



April 2009

Skate & BMX Plan

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1. Introduction

Skating and BMX riding continue to be popular activities among young people. The Skate and BMX Plan 2009 has been developed to provide a strategic approach to addressing the current and future needs of skate and BMX activities.

The Victorian State Government 2001 Skate Facility Guide (the Guide) prepared by Sport and Recreation Victoria indicated that in the 10–16 years age group skateboarding and BMX riding was in the top 10 recreational activities. The Guide further identified the benefits of recognising skate and BMX as legitimate activity because it has:

“all the typical benefits of other recreation activities (physical, mental and social). There is, however, the added bonus that these activities target a population who often feel marginalised by typical recreation provision, and who are at an age where participation in team sports and physical activity may have started to decline.”

Currently within Latrobe City there are six skate facilities and seven BMX tracks that have been considered during the development of this plan. The results of the consultation and stakeholder engagement processes and an assessment of the condition of the current facilities have identified that:

- the majority of sites are ageing rapidly and some no longer meet the needs of users;
- there is inconsistency in the provision of auxiliary facilities (shade, drinking fountains, signage, toilets, seating);
- since the development of these facilities, no major works or improvements have been undertaken;
- the majority of dirt BMX jumps are in poor condition;
- users have attempted to modify jumps in many of the BMX facilities; and
- facilities have been developed in inappropriate locations.

Additionally, in recent years Latrobe City Council has received a number of requests for improvements to existing facilities or development of new facilities. However, due to the informal nature of the activity it is difficult to obtain considerable data on the rates of participation within the community.

To address existing issues and improve the provision of skate and BMX track facilities this plan recommends;

- the introduction of a hierarchy of skate facilities to identify appropriate provision at a regional, district and local level;
- providing resources and support to the Glengarry community to assist with the development of a local level skate facility. The Glengarry community have demonstrated significant community support for the proposed development;
- undertaking a detailed technical audit of facilities to identify immediate and future requirements for the operation and maintenance of skate park sites to ensure existing facilities meet minimum standards;
- providing resources and support to the Yallourn North community to assist with the development of a local level skate facility; and
- that further consultation and investigation be completed into the development of a new district level facility for Morwell.

2. Latrobe City Council policy context

The Skate and BMX Plan 2009 has been developed to provide a strategic approach to addressing the current and future needs of skate and BMX activities. The plan is consistent with “*Latrobe 2021 The Vision for Latrobe Valley*”, as follows:

Strategic Objective: Liveability

“To promote and support social, recreational, cultural and community life by providing both essential and innovative amenities, services and facilities within the municipality”.

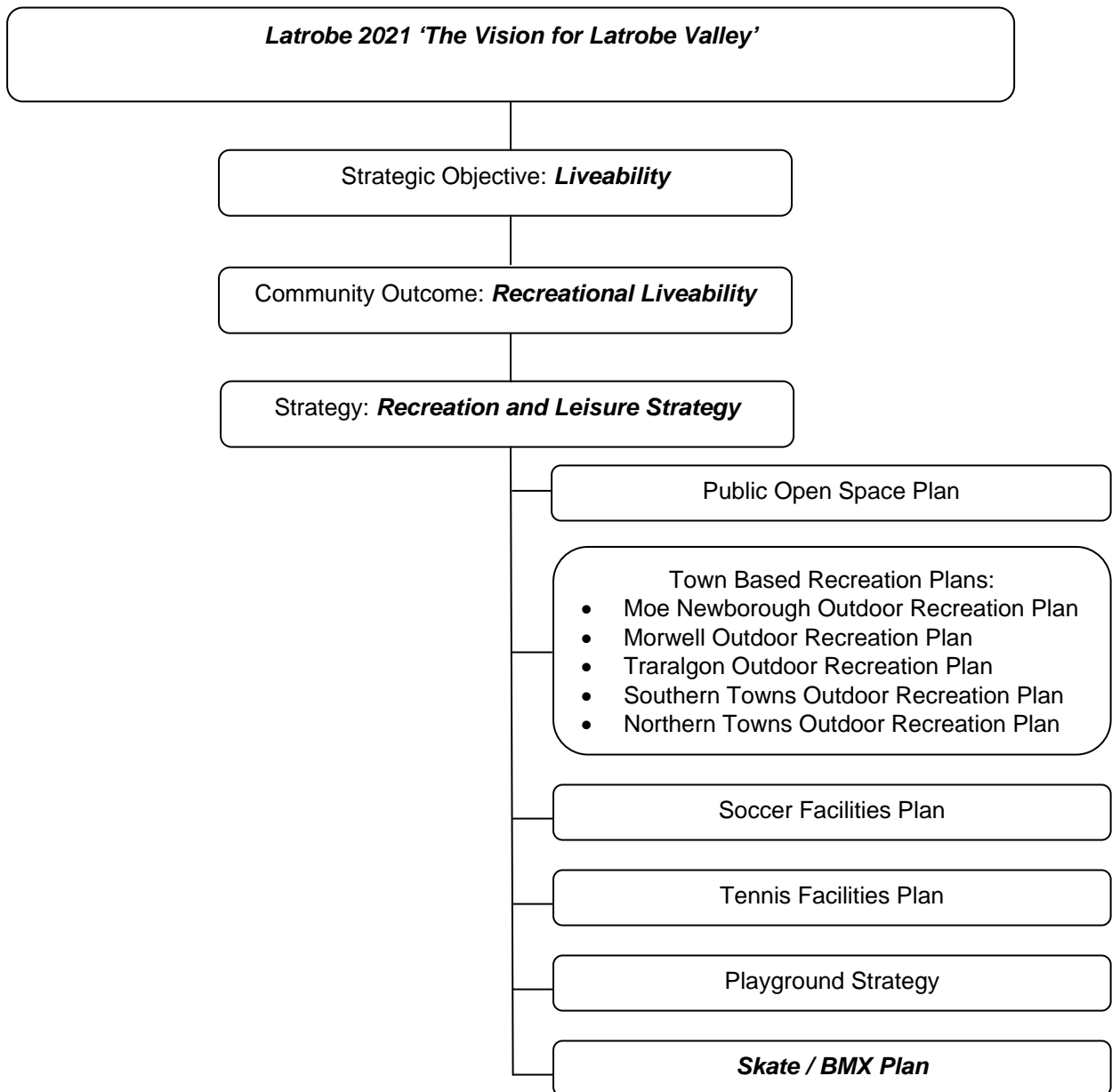
Community Outcome: Recreational Liveability

“By enriching the vibrancy and diversity of community life through promoting and supporting recreational services and facilities in the municipality”

Strategic Actions: Recreational Liveability

- *Assess and evaluate future recreational opportunities to address community aspirations;*
- *Encourage greater participation in all recreation pursuits;*
- *Increase the accessibility of Latrobe City’s recreation and sporting facilities;*
- *Develop and maintain high quality recreation facilities in partnership with the community; and*
- *Promote active living and participation in community life.*

2. Latrobe City Council policy context



The Skate and BMX Plan provides the opportunity for Latrobe City Council to determine the future provision of skate and BMX facilities consistent with the principles contained within Council's adopted Recreation and Leisure Strategy 2006. Specifically relevant to skate and BMX facilities is principle #5:

Generally, there shall be a focus on the consolidation of existing sporting facilities within the Region, and an emphasis on the provision of new (unstructured) recreational pursuits and open space use.

3. Background

Skating and BMX riding continue to be popular activities among young people.

The Latrobe City Council Recreation and Leisure Strategy 2006 identified the importance of providing unstructured and free facilities for the community. The strategy did not extend to provide details regarding these facilities particularly in relation to skate parks and BMX tracks.

The need to prepare this plan emerged from:

- A significant number of requests for improvement and development of facilities;
- The need for clear direction on provision, management and maintenance of facilities; and
- The need to prioritise capital projects to improve and provide for skate and BMX activities.

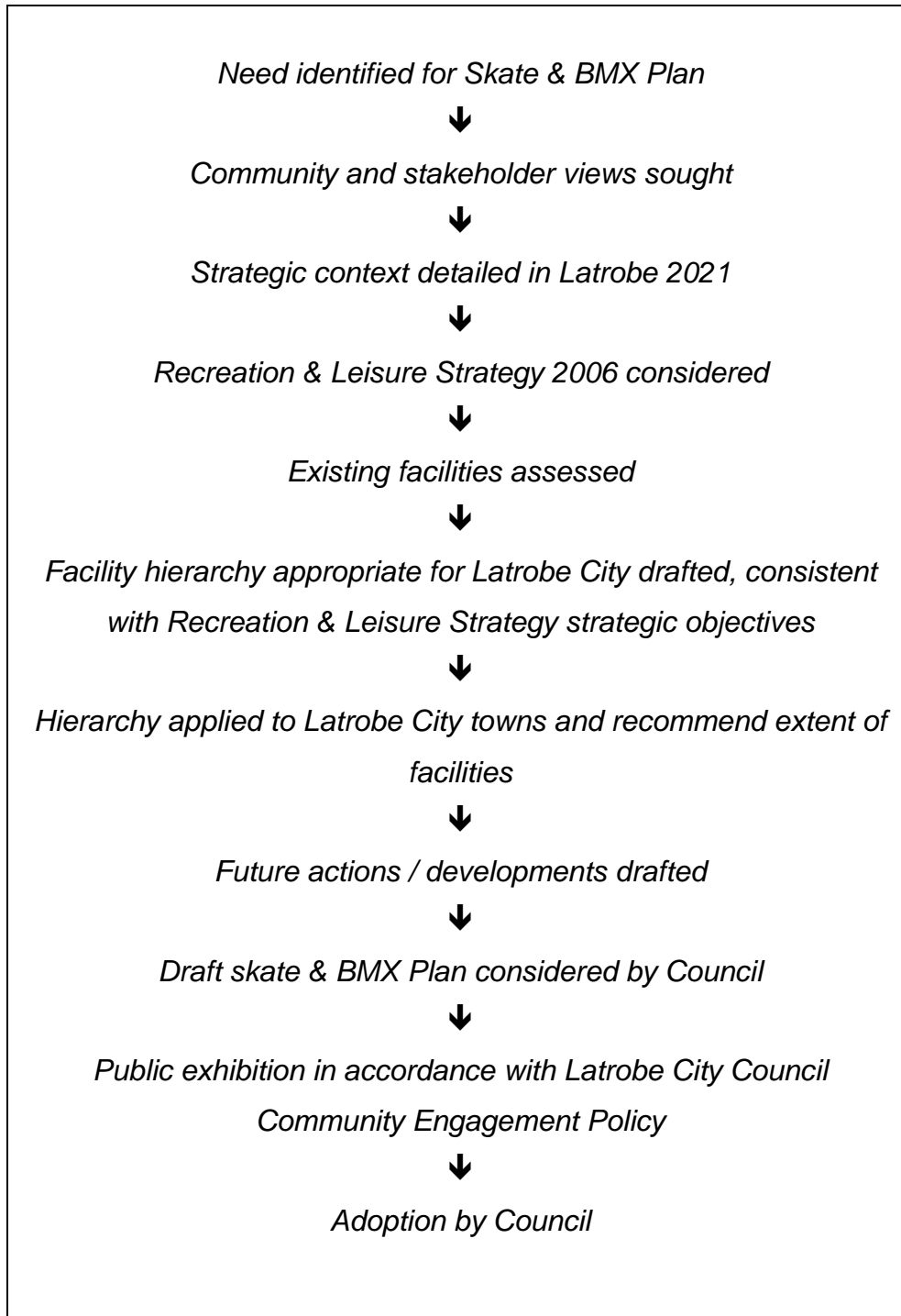
This plan has considered the existing six skate park facilities and seven BMX tracks as well as short term future facility priorities. These facilities include:

Skate Parks	BMX Tracks
Moe	Newborough
Morwell	Yallourn North
Traralgon	Tyers
Churchill	Traralgon
Boolarra	Glengarry
Toongabbie	Morwell
	Churchill

The Skate & BMX Plan 2009 has been formulated using the following approach:

- Site visits and assessments of all existing facilities, including an analysis of the condition of surfaces and components and the adequacy of supporting infrastructure;
- Meetings conducted onsite at existing facilities, typically attended by users and parents, that discussed issues of local as well as municipal provision for skate and BMX activities;
- Meetings and briefings held with the Latrobe City Youth Councillors; and
- Consideration of all relevant strategic documents.

The development of this plan has followed the key steps as detailed below:



4. Overview of community consultation & stakeholder engagement

4. Overview of community consultation & stakeholder engagement

The community consultation & stakeholder engagement process undertaken in the development of this plan identified a number of key common themes. These themes were very important in the development of the hierarchy of facilities and key recommendations contained in the plan and support the approach to be taken when considering the provision of future facilities.

The key themes identified by the community and key stakeholders included;

- The popularity of skating and BMX is increasing within the community as the unstructured nature of the activity is of particular appeal to young people;
- Existing facilities within Latrobe City are generally falling behind those of neighboring towns and municipalities;
- Latrobe City needs a skate / BMX facility that would attract visitors and competition from outside the area;
- Skate and BMX facilities should, where possible, be located near residential areas;
- Facilities within the major towns require improving or replacement;
- There is a need for better support amenities to accompany skate and BMX facilities;
- Skate and BMX facilities need to be accessible to public transport as the majority of users do not have the means to get to these facilities otherwise;
- Facilities need to be properly maintained on an ongoing basis;
- Small town communities have the capacity to assist Council in providing skate and BMX facilities.

5. Principles

The Recreation and Leisure Strategy 2006 developed a set of principles that underpin and support the provision of skate and BMX track facilities in Latrobe City.

These principles and how they guide the development the Skate & BMX Plan are detailed in the table below. Each principle as detailed in the Recreation and Leisure Strategy 2006 has a corresponding principle statement specifically developed to assist in determining the Latrobe City Council's direction and response to the provision of skate and BMX facilities.

Recreation and Leisure Strategy 2006 Principles	Key skate and BMX Plan Principles
<p>1. Council's role and responsibility in the development and provision of recreation and leisure opportunities shall be clearly defined.</p>	<p>1. Council plays an important role in the provision of outdoor recreation facilities for young people.</p> <p>2. Council works in partnership with key community organisations to provide for competitive skate and BMX sports events.</p> <p>3. Council acknowledges that skate and BMX facilities play a role in meeting the recreation needs of young people.</p>
<p>2. There shall be a diverse range of accessible recreation facilities and services, and open space areas available across the City.</p>	<p>4. The provision of skate parks and BMX tracks is a legitimate use of open space that satisfies a range of community needs.</p>
<p>3. Priority shall be given to supporting the provision of recreation facilities and services that cater for both municipal and local level needs.</p>	<p>5. Access to local and municipal facilities for skate and BMX will be provided through the provision of regional, district and local level facilities and planning for appropriate levels of development.</p> <p>6. The level of community support will guide Council's decision making about future provision of skate and BMX facilities to ensure that any developments are sustainable in the long term.</p>

5. Principles

Recreation and Leisure Strategy 2006 Principles	Key skate and BMX Plan Principles
4. The provision and allocation of recreation facilities and services shall be equitable according to age, gender, cultural background and ability.	7. Council will endeavour to provide skate and BMX facilities that encourage participation in skateboarding, BMX riding, rollerblading and scooter riding activities at all levels.
5. Generally, there shall be a focus on the consolidation of existing sporting facilities within the Region, and an emphasis on the provision of new (unstructured) recreational pursuits and open space use.	8. Wherever possible, skate and BMX facilities will be developed in conjunction with other recreation, sport and open space facilities.
6. There shall be a genuine attempt by Council to encourage the community into recreational activities for the health, well-being and social benefits they provide.	9. Opportunities for increased participation will be well promoted throughout recreation, youth and community initiatives.
7. Recreation and leisure facilities and settings shall provide safe and supportive environments for participants.	10. Compliance with all relevant guidelines will be a priority and skate and BMX participants will be actively encouraged to wear protective gear and participate safely in their activities.
8. The provision of recreation and leisure facilities shall maximise shared usage and flexibility to meet changing community needs and aspirations.	11. Wherever possible, skate facilities will be developed to accommodate all users including BMX riders, rollerbladers and scooter riders. 12. As an exception, dirt jumps for BMX riding will be stand alone facilities as opportunities for shared use is minimal.
9. A collaborative and partnership approach with community groups, government agencies and the private sector will drive the provision of recreation and sporting facilities and services, and the provision of open space.	13. Partnerships between Council, the community, young people and skating and BMX participants will be critical to the implementation of Skate and BMX Plan priorities.

6. Facility hierarchy

The following table defines the hierarchy of regional, district and local facilities for skate and BMX provision.

Hierarchy	Definition
<p>Regional: Skate / BMX</p> <p>Approximate establishment cost \$500,000</p>	<p>A regional facility for skaters and BMX riders would cater for a large number of users and would occupy a significant sized site. This type of facility would accommodate a bowl and street course, comfortably addressing the needs of both skaters and BMX riders. A regional facility would attract users from across the municipality and perhaps attract visitation from other municipalities.</p> <p>Location of a regional facility would give regard to factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility to the target population • Cost of establishment • Available and suitable sites • Amenity • Proximity to established residential areas
<p>District: Skate / BMX</p> <p>Approximate establishment cost \$250,000</p>	<p>A district level facility would cater for participants across the immediate and surrounding townships and would occupy a reasonable space within a site. This type of facility would accommodate a smaller range of facilities, primarily focussed on street course components suitable for both skater and BMX riders.</p>

6. Facility hierarchy

Hierarchy	Definition
Local: Skate / BMX Approximate establishment cost \$100,000	A typical local skate facility might be co-located with a play space and would include stand alone items like a small mini-ramp or a small scale skate space. These facilities would cater for local users and generally would not attract visitation from outside the area. Elements that are of a mobile nature could be moved between these parks to offer variety and change for users. The development and ongoing maintenance of local level facilities will be guided by the level of community support for the facility.
Local: BMX (dirt) Approximate establishment cost \$15,000	A typical local BMX dirt track would be developed in a park with good passive surveillance. Mounds may vary in shapes, heights and difficulty and can be altered for variety and interest.

It is noted that skate park facilities generally cater for both skating activities (including rollerblading and scooters) and BMX riding, with bike riders using the concrete facility.

The other aspect to BMX riding that is very popular is the 'dirt jump' BMX track. These BMX facilities are provided on a local level only as young people are generally seeking these facilities informally and because they comprise dirt mounds, can be modified easily (within approved guidelines) to create changing and interesting facilities.

All facilities should be well supported by amenities such as seating, drinking water and shade, and be easily accessible via a local pathways.

Comparison of existing skate and BMX facilities within Latrobe City against the facility hierarchy identifies where there are opportunities to establish additional facilities in accordance with the criteria and approach detailed in this plan.

6. Facility hierarchy

Location / Facility	Regional	District Skate / BMX	Local Skate / BMX	Local BMX (dirt)
Moe/Newborough	X	✓	NA	✓
Morwell		✓	NA	✓
Traralgon		✓	NA	✓
Churchill		✓	NA	✓
Boolarra	NA	NA	✓	X
Glengarry			X	✓
Tyers			X	✓
Yinnar			X	X
Traralgon South			X	X
Yallourn North			X	✓
Toongabbie			✓	X

X = potential facility to be established consistent with hierarchy

✓ = existing facility

NA = location does not require facility to level prescribed in the hierarchy

7. Assessment of existing facilities

7. Assessment of existing facilities

A preliminary assessment of all existing facilities considered the following aspects:

- *Physical condition*: the condition of ramps / jumps (transition surfaces, coping, ledges and grind rails);
- *Location*: location of the facility (access, relation to other facilities, proximity to residents);
- *Amenity*: auxiliary facilities available at the site (shade, drinking fountains, signage, toilets, seating).

A summary of the issues identified at the existing facilities is detailed below:

Skate Parks

- Concerns have been expressed during consultation sessions regarding the appropriateness of the location of Moe and Morwell skate parks;
- There is no consistency in the provision of auxiliary facilities (shade, drinking fountains, signage, toilets, seating);
- Since the development of these facilities no major works or improvements have been conducted to the sites.

Facility	General Overview
Boolarra Skate Park Duke Street	The park is well situated and well supported by surrounding facilities and infrastructure. The Park is located within central public open space adjacent to the town centre and has good amenity. The park is relatively modern in construction and the modular equipment provided is of good quality.
Churchill Skate Park Phillip Parade	The existing park is well situated within recreational open space in close proximity to the township centre. The park is currently being redeveloped utilising modular concrete ramps. When completed, the facility will be of District standard.
Moe Skate Park George Street	This facility consists of metal ramps and rails on an asphalt surface which is rough and uneven. The park is located adjacent to the railway, town centre and railway station. The equipment is beginning to age and is nearing the point of replacement.
Morwell Skate Park Valley Christian Centre Haywood Street	The existing park is an isolated site removed from the town centre and away from the railway station. Concrete ramps are in moderate condition however the base concrete surface is degraded creating a very rough surface.

7. Assessment of existing facilities

Facility	General Overview
Traralgon Skate Park Davidson Street	This facility consists of a concrete bowl and a variety of ramps and is located within open space adjoining the tennis facility. While some distance from the centre of town, location is considered appropriate by the users. Components are showing signs of wear and tear that are becoming more of a challenge for park users
Toongabbie Skate Park Toongabbie Recreation Reserve	The Park is located at the Toongabbie Recreation Reserve on a disused asphalt netball court. The surface of the facility is very rough and the metal ramps are in an advanced state of decline.

7. Assessment of existing facilities

BMX Tracks

- the majority of dirt jumps are in poor condition;
- users have attempted to modify jumps in many of the BMX facilities; and
- the majority of sites are well located, although there are some concerns raised by residents about the location of the facility in Newborough.

Facility	General Overview
Churchill Glendonald Park	The park is well supported by its own facilities and infrastructure as well as the surrounding facilities and infrastructure. The surface of the track appears quite loose and should be resurfaced.
Glengarry Apex Park	The park is well located in terms of visibility and proximity to the town centre. The jumps have been developed in an informal manner and are showing signs of wear. The site would benefit through remodeling of jumps.
Morwell Ronald Reserve / Waterhole Creek	The site is located in an isolated area of Ronald Reserve with limited associated infrastructure. The jumps have been well constructed but will require regular ongoing maintenance.
Newborough Murray Road	The existing park is well situated close to Newborough CBD; however local residents are concerned that the location of the track is within their primary passive open space. The park is well supported by surrounding facilities and infrastructure but requires regular ongoing maintenance.
Traralgon Traralgon Recreation Reserve	The existing park is isolated but co-located with a recreation reserve. The location is generally accepted by users. The park is reasonably supported by surrounding facilities and infrastructure but requires regular ongoing maintenance.
Tyers Tyers Recreation Reserve	The existing track is adequately situated adjacent to the Tyers Recreation Reserve. The Park is supported by surrounding facilities and infrastructure but has no amenities on site. The existing dirt jumps require remodeling and the site overall requires regular ongoing maintenance. This track is very basic in its design and construction, and hence attracts minimal use.
Yallourn North Reserve Street	The existing park is well situated, located adjacent to the school, near other sporting spaces, and is sufficiently removed from residential areas. The park is well supported by surrounding facilities and infrastructure but requires continued maintenance and inspection programs.

7. Assessment of existing facilities

Assessments completed of all existing skate and BMX facilities have been graded utilising a simple criteria – whether they are in a good, fair or poor condition.

Location / Facility	Location	Condition	Amenity
Skate Parks			
Moe	Good	Fair	Fair
Morwell	Poor	Fair	Poor
Traralgon	Good	Fair	Good
Churchill	Good	Good	Fair
Boolarra	Good	Good	Good
Toongabbie	Good	Fair	Fair
BMX Tracks			
Newborough	Fair	Fair	Good
Yallourn North	Good	Fair	Fair
Tyers	Good	Fair	Fair
Traralgon	Good	Fair	Fair
Glengarry	Good	Fair	Fair
Morwell	Fair	Fair	Fair

Good
Fair
Poor

From the investigations undertaken for this plan, Latrobe City Council has previously sought to provide a range of facilities for skaters and BMX riders throughout the municipality. However, these facilities are now ageing and some no longer meet the demands of the skate and BMX community.

Many of the facilities are in a state of decline. Maintenance of skate parks and BMX tracks is a key component of providing good facilities however the majority of facilities have now reached the point of requiring upgrades/replacement. It is appropriate when considering the upgrade of facilities to reconsider whether the facility is suitably located and the level for community support for the facility.

8. Key objectives for skate & BMX facilities

8. Key objectives for skate & BMX facilities

Further to the principles detailed in this plan, the Recreation and Leisure Strategy 2006 listed the following Strategic Objectives to guide the provision of recreation and leisure resources for Latrobe City for the next ten years.

The application of these statements (shown in the left column) to skate and BMX provision is outlined in the Key Objectives that have been listed in the right-hand column of the following table.

Recreation and Leisure Strategy 2006 Objectives	Key objectives for skate & BMX facilities
<p>1. Provide a diversity of financially sustainable recreation and leisure facilities and opportunities.</p>	<p>1. Investigate the development of a regional skate facility for Latrobe City. Accessibility is a key consideration given the majority of users (young people) of the facility are likely to have to rely on public transport.</p> <p>2. Provide district level skate and BMX facilities in the four major towns of Latrobe City.</p> <p>3. Install local skate facilities where there is demonstrated significant community support, within the seven small towns.</p> <p>4. Work with community groups / young people to provide and improve local BMX facilities within the seven small towns where there is demonstrated significant community support.</p>
<p>2. Provide well used and relevant recreation facilities and settings.</p>	<p>5. All skate and BMX installations will be designed and constructed as integrated components of park and/or township contexts.</p> <p>6. Facilities for skate and BMX will be reviewed on a periodic basis to ensure that designs and construction methods are still current.</p> <p>7. When developing or upgrading skate or BMX facilities, remove facilities that are no longer required.</p>
<p>3. Consolidate recreation and sports facility provision and use.</p>	<p>8. Encourage users of skate and BMX facilities to use regional, district and local facilities throughout Latrobe City in close proximity to home, school, public transport, shops and other services that they access.</p>

8. Key objectives for skate & BMX facilities

Recreation and Leisure Strategy 2006 Objectives	Key objectives for skate & BMX facilities
4. Encourage and support community involvement in sustainable facility management & development.	9. Consult with young people and users of skate and BMX facilities to ensure that the design, development and construction of facilities meet current and future recreation needs.
5. Maximise opportunities for economic development through recreation and leisure.	10. Consider during the development of facilities the potential of hosting major skate competitions and events.
6. Provide effective management, support and resources.	11. Council, young people and community representatives to seek funding and develop management procedures for the range of skate and BMX facilities throughout Latrobe City.

9. Recommendations

9. Recommendations

Taking into account the principles, key directions and objectives, hierarchy for provision, existing site assessments and community consultation undertaken in the development of the Skate & BMX Plan 2009, the recommended actions detailed below will result in improved skate park and BMX track facilities for the Latrobe City community.

Year	Action	Budget
2008/09	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce a hierarchy of skate facilities to identify appropriate provision at regional, district and local level. 2. That resources and support be provided to assist the Glengarry community in the development of a local level skate facility. 3. Undertake a technical audit of all existing skate / BMX facilities to identify condition and amenity issues requiring attention and undertake improvement works. 4. Provide support to the Yallourn North community to prepare a detailed project proposal for the establishment of a local level skate park for consideration in the 2009/10 budget. 	<p>Existing internal resources.</p> <p>\$60,000 plus surplus steel ramps from Churchill and existing internal resources.</p> <p>\$40,000</p> <p>Existing internal resources.</p>
2009/10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. That resources and support be provided to assist the Yallourn North community in the development of a local level skate facility. 6. Continue works identified in technical audit to address condition and amenity issues at existing facilities. 7. Undertake a feasibility study to identify the most appropriate location for a district skate facility in Morwell. 	<p>\$60,000 plus surplus steel ramps from Churchill and existing internal resources.</p> <p>\$40,000</p> <p>\$20,000</p>

10. Conclusion

The provision of recreation facilities for the community is a key service provided by local government. This plan has identified that the provision of skate and BMX facilities plays a key role in the recreational needs of young people.

However, due to the informal nature of the sport and the lack of guidance on the provision level of facilities, it is difficult to determine how best to meet the needs of the community.

This plan recommends further detailed investigation of existing facilities and community and stakeholder consultation to better inform Council of the level of community support for skate & BMX facilities and the real costs of providing these facilities.

The ongoing improvement and development of these facilities will need to be continually reviewed as changing demographics and community expectations into the future will impact on the facilities provided by Latrobe City Council for the benefit of the community.