Level AFL clubs. The size and amenity provision requirements for AFL are the most onerous of all the codes – by providing fit for purpose AFL changerooms, the facility automatically caters to all other sports
- The changeroom requirements account for 176sqm of building which leaves 274sqm for the 'Hub'
- The Hub:
 - 195sqm, which provides a maximum occupancy of 195 persons
 - Toilet provisions are provided to cater for a maximum occupancy of 195 persons in accordance with the National Construction Codes
 - Has a chair store so loose furniture can be conveniently stored for user groups requiring an empty floor
 - Has a small office
 - Has a kitchen/bar with dual-server windows to the Hub internally and covered external space
 - Large operable facades to provide a 'soft edge' between the Hub and external covered areas
 - Provides universal access throughout

10.1.2 Un-manned Caravan Park

A basic, short-stay caravan park should incorporate the following facilities as a minimum:

- Bays with either grass or gravel sites (with concrete pad if achievement within budget), ideally serviced with power and water. Bays should be easy to reverse a 22ft caravan into, with drive through bays if space permits.
- Basic ablution block with accessible toilets and showers.
- Dump point.
- Sheltered communal area, with gas BBQ and basic kitchen (sink and bench space) if budget permits.
- Information bay (potentially incorporated into communal area).

10.2 Locations

Following the engagement process, it was clear that some groups and individuals had strong opinions about particular locations, but there was no strong consensus about the appropriate location for a hub. To better assist the community to visualise the various locations that were discussed, three concepts have been presented to assist them in

gaining agreement on a way forward. In addition to the development of a caravan park area, the three options developed for a community and recreation hub are:

- Develop of a new facility to replace the existing football club buildings on the eastern sporting grounds site (between football and hockey fields).
- Development of a new facility on undeveloped area on the western sporting grounds site (between football oval and hard courts).
- Expansion of the existing Wundowie Community Hall.

10.3 Overview of Concept Designs

In terms of building style, the design is informed by community suggestions that the architecture should speak to the industrial/agricultural/farming history of the town.

Each building is designed as a series of large span boxes which references the rural shed vernacular and provides an envelope which is simple, functional and flexible.

By eliminating dependence on internal load bearing walls, the building offers myriad options for internal use and function while remaining fully adaptable and open to changes of use into the future.

Roof forms are purely pragmatic – simple forms designed to be low maintenance and derived from the building’s solar orientation and the need to provide protection from harsh summer sun while maximising solar penetration in winter. Deep verandahs create ‘outdoor’ rooms, provide shelter from weather and offer viewing platforms for external activities.

Operable windows have been used extensively to maximise use of natural light, provide cross ventilation and offer both visual and physical connections with the surrounding town and recreational areas.

The palette of materials has been chosen to reference the town’s association with the iron industry. Expressed steel structure and timber frames have been designed to support locally available skills and locally sourced materials. Cladding the structure with a combination of galvanised corrugated steel and expanses of glass offer a contemporary interpretation on the outback shed.

The presented designs allow for the considerations outlined in 10.1 Facility Requirements.

10.3.1 Community & Recreation Hub Option 1

Option 1, as shown in SK101 is located on the site mooted in the Wundowie Community Plan and would see the removal of the three existing buildings that form the Wundowie Football Club.

SK102 shows the floor plan for this option, the long axis of the building is orientated in parallel with the ovals to the east and west to provide viewing opportunities to both ovals and the play area to the north.

The two changerooms have outward opening doors and are separate units to the rest of the building, allowing the individual rooms to be utilised without opening up the rest of the building.

This location requires a western orientation of the building and as such, a wide western covered viewing deck has been designed to reduce the impact of the afternoon sun as well as providing an opportunity for observation of sporting matches from the hub.

Consideration has also been given to potentially creating a landscaped amphitheatre style space on the northern side that could be utilised for community presentations with seating on the covered area of the hub and in the area directly in front of it.

The building is elevated to allow for better sightlines of the field and to respond to suspected low level flooding in this area during significant rain events. Universal access has been allowed for with a ramp located at the south western end of the building adjacent to the existing bitumen area and universal toilets within the facility.

SK103, SK104 and SK105 provide elevations and perspectives to give a sense of the building's potential exterior.

10.3.2 Community & Recreation Hub Option 2

This option considers the site on the opposite side of the football field, adjacent to the tennis courts and directly across from the community hall. This location could be more strongly connected with the townsite, particularly with the creation of more traffic calming and pedestrianisation of Banksia Avenue. During events, it would be possible to close Banksia Avenue between each intersection with Boronia Avenue with minimal impact on vehicle movements and create a pedestrian dedicated piazza between the Hub and Community Hall. The piazza acts to link the 'town centre' with the recreational precinct and also reinforces the symmetry and 'heart' of the Garden City town planning design.

The site for Option 2 allows for a north facing facility which will provide deep penetration of sunlight into the Hub during winter months. The Hub has two fully glazed edges both protected by deep roof overhangs which provide connection to the town centre to the north and the football oval to the east.

Drawing SK201 shows the building in its standard configuration, with two changeroom facilities and a large open plan hub area. As with option 1, the two changerooms and umpire's room have outward opening doors and are separate units to the rest of the building, allowing the changerooms to operate independently from the rest of the Hub.

Drawing SK202 shows an option to create a larger Hub with externally accessible public toilets which can be easily converted in the future if the need to provide changerooms arises in the future.

Like option 1, an elevated style has been adopted to create better viewing opportunities. Universal access is achieved with ground level entry on the northern side of the building and universal toilet facilities within the building.

SK203, SK204 and SK205 provide elevations and perspectives to give a sense of the building's potential exterior.

10.3.3 Community & Recreation Hub Option 3

Option 3 has been presented as a way to utilise existing facilities, reinvigorate the town centre and more strongly adhere to the principles of the Garden City Plan of the town and the associated heritage implications on planning decisions (refer to 7.1 Commentary on Garden City Town Planning).

The Wundowie Community Hall is deliberately located precisely on the central axis of the heritage town plan and provides a strong focal point for the community, with the potential to really strengthen the draw of the town centre, with a positive flow-on of great foot traffic in the area for local businesses.

This design presents a solution with two key elements – a refurbishment and extension of the Town Hall, and the development of a smaller scale hub directly across from it, connected by a thoughtfully landscaped space between the two facilities. Like Option 2, this has real potential to be used to great effect during events, particularly with the temporary road closures suggested in Option 2.

Option 3 would see a smaller Hub developed as a north facing facility adjacent to the tennis courts. As illustrated in SK301, when utilised as a Hub, it offers a large open plan area for activities and some smaller offices potentially for use by visiting service providers and community groups. SK302 demonstrates how partition walls could be used to create changerooms for sporting activities and instead of office space the area be developed instead with players' amenities. Both options provide the potential to access the toilets from outside the building which could be useful during events where the Hub itself is not required. This smaller scale building offers universal access via the ground level northern veranda and universal toilets being located in the Hall.

As part of this development, it is recommended that first consideration is given to utilising the existing Hall which is still in good condition and offers many of the features the community identified as desirable. In SK303, in addition to cosmetic improvements/modernisation to the interior, it is suggested that the existing parking aisle (which is far in excess of standard width) be reduced to allow for glass fronted openings and

wide covered area on the southern side of the building, along with outdoor seating and landscaping. This would deliver an attractive meeting place with the potential to be able to be used for community events and activities, with a good-sized kitchen and toilet facilities already available. Consideration may even be given to changing parking arrangements in the town centre to increase the size of the landscaped area and provide more places with passive recreation.

SK304, SK305 provide elevations and perspectives to give a sense of the Hall's potential exterior.

10.3.4 Caravan Park

Based on the topography of the area, it is recommended that the most suitable area to locate a caravan park would be where the current lower hockey field is. As presented in SK101, the design has been created to avoid encroaching on the remaining hockey field but in close enough proximity that it could be used for overflow caravan or tent sites if the park was at capacity during an event or a visit from a caravan club.

In designing the park, consideration has been given to creating a layout that allows for drive through bays (attractive to caravaners with larger vans or motor homes) that offer a good degree of privacy with natural plantings around each site.

A modest ablution block and drive-through dump point is situated at the hockey field end of the park to allow for easy access by visitors using the overflow area and with the potential for the toilets to be used by players and spectators at sporting events on the field.

10.4 Management Models and Revenue Generation

10.4.1 Community and Recreation Hub

Management models differed across the case studies reviewed and anecdotally from other hubs the consultancy team is aware of, and each respond to the needs and nature of their local context. Regardless of the model selected, strong governance and management is key to a successful integrated facility and regardless of model, it should be implemented at the inception or redevelopment phase of a project, not later.

Irrespective of the suitability and quality of the building itself, without effective management the hub is unlikely to realise its potential and deliver the desired impact. In all likelihood, a well-managed facility that is poorly designed is likely to be more effective than a purpose-built facility that is badly managed.

In the Wheatbelt, community and recreation hubs in similar sized communities tend to be managed by local community members as part of an association, with little or no operational involvement by the local government. Only in the larger regional centres do

local governments tend to become involved in the management of recreation facilities and in these instances the facilities tend to cater to the needs of locals as well as those from surrounding communities to access the facility for team sports and community events.

In determining the management model, some threshold questions should be considered:

- What level of community ownership is expected by the Shire, community groups and the broader community?
- Will there be a membership system and how would this function?
- Will commercial leasing and sub-leasing of the facility or sections of the facility be considered?
- How will the facility generate funds to operate?
- Will the Shire consider providing an operating subsidy and/or staffing the facility?
- How will maintenance and renewal be funded?

Five potential management options have been identified, with option four seeming to be the most appropriate for this context (and option five having merit worth investigating further and potentially combining with the approach outlined in option four):

- 1. Local Government Management:** This model would see the Shire of Northam responsible for the operations of the hub, allowing complete control about the utilisation of the facility. An advisory committee made up of community members could be appointed to be involved in strategic level decision making.
- 2. Contract Management:** An individual, community organisation or commercial entity is contracted to operate the facility under a detailed contractual arrangement. This would see the Shire of Northam paying a third party to manage operations while retaining responsibility for the maintenance of the building and capital equipment. The Shire would play no role in day-to-day operations but could require the contractor to adhere to strict principles about how services are delivered. There is a risk that poor management could result in the Shire shouldering the burden of a third-party's poor financial decision making or dissatisfaction from the community about the services provided.
- 3. Lease:** The Shire could lease the facility to a third party to operate the Hub. This would see a third party able to operate the facility independently, without involvement from the Shire and would limit the Shire's responsibility for financial decisions taken by the lessee. However, it would also significantly reduce the Shire's ability to influence the operations of the facility. Given the small population base, it seems unlikely that a commercial entity would be interested in leasing the facility unless they were provided very favourable terms and, even so, it seems likely they would be unable to provide low cost services if it was to be a commercially viable venture for them.
- 4. Management Committee:** A new entity could be formed to manage the governance and operations of the hub, or an existing organisation could undertake this role. This

committee would operate with parameters in terms of financial and social responsibilities from the Shire and would need clear terms of reference in terms of its level of responsibility and authority. This option would allow greater community ownership and a more flexible management structure than may be possible within the constraints of local government.

5. **Establishment of a Social Enterprise:** In undertaking this study, it became clear that there is a lack of economic drivers within Wundowie. There is the potential to support the establishment of a social enterprise to support local people to develop new skills and potentially transition into local employment opportunities – examples could include the development of a café and tourism services. A more detailed examination of this would need to be conducted to determine whether it was a commercially sustainable proposition.

In considering revenue generation, it would also be important to note that typically community and/or recreation hubs in regional Western Australia (particularly those in smaller communities) experience significant difficulties in meeting the cost of operation. Most are largely operated by community volunteers and any profit from bar sale, meals and venue hire is used to cover the cost of insurance, utilities, basic repairs and, in some cases, a paid cleaner. Many struggled to set aside funds for asset renewal and replacement. Given the social profile of the Wundowie community, it seems that revenue generation sufficient to fund the full operational cost of the facility is unlikely.

Options to generate revenue (with a view to obtaining some level of profit to assist with operational costs) include:

- Fee-for-service to access recreation facilities (with concessional rates).
- Venue hire (with community and commercial rates).
- Lease of kitchen facilities to commercial entity, potentially operating a café or pop-up style restaurant.
- Ticketed events and activities (with concessional rates).
- Tourism-based services and activities.

10.4.2 Un-manned Caravan Park

There are a few options open to the Shire of Northam, including:

1. **Local Government Management** – Shire of Northam assumes total responsibility for the management and operation of the facility, including collection of fees, cleaning, promotion and maintenance. This gives the highest level of control to the Shire of Northam but may not be operationally convenient.
2. **Contract Management** – An individual, community organisation or commercial entity is contracted to operate all or part of the facility under a detailed contractual arrangement. This would see the Shire of Northam paying a third party to manage operations while retaining responsibility for the maintenance of the building and

capital equipment. The Shire would play no role in day-to-day operations but could require the contractor to adhere to strict principles about how services are delivered. There is a risk that poor management could result in the Shire shouldering the burden of a third-party's poor financial decision making or dissatisfaction from service users and/or the community about the services provided.

- 3. Lease** - The Shire could lease the facility to a third party to operate the park. This would see a third party able to operate the facility independently, without involvement from the Shire and would limit the Shire's responsibility for financial decisions taken by the lessee. However, it would also significantly reduce the Shire's ability to influence the operations of the facility. Given the small park size, it seems unlikely that a commercial entity would be interested in leasing the park even if they were provided very favourable terms.

Some other considerations could be the use of technological solutions for payment – for example credit card payment via a website could be established (and cheaper rates offered to visitors paying by credit card offered) to minimise the number of cash payments needing to be received. The adoption of such a method could result in the only management of the park on a day-to-day basis being cleaning and general maintenance. To minimise issues around vandalism, a key pad system could be used – the City of Busselton has an automated phone system where travellers wanting to use the dump point to call and provide some identifying information before being provided with a code to deactivate the dump point lock.

Potentially the caravan park offers the opportunity to allow a local individual or existing business to develop a tourism product (tours or other experiences for example) and being contracted to manage the caravan park could provide an additional income stream to make the business more viable (and incentivise them to ensure the visitor experience at the park was of a high standard to increase visitation).

10.5 Funding Options

The development costs of a community and recreation hub, along with a short-stay caravan park, could be funded through the combination of a range of mechanisms in addition to some level of financial contribution by the Shire of Northam. Grant funding is highly competitive, and while a project may be eligible and have an excellent case for support, it is still possible to not receive funding as most grant funds are oversubscribed, and suitable projects do miss out on funding.

In terms of operational costs, it is doubtful any grant funds can be secured to assist with these expenses and the service will either need to be self-supporting (unlikely) or be subsidised to some extent by the Shire of Northam.

Building Better Regions Fund

Two grant streams are available: infrastructure or community investments. This fund is highly competitive and is open to local government and not-for-profits with an ABN in regional Australia. Projects must not have already commenced and any co-funding must be confirmed. A business case and cost benefit analysis have been required, in addition to the grant application itself, in previous funding rounds. Both the community and recreation hub and the caravan park may be eligible under the infrastructure fund, and community capacity building projects and/or the development of a social enterprise may be suitable for the community investment stream.

Both funds are currently closed for applications but information from the most recent round is provided below:

- Infrastructure – Grants are between \$20,000 to \$10 million for construction of new infrastructure, or the upgrade or extension of existing infrastructure that provide economic and social benefits. Usually funding will be 50% of total project costs but exceptional circumstances can apply.
- Community investment – Grants are between \$5,000 to \$10 million (but usually under \$100,000 for community activities, new or expanded local events, strategic regional plans, and leadership and capability strengthening activities. For grants over \$20,000 funding will usually be 50% of total project cost. For grants under \$20,000 funding can be up to 100% of eligible costs. Projects must deliver economic and social benefits.

Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund (CSRFF)

The purpose of the program is to provide Western Australian Government financial assistance to community groups and local government authorities to develop basic infrastructure for sport and recreation. The program aims to increase participation in sport and recreation, with an emphasis on physical activity, through rational development of sustainable, good quality, well-designed and well-utilised facilities. There is \$12 million available for allocation in the 2019/20 funding round.

Currently, applications to the CSRFF require a feasibility study, needs analysis, management plan or consideration of how the facility will be managed, concept design and building plans, life cycle cost analysis and demonstration the organisation can meet ongoing operational costs, and a range of governance documentation in addition to the grant application itself.

Some of the priority considerations for CSRFF include:

- Projects that will directly lead to an increase in physical activity or participation.
- Projects that lead to facility sharing between clubs, or rationalization of existing facilities to increase sustainability.

- Projects to upgrade facilities to make them more accessible for female participants (e.g. changerooms with lockable showers and no urinals).
- Projects in a location with a significant Aboriginal population that will increase participation or physical activity.

The type of projects which will be considered for funding include:

- New playing surfaces — ovals, courts, synthetic surfaces etc.
- Floodlighting projects (must be to Australian Standards)
- Change rooms and ablutions
- Sports storage

The types of projects which are eligible for funding, but will be considered a lower priority for funding are:

- Clubrooms including social space, kitchens, training rooms and administration areas (due to their minimal impact on physical activity).
- Shade shelters, viewing areas and verandas (due to their minimal impact on physical activity).
- Resurfacing of existing sports surfaces such as courts and bowling greens. It is expected that facility managers will budget for these items as part of the ongoing operation of the facility, frequently over 7 to 10 years. If supported the project will likely attract a reduced funding percentage.

The CSRFF cannot be used to fund a project that does not achieve the aim of the fund to increase physical activity or participation in sport and active recreation. Other projects that are considered ineligible through CSRFF include:

- Projects that have commenced or will commence before approvals are announced
- Development of privately-owned facilities or commercial spaces
- Arts, music and craft facilities
- Maintenance or operating costs of existing facilities
- Purchase of land, landscaping, car parks, access roads and other infrastructure costs
- Playgrounds
- Bikeways or pathways
- Non land-based facilities, e.g. boat launching ramps, ocean pools and marinas
- Non-fixed equipment or fixed sports specific equipment (e.g. electronic targets, scoreboards)
- Facilities or fixtures for the express purpose of serving alcohol
- Projects that do not meet Australian Standards and National Construction Code

Lotterywest

Lotterywest funding has been successfully used by other centres for new equipment, as well as buildings. It would be important to note that Lotterywest will not fund portions of building used for sporting purposes as these are already eligible for funding under the Community Sporting and Recreation Facilities Fund. A conversation with the Wheatbelt region grant officer would be required close to the time of a potential application to check the eligibility of the project. Like the other major grant funders, it is likely that a business case could increase the likelihood of securing funds.

It should be noted that LotteryWest have recently significantly shifted their funding philosophy and are far more interested in applications outlining the anticipated outcomes of the funding, as opposed to the traditional focus on the expenditure items (for example, previously a community bus might be the subject of the grant, whereas now it might be a project about accessibility and enabling participation and part of this involves the purchase of a community bus).

The 'community spaces and places' grant stream could be accessed to support some costs of building. The 'furniture and equipment' stream could be used to purchase furniture and office equipment. Also worth considering is the 'projects' grant stream which could be utilised for a community capacity and cohesion building project.

Community Contributions

The case studies, and in most other community and recreation hubs known to the consulting team, some level of community contribution (both in terms of financial support and in-kind contributions) have been made. Financial support has generally been as a result of fundraising efforts and donations from local businesses and those with an interest in the community. In-kind was often in the provision of machinery and labour in the construction phase as well as project management.

11 Benefits

11.1 Community/Recreation Hub

11.1.1 Social Benefits

The development of a community and recreation hub would deliver a range of social benefits to Wundowie community members, in particular in relation to physical and mental health.

For children and adolescents aged 5-17, being physically active provides a range of social, health, emotional and intellectual benefits, including reducing anti-social behaviour, improving self-esteem, developing cooperation skills and reducing disease burden. For adults, it can reduce the risk of or manage health conditions, prevent weight gain and

create opportunities for socialising and meeting new people¹⁶. Physical activity can also prevent and manage mental health problems¹⁷ which is important as around 45% of Australians aged 16-85 will experience a mental illness in their life¹⁸.

Residents across the Country WA Primary Health Network area have higher rates of both drinking at harmful levels and smoking when compared to Western Australia and Australia. Compared to other regional areas in WA, the Wheatbelt has the highest rate of males with high or very high levels of psychological distress, and the second highest rate of male suicide¹⁷. The WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) flagged Wundowie as a priority location of greatest need in the Wheatbelt, based on an analysis of social determinants, health indicators, service gaps and stakeholder feedback. Specific issues in priority areas are:

- Alcohol and other drugs
- Chronic disease
- Dental health
- Service integration (workforce gaps, lack of integration and GPs)
- Transport (limited public transport).

The WAPHA states that “changing health behaviours can slow, stop or even reverse the progression of disease and occurrence of multiple diseases in the rising-risk population” and a priority action is to collaborate with a range of agencies in the health and other sectors to address social determinants of health¹⁷.

Increasing physical activity in the population is a priority at a national, state and local level. One of the strategic priorities in National Sport 2030 is ‘building a more active Australia’¹⁹ and in the Wheatbelt region, 67% of adults are overweight or obese and 67% are not sufficiently active¹⁷. The built environment can play a part in promoting obesity, including factors such as limited access to green spaces²⁰. According to the World Health Organisation, lack of sport and recreation facilities is a major factor of urbanisation that discourages people from becoming more active, and to increase physical activity, sports and recreation facilities are required ‘to provide opportunities for everyone to do sports’²¹.

There are also significant economic barriers to sport or recreation participation in Wundowie, and providing localised facilities would reduce or eliminate the need for travel.

¹⁶ DoH (2017). *Physical Activity*. Department of Health. Accessed at: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phy-activity>

¹⁷ WA Country PHN. (2016) *Population Health Needs Assessment*. November 2016 Retrieved from: www.wapha.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/WAPHA_Population_Health_Needs_Assessment_PHN_Country_WA-1.1.pdf

¹⁸ Department of Health (2018). *Sport 2030*. Commonwealth Government of Australia: Canberra

¹⁹ Department of Health (2018). *Sport 2030*. Commonwealth Government of Australia: Canberra

²⁰ ABS. (2014) *Value of Sport, Australia*. Australian Bureau of Statistics. 4156.0.55.002. 24 Oct 2013. p.28.

²¹ WHO. (2018). *Physical Activity*. World Health Organization. Accessed at: <http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>

However, it is worth noting that youth participation within Wundowie may still rely on transport by adults depending on the location of facilities due to the lack of public transport. Connectivity with existing ovals, skate park and the barbeque area was considered important through community engagement.

Retention of the youth population is a key concern of the Wundowie community. While sport and recreation facilities alone cannot solve this (as education is a primary trigger for leaving), they can assist in ensuring quality of life for the existing youth population. Sport and recreation can be leveraged to improve youth participation, engagement and retention, with the ABS finding those aged 15-17 had the highest spectator attendance at sporting events in Australia, at 58%²⁰. Adolescents aged 13-17 are also a key cohort in Australia not meeting the recommended amount of exercise each week²⁰ so encouraging physical activity is important.

Increasing sport and recreation participation can have many benefits, as a positive contributor to inclusivity as well as broad social objectives such as crime reduction and improvements in mental and physical health¹⁶. According to the World Health Organisation, lack of sport and recreation facilities is a major factor of urbanisation that discourages people from being more active and such facilities are required to 'provide opportunities for everyone'²¹.

Social connectivity and opportunities for informal recreation have been highlighted as important in Wundowie, as well as the need for more community cohesion and communication. Core needs of a building were identified as a place to connect and a place to be entertained. There was a consensus that any new facility must be capable of providing for all age groups - from young families, to teenagers, adults and the elderly, although it is not clear whether these are separate activities or intergenerational.

Social connectivity, particularly highlighted by the number of lone person households, can be addressed in part by recreation facilities. A study in the southern Wheatbelt found sport was integral in the formation of both bonding social capital (bringing people who already know each other closer) and bridging social capital (bringing together people who did not previously know each other). Sport can also foster 'localism', fulfilling the human need for identity and belonging. Those communities agreed or strongly agreed that sport participation improved self-esteem and confidence (91%); improved community identity and cohesion (86%); and promoted community pride and ownership (85%)²². A study in a northern Wheatbelt community found 82% of households chose social interaction as the most important aspect of local sport, 93% agreed sport is an important way to keep in touch

²² Atherley, K. M. (2006), *Sport, Localism and Social Capital in Rural Western Australia*. Geographical Research, 44: 348-360. doi:[10.1111/j.1745-5871.2006.00406.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-5871.2006.00406.x)

with friends and neighbours and 91% agreed it is important in promoting a sense of community in the area²³.

In Wundowie, the current or future viability of local sports teams is not known, however the need exists for recreation and activities that build bonding and bridging social capital and improving physical activity levels. The Department of Sport and Recreation's Strategic Directions identifies the emerging trend for informal participation in accessible, low cost activities geared around social networks²⁴.

11.1.2 Economic Benefits

The size of a proposed community / recreation hub in Wundowie would have little to no direct employment benefit, however this depends on the management structure chosen. Based on other centres, potential employment would exist in cleaning, facilities management and the design and delivery of programs. Opportunities to consider are providing local employment with wrap-around social support for those entering or re-entering the workforce, as well as traineeships. This could be particularly valuable for locals without the transport means to reach other employment centres and these options could also reap broader social benefits in the town. Government assistance could be investigated.

It is worth noting that sport and recreation occupations generally attract a younger age profile relative to all employed people. The 20-24-year age group is the largest representation²⁵ in the industry sector and providing employment attractive to this age group is important in Wundowie, with a decline in youth and young adult population.

The economic value of sports and physical recreation services have been measured, with the ABS finding in 2009/10²⁵ Australian households spent \$8,293.8 million or 1.5% of total household expenditure on selected sporting and physical recreation goods and services, mostly sports and physical recreation services. Whether this is transferable to Wundowie would need to be investigated, with comparably lower incomes compared to Western Australia.

The main economic benefit of a recreation facility would be from attracting new residents, with flow-on effects to local businesses and population services. A well designed and operated facility could help retain and attract population in Wundowie, which also fits with the objectives of Shire's Strategic Community Plan. With the availability of affordable lifestyle lots and ability to expand, appealing to those looking to relocate is also important. The success of this would be dependent on the facility's design and operation, requiring

²³ Tonts, M. (2005) *Competitive sport and social capital in rural Australia*. Journal of Rural Studies 21 (2005) 137–149

²⁴ Department of Sport and Recreation. (2016) *Strategic Directions for the Western Australian Sport and Recreation Industry 2016-2020 (SD6)*. April 2016. www.dsr.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/file-support-and-advice/file-research-and-policies/sd6-booklet_for-screen.pdf?sfvrsn=2

²⁵ ABS. (2013) *Value of Sport, Australia*. Australian Bureau of Statistics. 4156.0.55.002. 24 Oct 2013. p10

careful research and community consultation to ensure a hub would allow for a range of activities to take place, suiting a range of demographics.

Benefits could also be realised by attracting visitors to a facility (perhaps from neighbouring centres) for specialised events or competitions, although this is for short term periods and would depend on townsite businesses being open at the time. Secondary benefits could be expected from people staying locally rather than travelling to access recreation services and the possibility of local employment having a flow-on effect to more local spending. Part of this is dependent on whether or not kitchen facilities, a café or potentially a bar are considered as inclusions and the potential interplay with existing businesses.

11.1.3 Environmental Benefits

A 2018 Senate inquiry into the current and future impacts of climate change on housing, buildings and infrastructure found that overall the “duration, frequency and intensity of heat events have increased significantly”²⁶ and this will continue to intensify into the 21st century. Vulnerable groups are the elderly, infirmed and very young⁹ and the most likely impact to Wundowie is from extreme weather (higher and more extreme temperatures). Wundowie’s population is older than both the Western Australia and Australia average²⁷. Key impacts may be the need for more indoor sports to avoid both heat and UV radiation and increased need for air conditioning²⁸ but well designed, accessible public facilities can provide important respite for vulnerable community members.

Climate change planning undertaken by the Department of Sport and Recreation considered that water used to maintain urban green spaces is necessary as it underpins the fabric of sport and leisure industries and can mitigate some impacts of climate change²⁸ such as urban heat island effect. In some instances, amalgamating facilities into multi-purpose can reduce the resource demand while still providing the flow-on benefits.

When assessing potential options, consideration should be given to environmental impacts and gains from any development. This includes the re-use and adaptation potential of existing buildings, the embodied energy of existing or proposed building/s, potential gains in thermal and energy efficiency and advances in sustainable building technologies.

²⁶ Commonwealth of Australia (2018) *Senate: Current and future impacts of climate change on housing, buildings and infrastructure*. P13. August 2018.

²⁷ 2016 Census Quick Stats: Wundowie. ABS.

http://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/SSC51634

²⁸ Department of Sport and Recreation (WA), *Climate change: Climate change is no longer a just a concept—how climate change could affect sport and recreation now and in the future*. www.dsr.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/file-about-us/file-plan-for-the-future/climatechange.

11.2 Benefits – Short-Stay (Un-Manned) Caravan Park

Given the relatively low average income in Wundowie compared to Western Australia, a significant way to provide economic benefit is by attracting outside visitors to the town.

11.2.1 Economic Benefits

The focus of a short-stay caravan park would be economic benefits from attracting visitors, with some flow on of social benefits to local residents. Tourism in regional Australia is a significant economic contributor and generally has a nature-based focus²⁹. Outdoor recreation is an emerging trend identified in WA and abundant space and natural environments are seen as drawcards³⁰, with the western ward of the Shire abundant in both of these plus close proximity to Perth.

The economic benefits of nature-based tourism are two-fold: primary tourism spend within the region on user fees, accommodation, equipment, food and fuel; and secondary employment and income expenditure. Economic multipliers are usually inaccurate at such a small scale however direct spend estimates can be used. The mean daily direct spend measured at several sites in WA is shown below²⁹:

Item	Exmouth	Coral Bay	Cape Range	Stations
Local travel	\$15.50	\$43.10	\$12.90	\$16.40
Accommodation	\$41.22	\$16.10	\$11.10	\$6.00
Food/drinks	\$46.58	\$12.20	\$10.30	\$7.50
Activities	\$34.84	\$19.00	\$6.90	\$11.20
Equipment	\$3.88	\$5.50	\$4.90	\$2.90
Total	\$142.02	\$95.90	\$46.10	\$44.00

A study of Exmouth, Coral Bay, Cape Range and stations camping showed a higher direct tourist spend in Exmouth and Coral Bay was directly related to the existence of facilities, services and infrastructure that require or encourage spending. Furthermore, although the visitors had comparable incomes to those using town-based facilities, those camping made lower spends in all categories except travel (e.g. fuel), and were actually found to be a cost to the local economy rather than a net benefit as they used local services such as roads (maintained by the local government) but did not contribute in the way formal accommodation does²⁹.

²⁹ David Wood & Michael Hughes (2006) Tourism accommodation and economic contribution on the Ningaloo Coast of Western Australia. Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development, 3:2, 77-88, DOI: 10.1080/14790530600938212

³⁰ Tourism Western Australia (2015) *Tourism Western Australia: Fast Facts* Year Ending June 2015, Perth, Western Australia; Government of Western Australia.

This is important to consider in the context of Wundowie as it does not have an existing tourism product to draw on and, other than the Iron Festival, no strong pull factors for visitors. As an economic driver, there are limitations to the festivals and events sector for small towns due to their episodic nature²⁹. There are also limited opportunities to leverage the buying power of visitors and few tourism spend categories covered, with fuel, accommodation, food/drinks currently largely offered elsewhere in the Shire. There is potential for sufficient caravan park visitors to make enterprises such as a café or coffee van more viable.

Opportunities also exist to leverage Wundowie's unique offering as a demonstration of the beginning of the iron industry in Western Australia and the potential to further interpret the history of iron and rare earth materials and industrial technology. Education-oriented tourism has shown growth on a global scale, and there is also promise in route-based tourism, bringing together tourism products of a similar theme within rural areas. The small Canadian town of Morden, located 125km from the nearest city, successfully diversified its economy around tourism products based on its past and present bentonite mining³¹. Morden's 'fossil centre' is located within a larger recreational and community complex and firmly taps into the self-drive tourism sector.

Other Wheatbelt towns are using short-stay (unmanned) caravan parks to attract tourists while having low ongoing running costs. Similar facilities have leveraged caravan club visits, used added attractions such as movies, made use of their proximity to larger tourist destinations or tapped into route-based tourism such as the Wheatbelt Way. Quairading, Koorda and Bindoon consider their caravan parks provide extra income for businesses in town, in turn making them more viable.

Research into the WA caravan sector showed 'grey nomads' represent 40% of caravanners who stayed at caravan parks for accommodation on a road trip, with some research suggesting a spend of \$500 per couple per week on the road³². A study of 90 Queensland Caravan Club members found the biggest trigger for frequency of future trips was organised social activities, highlighting the importance of interaction in a formal or organised setting.

Over 43% of respondents had visited the Beaudesert region at least three times in the last five years and this study found the national park was sufficiently explored once, so less of a draw for future visits and the 'outback spectacular' event was highly unlikely to encourage repeat visitation due to lack of variety.

³¹ Ramsey, Doug ; Malcolm, Christopher D. (2018) *The importance of location and scale in rural and small town tourism product development: The case of the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre, Manitoba, Canada*. Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien, June 2018, Vol.62(2), pp.250-265

³² Renuka Mahadevan (2018) Understanding Senior Self Drive Tourism in Australia Using a Contingency Behavior Model. Journal of Travel Research 2014, Vol. 53(2) 252-259

However, there was a positive correlation between additional accommodation and repeat visitation, with 'grey nomads' using a variety of accommodation due their flexibility and being able to pre-book. Accommodation variety was more important than travel cost and the study concluded that to encourage more trips, more accommodation facilities should be provided, with higher prices charged to recover the development costs, with a variety of attractions important for future visitation of 'grey nomads'³⁰.

The idea of a short-stay caravan park facility in Wundowie was well received by attendees at the community workshop, although there were differing views on the potential location, either at the lower oval, with the option to access amenities at the hub or away from the hockey fields to the south of both ovals - so all ovals can be retained for sports. Some Wheatbelt parks use an honour system, the success of which could depend on some passive surveillance and therefore be partly dependent on the location chosen.

11.2.2 Environmental Benefits

In areas of high environmental value, small scale tourism development is a preferable model, primarily because the infrastructure required is cheaper and less demanding of resources, and smaller visitor numbers are considered to have less impact²⁹. The same principles could be applied to Wundowie, where a small-scale facility would be most appropriate so as not to provide pressure on the existing town's services and resources or artificially inflate the demand at peak times only.

Camping is considered a generally high impact activity ecologically as it has the potential to result in loss of vegetation cover, soil compaction, erosion, pollution and other issues such as disposal of waste, taking resources as firewood and unregulated access to natural areas²⁹. Many of these issues can be mitigated through design and supply of sewerage services and/or formalised accommodation. Therefore, counter to the assumptions of camping as a 'low impact' activity, development of 'nature-based' tourism that does not impact on the environment relies on the provision of suitable infrastructure.

11.2.3 Social Benefits

The WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) flagged Wundowie as a priority location of greatest need in the Wheatbelt, based on an analysis of social determinants, health indicators, service gaps and stakeholder feedback¹⁷. An unmanned caravan park is unlikely to offer any significant social benefits to the local community, apart from through potential flow-on employment improving the sustainability of local business and therefore maintaining the social fabric of the area.

Any facilities would need to be carefully planned so as not to disrupt the character of Wundowie, hence small-scale tourism is considered most appropriate. The development of activities and interpretation of the town's history and significance could also contribute to community pride. For example, the development of heritage interpretation for Central

Maitland in NSW, a city which had experienced significant population decline, led to increased local knowledge about the region's heritage, community capacity building and created a sense of place and community pride³³. Potential exists here to use interpretation as a vehicle to rebuild community bonds in Wundowie.

³³ SH (2014) *Maitland Heritage Interpretation Masterplan*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.shp.net.au/interpretation.html>

The background features several abstract geometric elements. A long teal line runs diagonally from the top-left towards the bottom-right. On the left side, there is a dark purple line forming a V-shape pointing right, with a vertical teal line segment intersecting it. On the right side, there are three nested orange triangles pointing right, with the teal diagonal line passing through them.

Prepared by Anna Dixon Consulting
annadixonconsulting.com
hello@annadixonconsulting.com
(08) 6102 8580 | 0429 869 988