



Image source: Romsey Mechanics Institute

# Romsey Community Infrastructure Assessment

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

June 2023





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# Executive summary

## **Purpose of this assessment**

Macedon Ranges Shire Council (Council) is currently preparing the Romsey Structure Plan (the Structure Plan). The Structure Plan will designate appropriate land uses for the Romsey area, including areas for additional residential development and the infrastructure required to manage population growth and change over the next 30 years.

Council engaged SGS Economics and Planning (SGS) to undertake a comprehensive community infrastructure assessment for Romsey to assess infrastructure needs based on new forecast population scenarios, a quantitative assessment of current supply and future demand, strategic directions from state and Council policy, and stakeholder and community feedback.

This report identifies opportunities to address shortfalls and surpluses in community infrastructure provision as well as opportunities to improve accessibility, functionality, and integration of community infrastructure in line with contemporary infrastructure delivery and service models. It will serve as a technical input to the Structure Plan.

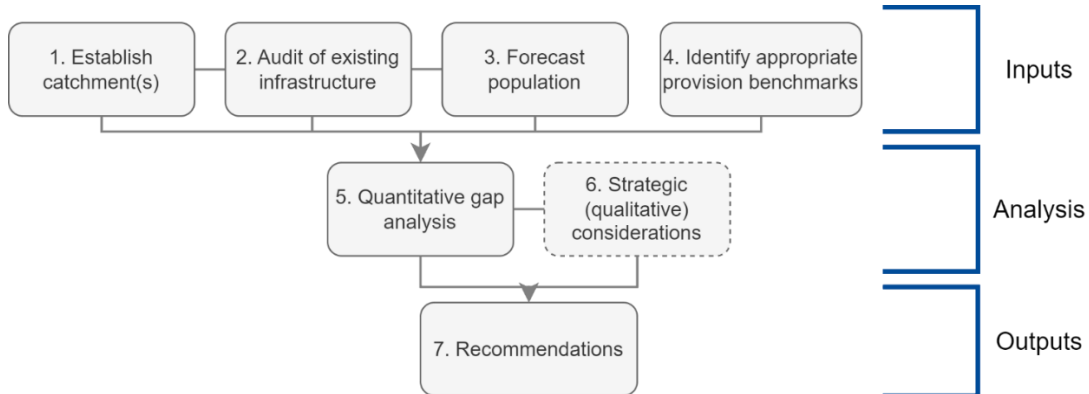
## **Approach**

Community infrastructure includes both public and privately provided facilities and services, including Council and non-Council facilities. For the purpose of this assessment, the scope of community infrastructure falls across nine broad categories:

- Education
- Early years
- Services for older people
- Arts and cultural facilities
- Community meeting spaces
- Libraries
- Community health
- Emergency services, law and order, hospitals
- Indoor and outdoor recreation facilities

The methodology for undertaking community infrastructure needs assessments is undertaken as three key phases, illustrated in Figure 1. Recommendations will feed directly into the Structure Plan and other strategic local documents, and eventually, capital works programs. They seek to address the gaps and surpluses identified in the analysis, balanced against strategic considerations.

**FIGURE 1: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning 2023

Although the Structure Plan adopts the Romsey Urban Centre Locality (UCL) as the main study area, this report adopts the Romsey Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) for the purposes of assessment. This is due to demand for community infrastructure being drawn from a larger catchment than the township alone. The different geographies are depicted in Figure 2.

**FIGURE 2: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE CATCHMENT**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning 2023

## Principles of infrastructure planning

The delivery of community infrastructure and the services need to respond and adapt to community needs, changes in technology, partnerships, and financial and environmental sustainability. The following serve as principles to guide the recommendations within this report.

- **Integration and co-location:** more cost effective and beneficial to community groups than traditional standalone facilities under exclusive use.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** ability to respond to a wide range of activities and programs through design solutions.
- **Shared use:** managing lease and license agreements to enable shared use of facilities and maximise utilisation.
- **Partnerships and agreements:** increasing provision through the private and not-for-profit sectors to promote choice and financial viability.
- **Technology:** digital equipment to support work and study, and online service delivery options
- **Accessibility:** locating community infrastructure where there are strong links to public transport, bike paths, and footpaths to achieve 20-minute neighbourhood objectives.
- **Equity and inclusion:** facilities that include all, regardless of their gender, cultural background, identity, age, or ability.

## The Romsey community context

The Romsey SA2 has a similar population to the wider Council area across categories such as education, employment, level of advantage, and cultural diversity. It is distinguished in the following ways:

- Household characteristics – Romsey has fewer medium and high-density dwellings and slightly fewer lone-person households.
- Fewer low-income and also fewer high-income households (indicating most are on middle/moderate incomes).

Compared to the Victorian average, Romsey households are larger with more children, wealthier, have far fewer people born overseas or speaking a language other than English, more advantaged, and have lower unemployment.

## Forecast population

Population forecasts have been provided to SGS by Tim Nott, based on the three growth scenarios established in the Romsey Structure Plan Economic Assessment (2021). The low growth scenario forecasts the population to increase to a total of 13,993 persons for the Romsey SA2 by 2041. Under the medium and high growth scenarios population is forecast to increase to 14,485 and 15,412, respectively, with growth focused in the Romsey urban area. The scenarios are summarised below.

Scenario	Description	Additional pop. 2021-41	Total pop. 2041
Low	Population growth rate based on that expected for the Romsey SA2 by the State Government in Victoria in Future, 2019 – around 1.4% per year over the period 2021 to 2041.	3,228	13,993

<b>Medium</b>	Population growth rate based on Romsey township capturing a higher share of the growth forecast for the SA2 as a whole – around 2.2% per year over the forecast period.	3,720	14,485
<b>High</b>	Population growth rate of around 2.8% per year over the forecast period, based on accelerated housing development, matching housing sales experienced in recent times.	4,647	15,412

Source: Tim Nott, 2023

The population is forecast to age in line with national trends, with the 85yo+ cohort growing substantially from a very low base. The 40-44yo cohort (parents and home builders segment), followed by the 10-14 cohort will see moderate growth, while the share of 25-34yo (young workforce) is forecast to decrease the most.

### Analysis & recommendations

As a well-established district town, Romsey is already well-serviced by community infrastructure across the majority of categories. Most of the existing community infrastructure is within the townships of Romsey and Lancefield. There are also two facilities located in Bolinda (about 9km to the south of Romsey). Under all growth scenarios being explored for the Romsey Structure Plan (low, medium, and high), community needs can generally be accommodated at existing infrastructure through more minor modifications to use and programming. There are no major additional facilities required to support the forecast population growth, even under the higher growth scenario.

Findings from the needs assessment are summarised by service area below. For each section, there is a table that summarises the findings for gap (-) or surplus (+) in facilities/services under each growth scenario, and corresponding recommendations. For the full rationale of findings and recommendations, refer to the body of the report.

Facility/service	Recommendation(s)
<b>Education</b>	
Government secondary schools	Continue to engage with the Department of Education regarding improved transition arrangements and transport to government secondary schools from Romsey.
<b>Early Years</b>	
Kindergarten	Continue to monitor demand and engage with existing private providers to support them in increasing provision and addressing any workforce challenges, particularly under the higher growth scenarios.
<b>Services for older people</b>	
Seniors' facilities	Review existing community facilities to investigate how they can be used to support seniors' groups (e.g. a meeting room dedicated to seniors at a specific time during the week for them to gather, socialise and connect).
Residential aged care	Continue to support the allocation of residential aged care within the Shire, including in Romsey.



Arts and cultural facilities	
Arts and cultural facilities	Ensure existing multipurpose community facilities integrate spaces that can support arts and cultural activities through the inclusion of wet spaces and storage.
Community Meeting Spaces	
Community meeting spaces	Review utilisation, hiring policies, and the design/fit-out of the existing multipurpose spaces to ensure use can be maximised.
Youth	Engage with young people and review existing community meeting spaces to see if they can be used to better address the needs of young people.
Libraries	
Libraries	Consider how to better utilise the library facility to meet a wider range of needs and interests from the community – including though expanded programming and opening hours, and introduction of programs and services for young people.
Community health facilities	
None	
Emergency Services, Law and Order, Hospitals	
Emergency services	Continue to liaise with local service providers in relation to forecast population growth and to ensure services have adequate access and broader infrastructure (road network) to access future residential developments and respond to extreme events in the context of climate change.
Hospitals and law and order	Review public transport links to hospitals and law courts to ensure they are appropriate to meet current and future community needs
Indoor recreation facilities	
Pavilions	Monitor active open space use/participation in sport and consider provision of additional infrastructure under high growth scenario. Any new active recreation infrastructure should be co-designed with children and young people and cater to demand for a wide variety of sport and more informal recreation activities.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project context

The Macedon Ranges Shire local government area is located just outside of the metropolitan district, providing strong connections to both Melbourne and Bendigo. The Shire includes a number of townships which are connected through rail and major road networks. Macedon Ranges was declared under the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Act 2018, requiring all townships within Macedon Ranges Shire to establish a settlement boundary.

The Romsey Structure Plan is currently being developed to determine the settlement boundary for the township. This boundary will protect the distinctive positive elements of the township as well as building upon its opportunities. The Structure Plan will designate appropriate land uses for the Romsey area, including areas for additional residential development, forecast population growth, and infrastructure required to manage growth and change over the next 30 years.

The 2022 Draft Romsey Structure Plan Emerging Options Paper includes the following principles relating to community infrastructure:

- *Increase the town's population to enable appropriate services and facilities to be provided*
- *Service the community facilities and cultural needs of the town's population*

## 1.2 Purpose of this report

Macedon Ranges Shire Council (Council) have engaged SGS to undertake a comprehensive community infrastructure assessment of Romsey to test infrastructure needs based on a quantitative assessment of current supply and future demand, strategic directions from state and Council policy, and stakeholder and community feedback. The objectives of this assessment are to:

- identify the community infrastructure needs of existing and future communities of Romsey;
- Identify opportunities to address shortfalls and surpluses in community infrastructure provision;
- identify opportunities to improve accessibility, functionality, and integration of community infrastructure in line with contemporary delivery and service models; and
- provide an evidence base to inform the subsequent Structure Plan.

## 1.3 Definition of community infrastructure

Community infrastructure can be broadly defined as the:

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

Community infrastructure includes both public and privately provided facilities and services, including Council and non-Council facilities.

## 1.4 Scope of infrastructure

The state government-endorsed scope of community infrastructure from the Planning for Community Infrastructure in Growth Areas Guideline, prepared 2008 (the 2008 Guideline) has been adapted for use in this assessment. The scope of community infrastructure falls across nine broad categories, listed in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE**

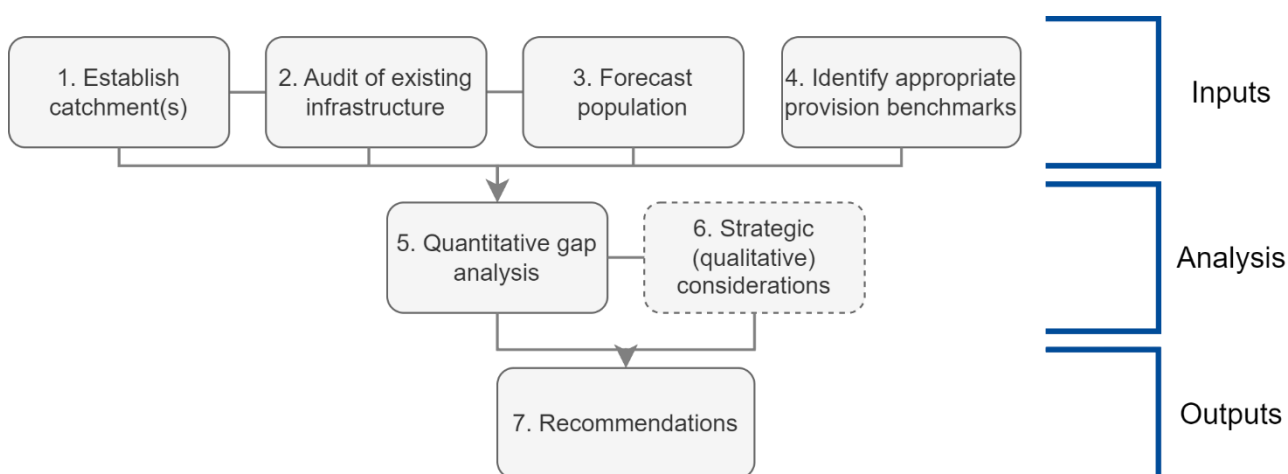
<b>Education</b>	<b>Early Years</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Government Primary School</li> <li>▪ Government Secondary School</li> <li>▪ Catholic Primary School</li> <li>▪ Catholic Secondary School</li> <li>▪ Government Specialist School</li> <li>▪ TAFE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kindergarten (3- and 4-year-olds)</li> <li>▪ Childcare (long day care)</li> <li>▪ Playgroup</li> <li>▪ Maternal and child health services</li> <li>▪ Toy library</li> </ul>
<b>Service for older people</b>	<b>Community Health</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Senior's facilities</li> <li>▪ Residential aged care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community based health care – Level 2, Level 3, and Large</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency Services, Law and Order, Hospitals</b>	<b>Community Meeting Spaces</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ambulance station</li> <li>▪ Fire station</li> <li>▪ Police station</li> <li>▪ SES</li> <li>▪ Courts</li> <li>▪ Public Hospital</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meeting spaces (various sizes)</li> <li>▪ Neighbourhood house</li> <li>▪ Youth space and facilities</li> <li>▪ Multi-purpose community centre</li> </ul>
<b>Libraries</b>	<b>Arts and Cultural Facilities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Arts Facility</li> <li>▪ Community Arts Centre</li> <li>▪ Regional Arts Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facilities</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Indoor recreation/stadium</li> <li>▪ Indoor aquatic/leisure/fitness centre</li> <li>▪ Netball facility</li> <li>▪ Tennis facility</li> <li>▪ Lawn bowls facilities</li> <li>▪ Synthetic athletics track</li> <li>▪ Pavilion</li> </ul>	

## 2. Approach

### 2.1 Overview of methodology

The SGS approach to community infrastructure needs assessments balances the quantitative gap analysis with a strategic consideration of opportunities. As articulated in Figure 3, and further outlined below, the assessment progresses across three key stages. The inputs utilised for this assessment are clarified under parts 1-4.

**FIGURE 3: INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**



Source: SGS, 2022

#### *Inputs*

##### 1. Establish study area/catchment

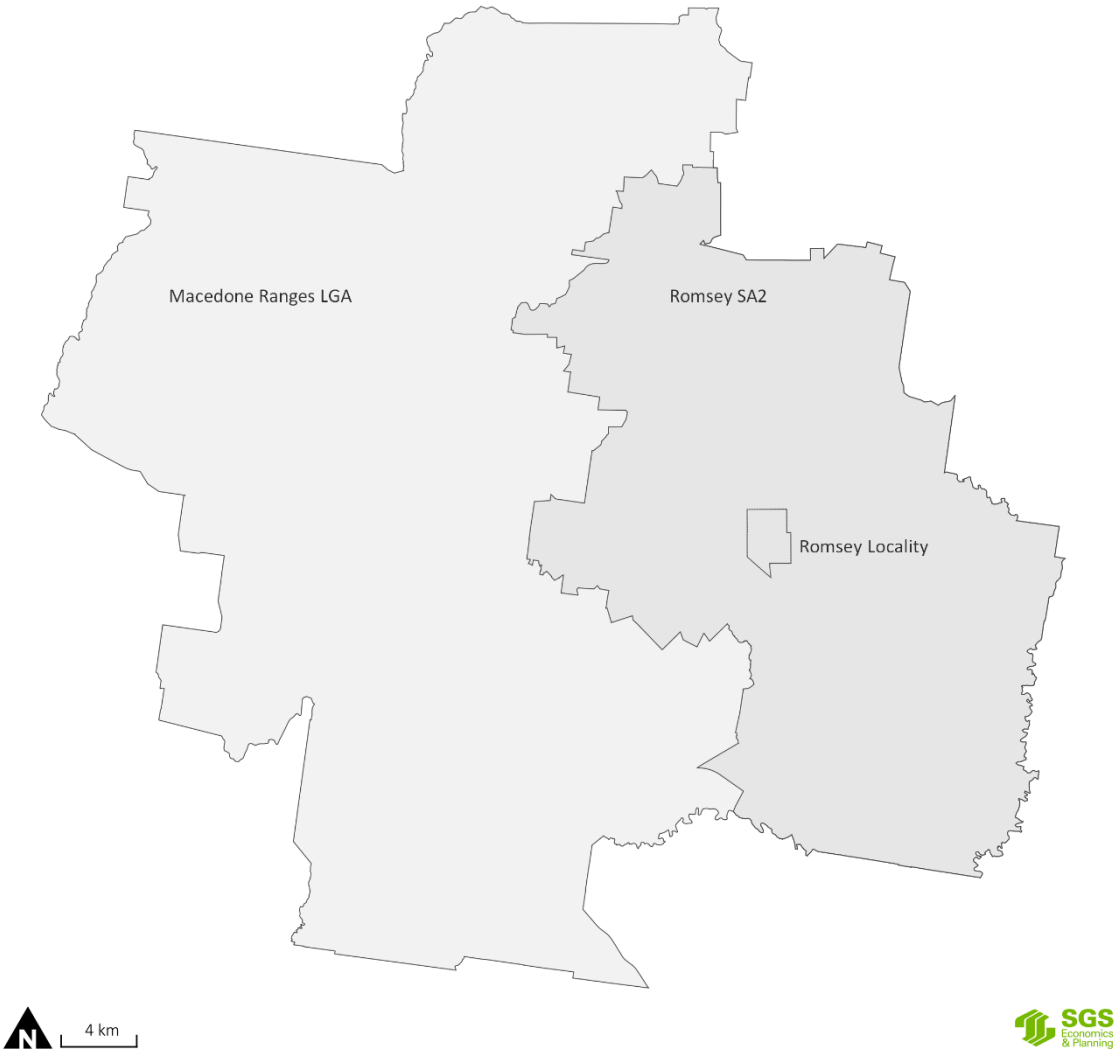
In order to undertake an infrastructure assessment a catchment/study area needs to be established, including current and future land uses. This study area defines the boundary for the existing and forecast population (and therefore must align with statistical area boundaries or boundaries for which there are existing population profiles and estimates) as well as the area for which to audit the existing infrastructure for the infrastructure analysis.

Generally, this area will only generate demand for the delivery of local level infrastructure. The population however will also require access to more regional infrastructure that serves multiple townships/catchments. Given this, higher order-infrastructure is assessed as part of the analysis, with a focus on strategic considerations such as accessibility to existing district and regional facilities as well as capacity within these facilities/services.

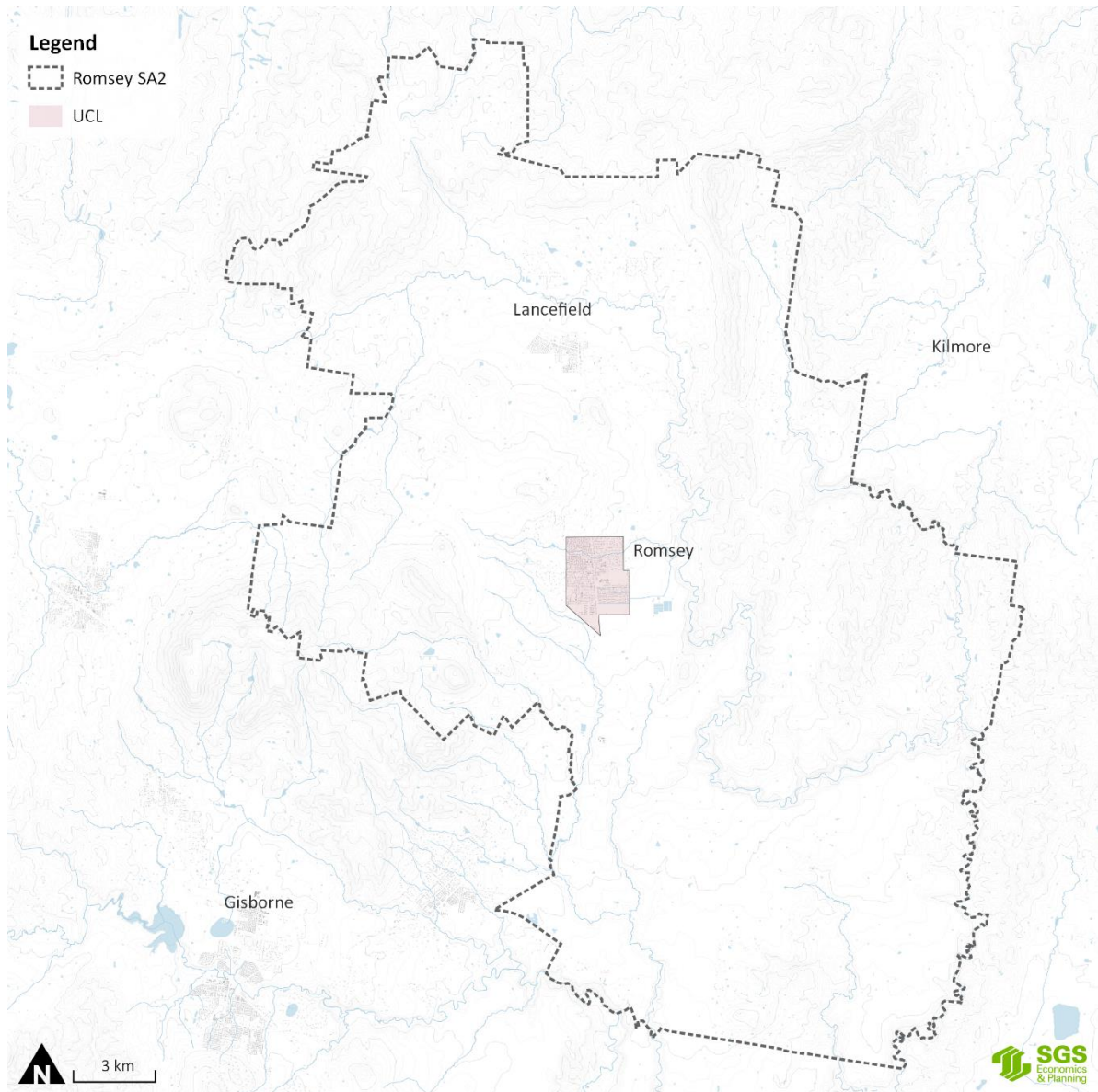
The Romsey Urban Centre Locality (UCL) was adopted as the study area for the Romsey Structure Plan, as it best aligns with the current township area. However, demand for community infrastructure in Romsey is drawn from a larger catchment than the township alone. The Statistical Area Level 2 (SA2) of

Romsey has therefore been adopted as the study area for the purposes of the community infrastructure assessment. It is important to note this is a larger geographic area that encompasses most of the eastern area of the Shire, rather than just the Romsey township. It includes Lancefield to the north, Monegetta to the south, and Darraweit Guim to the east (depicted in Figure 4 and Figure 5).

**FIGURE 4: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY AREA: ROMSEY SA2 IN THE MACEDON RANGES LGA**



**FIGURE 5: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE STUDY AREA: ROMSEY SA2**



## 2. Audit of existing infrastructure and services

An audit (survey) of existing infrastructure within the Romsey SA2 is undertaken along with consideration for district and regional infrastructure (e.g. tertiary education) outside the catchment that likely services the local population. This includes services and facilities, which are then categorised according to their type. The quantum of provision is documented (e.g. two rooms) as well as any data regarding the current capacity and lifecycle of this infrastructure related to service utilisation, service standards, asset condition, and fitness-for-purpose.

The scope of infrastructure assessed is included at section 1.4, and a summary of the audit for each service area is contained at section 5 of this report.

### 3. Forecast population

Population forecasts are adopted for the catchment, and segmented across 5-year age groups to understand forecast change. Forecasts are a key input to the gap analysis, as the size and demographics of the population determines demand for infrastructure.

This assessment adopts three scenarios for residential land use outcomes – low, medium, and high growth. The population forecasts for the Romsey SA2 have been provided by Tim Nott in 2023, based on the Romsey Structure Plan Economic Assessment (2021).

### 4. Provision ratios

A range of provision ratios (also referred to as benchmarks) are used across the community infrastructure planning sector. Provision ratios provide a useful starting point to understand supply and demand. For each infrastructure type, they establish the trigger for delivery (e.g. population, floor size, households), and the unit for provision (e.g. 1 school). They also typically include standards for delivery, e.g. typical size and components of a facility, or model for service.

Benchmarks for community infrastructure from the 2008 Guideline have been adopted for the purposes of this assessment, with the exception of Kindergarten services. SGS has created a new benchmarks for three- and four-year-old Kindergarten based on recent state government service changes.

An index of benchmarks and their assumptions can be found at Appendix A. Benchmarks should never be used in isolation, rather should be an input alongside the infrastructure audit (service utilisation and service standards).

## Analysis

### 5. supply and demand analysis

Based on the above inputs, a supply and demand analysis for community infrastructure in the catchment area is undertaken. This compares the future demand for infrastructure against current provision levels, and is expressed as a surplus (+) or gap (-).

For infrastructure where the forecast community does not demand a full facility, however the some of the population will still require/access this infrastructure, a high-level analysis of infrastructure availability outside the catchment is undertaken. This assesses where the nearest infrastructure is located, if it is accessible, and if there is likely capacity for the forecast population.

### 6. Strategic considerations

While the supply and demand analysis provides a useful starting point for assessing community needs, equally important to the planning process are site-specific considerations. Need for infrastructure and services is not homogenous across every growing Victorian community. Policy, emerging trends, existing facilities, local needs, area context, and stakeholder and community feedback should all contribute to each local planning process. Accordingly, the community infrastructure needs assessment considers the following strategic factors:

- Community infrastructure principles and best practice

- Local and State policy directions for community infrastructure including service reforms
- Private market trends for community infrastructure (e.g. childcare)
- Population/social trends that influence demand for services
- Feedback from stakeholders and the community
- Opportunities to fill gaps/ address needs in the network, including for higher-order infrastructure.

## *Outputs*

### **7. Recommendations**

Following the analysis, recommendations are made for each service area. Some may concern the delivery of new facilities, while others may be relevant to service changes. In addition, some will require further work (such as site assessments or brokering of partnerships).

Recommendations will feed directly into the Structure Plan and other strategic local documents, and eventually, capital works programs. They seek to address the gaps and surpluses identified in the analysis, balanced against strategic considerations explored earlier in the assessment.

## **2.2 Principles of infrastructure planning**

Community infrastructure is undergoing changes alongside the populations that it serves. Contemporary needs and models differ significantly to those that were standard even 10-20 years ago. This section contains a summary of trends in infrastructure planning and delivery that serve as principles for the purposes of this assessment.

### **Integration and co-location**

Traditional standalone models for the exclusive use of specific community or socio-demographic groups do not offer the same cost-effectiveness or benefits as an integrated community hub or co-location of infrastructure. Standalone infrastructure often leads to limited use and or exclusive use to one community group, increased maintenance costs due to the increase in number of assets, in ability to change with community needs, and limited opportunities for sharing ideas, resources, and social interactions between community groups.

Integrated facilities are generally in the form of a community hub which include services such as community centre or neighbourhood house, library, arts, youth, seniors, early years, and meeting room spaces. Integration can also occur in recreation pavilions and school infrastructure such as integrated kindergartens.

Co-location involves a number of facilities located within the same area. These generally include community centres/hubs, schools, kindergartens, recreation facilities, and open spaces. In recognition



of the importance of co-location, the Victorian Government has a policy that all new primary schools should have a kindergarten on-site or next-door.<sup>1</sup>

### **Flexibility and adaptability**

There is growing recognition of the need for flexible facilities that can respond to changes in community needs.<sup>2</sup> Community infrastructure must be designed and managed to be flexible and adaptable over the long-term to ensure it can change with community needs and be used by a variety of groups for many different types of activities. Key ways in which this can be achieved is through having:

- a range of shared spaces
- developing rooms with moveable wall dividers
- designing with universal design and disability access considerations
- having unprogrammed spaces (also referred to as ‘bumping spaces’ – for informal activities and socialising, both indoors and outdoors) to activate a space encourage casual interactions and the forming of social connections across different user groups.

### **Shared use**

Management of spaces can be just as important as their design and fit-out in ensuring they can be enjoyed by different groups in the community. Facilities that are under lease/license agreements for exclusive use by certain groups can be inappropriate to be shared, especially where a facility may be highly fit-for-purpose for those groups alone. For multipurpose spaces however, if they are not shared, it typically means the facility is at risk of underutilisation. Many providers are now reviewing their agreements with committees of management and tenants to share access with more user groups.

### **Partnerships and agreements**

While state and local government have historically been the providers of the majority of community infrastructure spaces, innovative partnerships between the private sectors now play an important role. Major residential developments may deliver community spaces that can be used by residents as well as the surrounding community, and some services—such as kindergarten—may occur at a privately owned and run facility, with programs subsidised by state government. In addition, private providers are delivering co-working spaces, and local governments are partnering with schools to deliver shared infrastructure outcomes.

This can reduce or even eliminate up-front costs if a facility is provided by the private sector and handed over to Council, service provider, or community group. Throughout operation, casual hire fees and lease agreements for use of Council-owned spaces can help cover ongoing costs and improve the financial viability of many services and facilities.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/land-locked-new-school-name-consultation-begins>

<sup>2</sup> Landcom, Community centre guidelines, NSW Government, 2008, viewed 2 March 2022, <https://www.landcom.com.au/assets/Publications/Statement-of-Corporate-Intent/95cff2c1fe/community-centre-guidelines.pdf>.

## **Technology**

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

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

## **Accessibility**

Access to infrastructure is a critical principle in planning and delivery, and a key focus under the 20-minute neighbourhood model. 20-minute neighbourhoods envision communities that support walkability to all, or at least most, daily needs. This requires a certain degree of population density to support this level of accessibility and ensure there is enough population to make services viable.

As such, it can be challenging to achieve in rural/regional areas. Trade-offs are therefore required to balance the efficient use of facilities and resources and the most accessible location of facilities for the greatest number of people. This is achieved by locating community infrastructure where there are strong links to public transport, bike paths, and footpaths. Co-location also plays a role, where community facilities that are co-located with other infrastructure or activity centres/retail precincts can 'draw in' people that have already travelled to the area and reduce the need for multiple trips.

## **Equity and inclusion**

Community facilities that are equitable and inclusive go beyond thinking about walkability or public transport access. An equitable and inclusive facility meets universal design standards to accommodate people regardless of their physical abilities. It considers how the services it provides can be accessed by people regardless of their level of advantage or disadvantage. It supports environments that are safe and welcoming of all genders, cultures, identities, and ages. The design process is critical to equity and inclusion – engagement with target groups should be undertaken to ensure that the facility is welcoming and inclusive of all communities that will use it.

## 3. Local context

### 3.1 Overview

The communities of Romsey and Lancefield are within the Macedon Ranges Shire which is located on the lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples. The wider area was first occupied by pastoralists from the 1830s and would soon establish a burgeoning timber industry, further buoyed by the discovery of gold in the 1850s. It was surveyed in 1851, from which time the area continued to develop with the introduction rail and then cars bringing many wealthy residents to the area from Melbourne.<sup>3</sup> While Lancefield was settled first, Romsey's rich farming land supported travellers on their way to the gold fields.<sup>4</sup>

Romsey is located approximately 65km north-west of Melbourne, approximately 80km south of Bendigo and 80km east of Ballarat. It is serviced by the Melbourne-Lancefield Road with Clarkefield being the nearest train station 15km to the south along the Melbourne-Bendigo rail line. Within the Macedon Ranges Shire, nearby Gisborne is the major urban centre in the southern part of the Shire.

It is surrounded by rolling hills and rich agricultural land, which contribute to the town's semi-rural character. The semi-rural and historic character of the town are important elements of what residents consider as definitive of the character and "feel" of this area. The town enjoys a village character of homesteads, mature trees and heritage buildings while providing a mix of contemporary cafes and services in the town centre.

As in many Victorian communities, there is a natural and ongoing tension between a desire for growth and development and the desire to retain the historical and existing character of Romsey. This has been reflected in consultation leading up to the Romsey Structure Plan, with residents desiring a higher quality and more vibrant town centre with additional facilities, more diverse housing types in the urban area, and improved transportation including pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. Though Romsey and Lancefield – which also has a number of community facilities - are a short drive from each other, residents are in favour of maintaining a rural break between the towns.<sup>5</sup>

### 3.2 Community profile

The community living in Romsey (SA2) is similar to the wider Council area across categories such as education, employment, level of advantage, and cultural diversity. It differs from the rest of the Shire in the following ways:

- Household characteristics – Romsey has fewer medium and high-density dwellings and slightly fewer lone-person households
- Fewer low-income and also fewer high-income, socio-economically advantaged households

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<sup>3</sup> Gisborne & Mount Macedon Districts Historical Society Inc. (2021), <https://www.gisbornemountmacedon.org.au/history.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Macedon Ranges Shire Council (2023), Romsey History, <https://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/See-Do/Townships/Romsey-Township#section-3>

<sup>5</sup> Macedon Ranges Shire Council (2022), Romsey Structure Plan – Emerging Options Paper, Plan2Place

Compared to the Victorian average, Romsey households are larger with more children, wealthier, have far fewer people born overseas or speaking a language other than English, more advantaged, and have lower unemployment (Table 2)

**TABLE 2: ROMSEY SA2 COMMUNITY PROFILE 2021**

Indicator	Romsey SA2	Macedon Ranges Shire	Victoria
Total population (ERP)	10,765	51,458	6,503,491
Average household size (persons per dwelling)	2.7	2.7	2.5
Medium & high-density dwellings (combined)*	1.8%	5.8%	26%
Households with children <sup>^</sup>	58.4%	59.1%	60.7%
Lone person households	18.3%	20.0%	25.9%
Median age (years)	41	43	38
Born outside of Australia	17.0%	18.4%	35.0%
Language other than English spoken at home	5.5%	6.7%	24.8%
Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	1.2%	0.9%	1.0%
Low-income households (\$650 per week or less)	12.9%	13.4%	16.4%
High income households (\$3,000 per week or more)	26.9%	31.3%	24.3%
Year 12 or equivalent completed	13.9%	13.5%	14.9%
Unemployment rate	3.0%	3.2%	5.0%
SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (2016) – lower score indicates greater disadvantage	1,048	1,060	1,010

Source: ABS Census 2021

\*Includes semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc., flat or apartment

<sup>^</sup>Includes Couple family with children and one parent family

In addition to the above, the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing 2021-2025 notes that residents of Macedon Shire are generally physically healthier and more active with lower rates of gambling and smoking compared to the Victorian average. However, the challenges for the community include high rates of harmful alcohol consumption and diagnoses of anxiety and depression, much higher than average rates of suicide compared to the rest of Victoria.

Council's Youth Strategy 2018-2028 identified the top concerns voiced by young people (aged 12-25) in the Shire. The issue with the most personal impact was mental, with the next four of five issues also closely related (body image, isolation, bullying, feeling unsafe – the fifth issue was access to public transport). Community infrastructure that is accessible, non-judgemental, and provide supportive environments for young people are key pieces of infrastructure to support younger members of the community with these challenges.

### 3.3 Forecast population

Population forecasts have been provided to SGS by Tim Nott. These are based on three residential growth scenarios established in the Romsey Structure Plan Economic Assessment. The low growth scenario forecasts the population to increase to a total of 13,993 persons for the Romsey SA2 by 2041. Under the medium and high growth scenarios population is forecast to increase to 14,485 and 15,412, respectively, with growth focused in the Romsey urban area. Scenarios are summarised in Table 3.

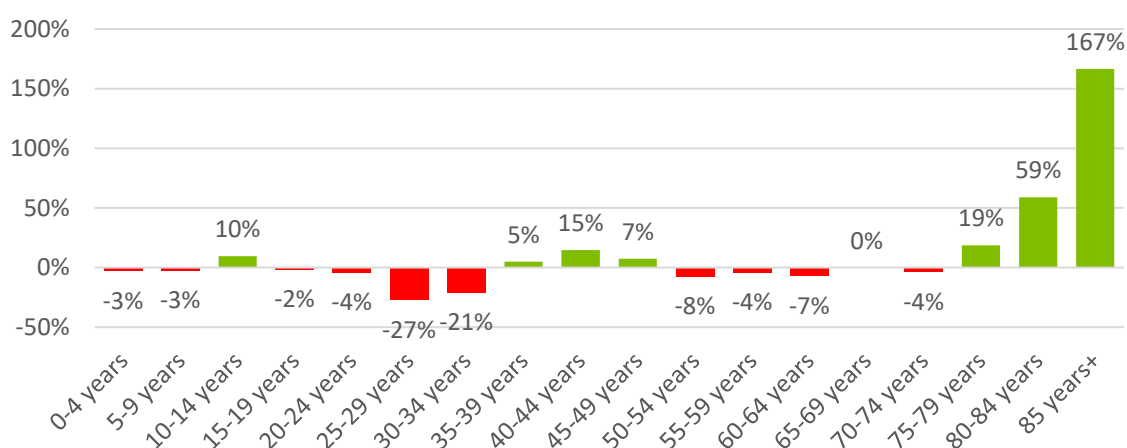
**TABLE 3: POPULATION GROWTH SCENARIOS**

Scenario	Description	Additional pop. 2021-41	Total pop. 2041
Low	Population growth rate based on that expected for the Romsey SA2 by the State Government in Victoria in Future, 2019 – around 1.4% per year over the period 2021 to 2041.	3,228	13,993
Medium	Population growth rate based on Romsey township capturing a higher share of the growth forecast for the SA2 as a whole – around 2.2% per year over the forecast period.	3,720	14,485
High	Population growth rate of around 2.8% per year over the forecast period, based on accelerated housing development, matching housing sales experienced in recent times.	4,647	15,412

Source: Tim Nott, 2023

Proportionally, the age groups that will see the largest growth compared to 2021 levels are those 75 years and older, with the 85yo+ cohort growing substantially from a very low base, indicating an ageing of the population. The 40-44yo cohort (parents and home builders segment), followed by the 10-14 cohort will see moderate growth, while the share of 25-34yo (young workforce) is forecast to decrease the most (Figure 6).

**FIGURE 6: CHANGE IN AGE COHORTS 2022-2041, ROMSEY SA2**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning, adapted from .id consulting, 2023

In real numbers, all age cohorts will see an increase under each growth scenario (Table 4). The highest population growth however will be seen across ages 40 to 59 years, and those aged 5 to 14 years old.

**TABLE 4: ROMSEY SA2 POPULATION FORECAST 2041**

5-year age groups	2021		2041 %*	2041 Number		
	Number	%		Low Scenario	Medium Scenario	High Scenario
0-4 years	678	6.3	6.1	854	884	940
5-9 years	764	7.1	6.9	966	999	1,063
10-14 years	678	6.3	6.9	966	999	1,063
15-19 years	667	6.2	6.1	854	884	940
20-24 years	495	4.6	4.4	616	637	678
25-29 years	592	5.5	4.0	560	579	616
30-34 years	710	6.6	5.2	728	753	801
35-39 years	657	6.1	6.4	896	927	986
40-44 years	667	6.2	7.1	994	1,028	1,094
45-49 years	732	6.8	7.3	1,021	1,057	1,125
50-54 years	829	7.7	7.1	994	1,028	1,094
55-59 years	754	7	6.7	938	970	1,033
60-64 years	743	6.9	6.4	896	927	986
65-69 years	614	5.7	5.7	798	826	878
70-74 years	549	5.1	4.9	686	710	755
75-79 years	344	3.2	3.8	532	550	586
80-84 years	183	1.7	2.7	378	391	416
85 years and over	97	0.9	2.4	336	348	370
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,675</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13,993</b>	<b>14,485</b>	<b>15,412</b>
Additional age groups	Number	%	%	Number	Number	Number
3yo	136	1.3	1.2	171	177	188
4yo	136	1.3	1.2	171	177	188
0-5yo	831	7.7	7.5	1,047	1,083	1,092
70yo+	1,173	10.9	13.8	1,931	1,999	2,219

Note: 2021 shares for each age group have been sourced from ABS Census data, while forecast shares have been sourced from .id consulting forecasts for the Romsey District (2036 – extrapolated here to 2041). Note that the Romsey District boundary differs somewhat to the Romsey SA2, however, age structure would be broadly consistent between the two catchment areas.

### 3.4 Stakeholder and Community Feedback

Community consultation was undertaken to inform the Romsey Structure Plan Emerging Options Paper in February and March of 2022. The aim of the Structure Plan is to provide a vision for the sustainable development of Romsey to 2050, protecting the character and environmental qualities of Romsey while planning for township growth, enlivening the town centre, strengthening the local economy and building community resilience.<sup>6</sup>

While the community generally supported the vision and objectives of the plan, community feedback including the following key desires:

- A secondary school to be provided locally in Romsey.
- A pool to be provided in Romsey.
- The library and parks were viewed positively but a wider range of sports options were desired.
- Children and young people should be involved in the design of any new recreational and/or open spaces.

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<sup>6</sup> Macedon Ranges Shire Council (2022), Romsey Structure Plan – Emerging Options Consultation Report, Final, Plan2Place

# 4. Policy context

## 4.1 Scope of review

Planning for community infrastructure is influenced by a range of key directions at the state, regional and local government level. The documents reviewed in this assessment are summarised below. A detailed policy review can be found at Appendix B.

### Victorian Government

- Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy (2016)
- Absolutely Everyone – State Disability Plan (2017-2020)
- Victoria’s Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2051

### Macedon Ranges Shire

- Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-2028
- Council Plan 2021-2031 (Year Two 2022-2023)
- Disability Action Plan 2021-2025
- Economic Development Strategy 2021-2031
- Asset Plan 2021-2031
- CREATE: Municipal Early Years Plan 2021-2025
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- Open Space Strategy, 2013
- PARTICIPATE: Positive Ageing Plan 2020-2025
- Settlement Strategy, 2011
- Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2018-2028
- ELEVATE: Youth Strategy 2018-2028
- Macedon Ranges Shire Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan

### Romsey

- Romsey Aquatic Centre Feasibility Study Final Report, 2013
- Romsey Education Review, 2018



## 4.2 Key policy themes and implications

### Community infrastructure principles for delivery

There are a number of general principles that guide effective and equitable provision of community infrastructure.

Equity is a cornerstone of both State and local policy, highlighting the need for infrastructure to be inclusive of all abilities, ages, genders, and cultures. A key way in which infrastructure can do this is through the use of universal design.

Council's Disability Action Plan 2021-2025 further outlines the need to inform the community about existing accessibility facilities and features, such as the Changing Places toilets in Gisborne (larger than standard accessible toilets to support people with high support needs and people with a disability) and working with community groups and clubs to strengthen inclusion. The Council Plan 2021-2031 seeks to optimise accessibility and usage of facilities such as the addition of a modular change room at the Gisborne Aquatic Centre.

State and local policy also emphasizes the importance of community facilities that are multipurpose and able to be used for different activities by different community groups. While this is also important for planning for urban communities, this is particularly important for regional areas, where councils spend more on facilities per person than their metropolitan counterparts.<sup>7</sup> Co-location is another key principle, with Victoria's Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2051 and the Shire's Open Space Strategy (2013) calling for the co-location of open space with other community facilities such as schools, children's centres, and halls to create 'whole-of-community hubs', and the shared use of flexible recreation facilities.

Regional communities also face increased risk of bushfire and other environmental threats, and Victoria's Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2051 highlights the need to provide access to designated, accessible climate-adapted community buildings to manage the health impacts of extreme heat and bushfire smoke.

### Education and Early Years

The Municipal Early Years Plan 2021-2025 point to the community's concern about limited availability of a wide range of early childhood education and care (ECEC) services such as childcare, kindergarten, day care and afterschool programs, clubs, groups and activities, and increasing the hours for the 3-year-old kinder program.

Council currently run eight Kindergarten programs across the Shire. The Municipal Early Years Plan 2021-2025 includes actions to engage with the not-for-profit (NFP) and private sectors to ensure sufficient access to Kindergarten services, and investigating options to increase childcare provision.

The State Government Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) identifies that Lancefield and Romsey are expected to be more severely strained than elsewhere in the Shire, with kindergarten

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<sup>7</sup> Infrastructure Victoria (2020), Infrastructure Priorities for the Regions, <https://www.infrastructurevictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Infrastructure-Priorities-for-the-Regions-December-2020-1.pdf>

provision gaps to appearing in Romsey by 2025. This advice was prepared prior to the announcement of additional funded hours for four-year-old kindergarten, and as a result, demand will surpass what was anticipated under the KISP unless government or the private market respond. Council has responded by successfully applying for a capacity building grant. We will be growing from a 25 licenced capacity service to a 99 licenced capacity service in Lancefield, due to open in 2024. The new building will also see the return of MCH services to Lancefield.

The background report for the Gisborne Futures report (2020) reports that there is a desire among the community for a secondary school to be located in Romsey or Lancefield, whereas the study conducted by DET and VSBA concluded that there is insufficient demand to support either a new 7-12 or a P-9 school.

### **Community Meeting Spaces and Libraries**

Accommodating the younger population of Romsey is another key concern within policy and of the community. The Shire's Youth Strategy (ELEVATE: Youth Strategy 2018-2028) identifies the need for more multi-purpose youth-friendly spaces that include libraries that support tech learning hubs, as well as cinemas, sports courts and gyms. This is supported at the State level with Victoria's Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2051 suggesting a focus on youth foyers and libraries with internet access. The Shire's Youth Strategy makes recommendations for programs to support youth mental health and wellbeing (such as the Live4Life program, general Shire programs, school programs, and advocating for a full-time generalist youth support worker) and for youth-friendly places and spaces generally and the library specifically. It recommends improving libraries to be places where young people want to spend time, and consulting with young people on the design and development of current and new spaces.

The Youth Strategy revealed that mental health is the most pressing concern among the Shire's younger population and made worse by a low proportion of young people being comfortable seeking out formal assistance (parents and friends are the dominant sources of support). Accordingly, 'youth spaces' were widely discussed during consultation as an important tool for providing spaces for young people to socialise and support each other. While the support of peers is important, given the above average and increasing prevalence of mental health issues in the Shire, providing better access to more formal and professional support systems that young people feel comfortable accessing is important.

Libraries have increasingly been a location where a range of community services are provided for. Mental health is one of the primary impact areas that both Public Libraries Victoria and the Goldfields Library Corporation are focused on,<sup>8</sup> recognising the role libraries can play in social connection for young people. Further, as consultation for Council's Youth Strategy found, young people felt that libraries were for children and old people and heard that the average use of libraries for youth was between once a month and never.

Given this, an important job for Council will be around rethinking the types of spaces youth are willing to engage with, whether libraries are best placed to serve this cohort, and if so, how they are designed and implemented to be a desirable 'youth space'. Youth services and the libraries did a consultation

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<sup>8</sup> State Library Victoria and Public Libraries Victoria (2021), Libraries for Health and Wellbeing, A strategic framework for Victorian public libraries towards 2024, [https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/LFHAWB-vFIN-web\\_0.pdf](https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/LFHAWB-vFIN-web_0.pdf); Goldfields Library Corporation, Goldfields Library Strategy 2021-2025, [https://www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Library%20Plan%202021-25-web\\_0.pdf](https://www.ncgrl.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Library%20Plan%202021-25-web_0.pdf)

with young people in 2019, which made a number of recommendations about making libraries more inviting/engaging to young people.

### Arts and cultural facilities

The Shire's Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-2028 identifies increasing demand for new arts and cultural spaces and events in Gisborne and across the Shire, however this does not specifically mention a role for Romsey. The Strategy notes that the key Cultural Facilities Precincts are Woodend, Hanging Rock, and Kyneton, with Objective 6.1 calling for Kyneton Town Hall to be promoted as "the premier cultural venue in the shire".

### Recreation

Council undertook a Romsey Aquatic Centre Feasibility Study (2013) to explore the potential for an aquatic centre. The findings from this studying concluded that the forecast population within the Romsey catchment was significantly short of being able to justify the costs to Council for such a facility (construction, operation, and maintenance). With limited population there is a significant risk to Council and the community that the aquatics facility would be unviable. There are also several pools within close proximity of Romsey namely, Gisborne Aquatics Facility and Lancefield seasonal outdoor pool.

The Open Space Strategy (2013) is currently being updated, however states that open space should be widely available and provide for social / family recreation spaces in addition to off-road trails, sports facilities and conservation reserves. The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 places a focus on continual investment to existing infrastructure to create supportive, low-cost environments for physical activity, including continuous and accessible paths of travel to key destinations. The need for continuous investment is mirrored in the Asset Plan 2021-2031 as recreation facilities are among the facilities that receive the most requests for maintenance.

It is worth considering that there is a body of research that has noted a shift away from organised and competitive sport towards more informal activities. Investment in future passive and active recreation infrastructure should consider this trend when deciding on the types of facilities and spaces to cater for.<sup>9</sup>

Specific projects identified across recreation policy include:

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<sup>9</sup> For more on this topic, see:

Roy Morgan Research (2017), Aussies are losing their competitive spirit for sport, viewed 2 March 2022, <http://www.roymorgan.com/findings/7182-decline-in-competitive-sports-participation-australia-december-2016-201703200905>

Boston Consulting Group (2017), Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport 2017, prepared for Australian Government, 2017, viewed 2 March 2022, [https://www.sportaus.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/660395/Intergenerational\\_Review\\_of\\_Australian\\_Sport\\_2017.pdf](https://www.sportaus.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/660395/Intergenerational_Review_of_Australian_Sport_2017.pdf)

CSIRO (2013), The Future of Australia Sport: Megatrends shaping the sports sector over coming decades, Australian Government, viewed 2 March 2022, <https://publications.csiro.au/rpr/download?pid=csiro:EP131275&dsid=DS1>

A Taylor (2019), "Tennis is not booming": Why Australians are shunning competitive sports,' Sydney Morning Herald, 26 May 2019, <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/tennis-is-not-booming-why-australians-are-shunning-competitive-sports-20190523-p51qip.html>

City of Monash (2021), 'Asset Plan 2021-2031', [https://hdp-au-prod-app-mon-shape-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/7416/3790/3125/Asset\\_Plan\\_2021-2031.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-mon-shape-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/7416/3790/3125/Asset_Plan_2021-2031.pdf)

City of Monash (2021), Draft Asset Plan 2021-2031, City of Monash, viewed 2 March 2022, [https://hdp-au-prod-app-mon-shape-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/8816/3046/8994/Draft\\_Asset\\_Plan\\_-\\_V4.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-mon-shape-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/8816/3046/8994/Draft_Asset_Plan_-_V4.pdf)

- Establishing a social family recreation space in Romsey
- Establish outdoor fitness equipment at Five Mile Creek
- Support improvements to Romsey Park including upgrades to pavilions to provide additional social room spaces (Romsey Park Sports Precinct Master Plan 2023)

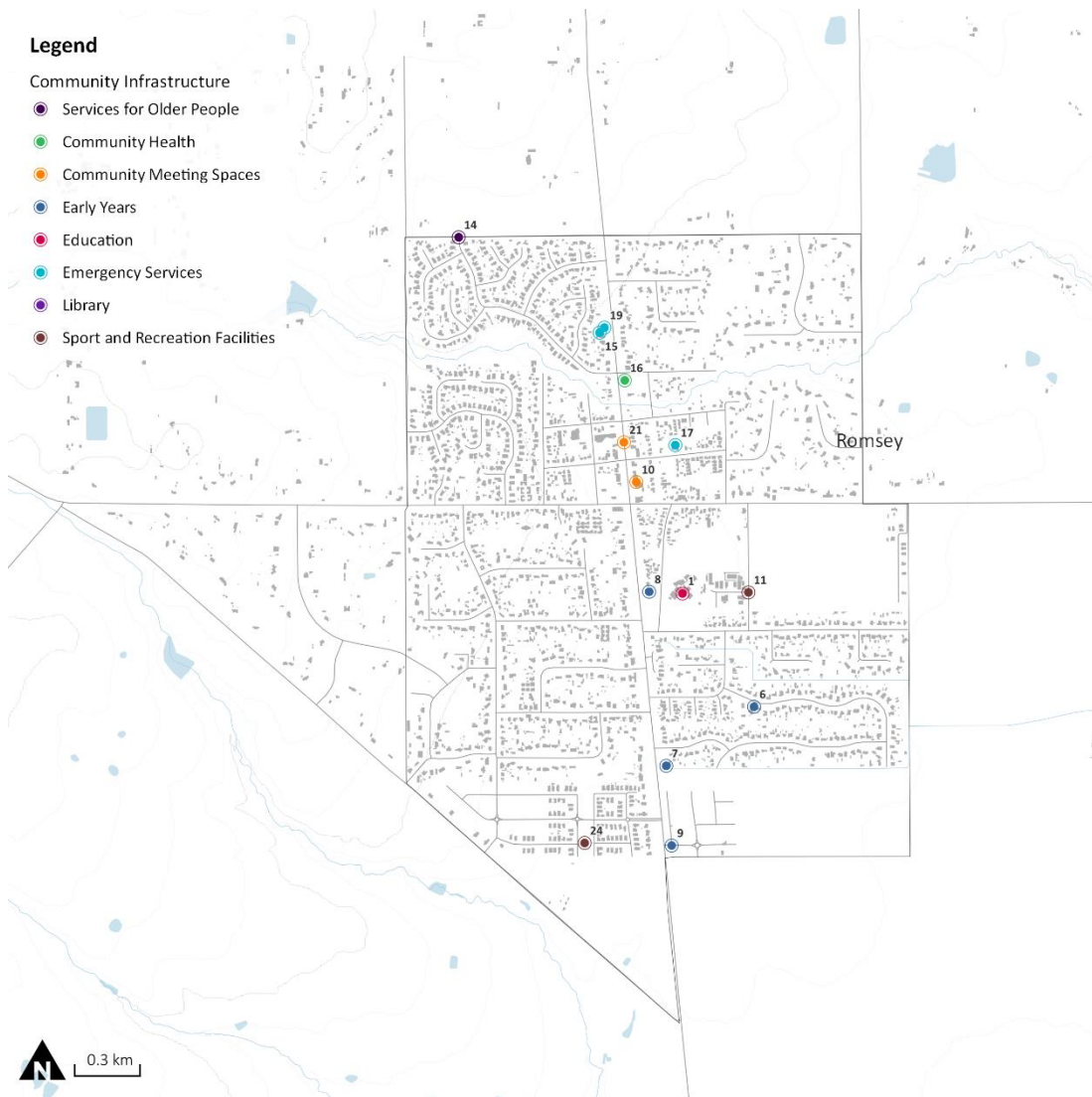
# 5. Needs assessment

## 5.1 Overview

A review of existing and planned community infrastructure within the SA2 of Romsey has been undertaken to understand the current supply of facilities and services, and how this compares with forecast demand. Discussion of findings and recommendations focus on implications for the Romsey community in order to inform the development of the Structure Plan.

Most existing infrastructure is concentrated in the townships of Romsey and Lancefield (Figure 7 and Figure 8). All infrastructure that falls within the Romsey SA2 study area is listed in Table 5.

**FIGURE 7: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN ROMSEY TOWNSHIP (UCL)**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023)

**FIGURE 8: COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN LANCEFIELD**



Source: SGS Economics and Planning (2023)

**TABLE 5: EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN ROMSEY AND LANCEFIELD**

Facility #	Facility name	Facility #	Facility name
1	Romsey Primary School	15	Romsey Ambulance Station
2	Lancefield Neighbourhood House	16	Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health Centre
3	Bolinda Primary School (not shown on map)	17	Romsey CFA
4	St Mary's Primary School	18	Lifeline Medical Centre Romsey (not shown on map)
5	Lancefield Primary School	19	Romsey Police Station
6	Romsey Early Education Centre	20	Parkwood Green medical centre Romsey (not shown on map)
7	Romsey Early Learning	21	Romsey Mechanics Institute
8	Romsey & Lancefield Maternal and Child Health Centre, Romsey Kindergarten	22	Bolinda Hall (not shown on map)
9	Little Stones Early Learning	23	Lancefield Mechanics Institute
10	Romsey Hub	24	Parkside Avenue Reserve
11	Romsey Park Recreation Reserve*	25	Lancefield Memorial Swimming Pool
11	Romsey Recreation Centre*	26	Lancefield Bowling Club
12	Lancefield Kindergarten (New)	27	Lancefield Recreation Reserve
13	Lancefield Early Education Centre	28	Lancefield CFA
14	Aged care (Proposed)	29	Lancefield Police Station

\*These facilities are at the same address

The Romsey SA2 is well-serviced across all categories of community infrastructure with the only category not found within the area being a secondary school and Arts and Cultural facilities (Table 6). Arts and Cultural facilities are concentrated around Kyneton with additional facilities found in Macedon and Mount Macedon.

The Romsey SA2 contains 29 facilities providing 46 services which are mostly located in the established urban areas of Romsey and Lancefield, and two facilities located in Bolinda, 9km to the south of Romsey (Government Primary School and a Multi-purpose community centre (Level 1)).

Both Romsey and Lancefield are serviced by at least one primary school, childcare and playgroup, multi-purpose community centre, pavilion and outdoor recreation facility, lawn bowls, police station, and CFA. Only Romsey has a library, an indoor recreation centre, and a Maternal Child Health (MCH) facility,

but this will change with the inclusion of MCH at the new Lancefield Kindergarten site, opening in 2024 adjacent to the primary school. The quantity of infrastructure can be found in Table 6.

Facilities not included in this report but that still offer services to the community include two medical centres in Romsey and a number of private gym/fitness facilities.

**TABLE 6: EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE WITHIN ROMSEY SA2 (INCLUDES LANCEFIELD AND BOLINDA)**

Facility	Existing Infrastructure
Government primary schools	3
Catholic primary schools	1
Kindergarten (rooms)	6 (+3 in 2024 with the opening of the new Lancefield Kindergarten and a newly-funded service at Little Stones Learning Centre)
Childcare	4
Playgroup	3
Maternal and child health	1
Services for older people	(+ 1 future facility)
Community health	1 (+ 2 private medical centres in Romsey)
Emergency services, law and order, hospitals	5 (1 CFA and 1 Police Station each in Romsey and Lancefield, 1 Ambulance Station in Romsey)
Community meeting spaces / Multipurpose Community Centre	10 (includes 3 Level 1 multi-purpose community centres)
Neighbourhood House Service	2
Libraries	1
Indoor aquatic / leisure / fitness centre	1 (outdoor)
Indoor recreation	1
Outdoor recreation facilities	12



## **5.2 Limitations**

Through this assessment, it was identified that some of the existing community infrastructure in Romsey – older halls and mechanics institutes—is ageing and not necessarily fit for contemporary community needs.

Moreover, there were significant gaps in the information provided around the utilisation, condition, accessibility, and fitness-for-purpose of existing infrastructure. Further strategic work to understand these aspects would enable a coordinated, whole-of-Shire approach to providing and managing community infrastructure over the long term via a strategy/plan. This will enable the implementation of the recommendations of this report, which focus on increased and improved use of existing infrastructure to meet community needs.

## 5.3 Education

### Existing infrastructure

There are five schools in the Romsey SA2, including three government primary schools and one primary Catholic school. These are distributed across Romsey and Lancefield. In addition to these, Candlebark School is an Independent school (grades P-7) just west of the Romsey township, and is shown as having waiting lists for most grades.<sup>10</sup> Candlebark also has a sibling school just outside the SA2 in Macedon – the Alice Miller School.

The nearest government secondary school is in Gisborne, a 25-minute drive to the south-west, and its catchment includes the Romsey township. However, the broader SA2 is split between 5 secondary school catchments – the Kyneton, Gisborne, Wallan, Sunbury, and Broadford Secondary Colleges. The nearest Government specialist school is further west of Gisborne in Bullengarook.

**TABLE 7: EXISTING EDUCATION FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Government Primary School				
#	Facility	Location	Ownership	Additional information
1	Romsey Primary School	Romsey	DoE	P to 6
3	Bolinda Primary School	Bolinda	DoE	P to 6
5	Lancefield Primary School	Lancefield	DoE	P to 6
Catholic Primary School				
4	St Mary's Primary School	Lancefield	Private	

### Forecast demand for infrastructure

The question of need for a secondary school has been a key topic of previous studies for the area, as well as in consultation feedback. The 2018 review of secondary education in Romsey from the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) and the Department of Education (DoE; formerly Department of Education and Training) concluded that there would not be enough secondary school-aged students to support the delivery of a quality senior curriculum.<sup>11</sup> It outlined next steps for secondary school education in the area, including monitoring population growth and supporting transition arrangements and transport access from the Romsey area. The report also suggests that capital works at Romsey Primary School could enrich the curriculum,<sup>12</sup> while leaving the option for the addition of years 7-9 at the site further in future. These capital works on the P-6 facilities were completed in early 2020.

Based on the demand assessment (Table 8), none of the growth scenarios necessitates supply of an entire additional school of any type. Under all growth scenarios, there is only demand for around half of a Government secondary school. Based on the VSBA/DoE figures from the 2018 report that “around

<sup>10</sup> Candlebark School (2023), <https://www.candlebark.info/>

<sup>11</sup> Victorian School Building Authority (2018), Key Findings: Romsey Education Review, <https://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/build-amp-plan/planning-for-our-future/romsey-structure-plan/romsey-structure-plan-vsba-key-findings-romsey-education-review.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Victorian School Building Authority (2022), Romsey Primary School, <https://www.schoolbuildings.vic.gov.au/romsey-primary-school>

450 students is needed at Years 7-9, or 600-700 at Years 7-10, to generate the 300+ students required at Years 11-12". Based on the forecast population growth, the future population would also be unable to support the provision of years 7-9 within one of the existing primary schools.

If a Government secondary school were to be provided in Romsey, catchment boundaries would likely need to be redrawn and the school would take in enrolments from the other existing catchment areas (). In addition to the government secondary schools in Kyneton, Gisborne, Wallan, Sunbury, and Broadford, a new government secondary school is planned for Wallan South according to the Precinct Structure Plan background documents, which will be located within a 20-30 min drive from Romsey.

As noted in the 2018 VSBA/DoE report, too many schools in a geographical area can undermine schools' viability, and "risks narrowing the range of programs being offered to students." Ultimately, it is highly unlikely that there is sufficient demand for government secondary schools in the broader region (around Lancefield, Romsey, and Riddells Creek) to support a new secondary school in Romsey, without potentially undermining other schools – particularly Kyneton High School. Even with higher growth forecast for Romsey and Gisborne than what was anticipated prior to the development of Structure Plans for both townships, Macedon Ranges Shire is still only likely to support two secondary schools. The existing secondary school locations in Gisborne and Kyneton means that they achieve a north-south geographical spread, are located in the shire's largest townships, on the freeway corridor, and train lines for accessibility. It is therefore highly difficult to justify favouring provision of a secondary school in Romsey.

While it is ultimately the decision of the State Government whether (and where) new government schools are provided, based on the current forecasts scenarios it remains highly unlikely that Romsey would be provided with a partial or full government secondary school.

Small gaps emerge for Catholic primary and secondary schools, however they are unlikely to support provision of new schools from Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS). Moreover, enrolment numbers from recent years suggest that some Catholic primary and secondary schools have spare capacity. Based on this, additional demand for Catholic education is likely to be accommodated at existing schools.

Regarding tertiary education, both TAFEs and Universities are typically located in highly accessible urban centres where they are able to effectively service large populations. There are currently none in the study area, and the population growth scenarios would not necessitate provision of any tertiary education facilities locally. Moreover, the current Labor government has committed to new TAFE campuses in both Sunbury and Melton, which would significantly improve access to higher education and training opportunities for young people in the community.<sup>13</sup>

**TABLE 8: FORECAST DEMAND FOR EDUCATION FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Education - Facility/Service	Provision rate	Current Supply	Growth scenario	Demand	Gap / Surplus
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<sup>13</sup> Victorian Labor (2022), 'Backing TAFE for the skills Victoria needs', <https://www.danandrews.com.au/news/backing-tafe-for-the-skills-victoria-needs>

Primary Schools					
Government Primary School	1 school per 9,000 residents	3	Low (2041)	1.2	1.8
			Medium (2041)	1.6	1.4
			High (2041)	1.6	1.4
Catholic Primary School	1 school per 5,000 households	1	Low (2041)	1.0	0.0
			Medium (2041)	1.1	-0.1
			High (2041)	1.1	-0.1
Secondary Schools					
Government Secondary School	1 school per 27,500 residents	0	Low (2041)	0.5	-0.5
			Medium (2041)	0.5	-0.5
			High (2041)	0.6	-0.6
Catholic Secondary School	1 school per 16,000 households	0	Low (2041)	0.3	-0.3
			Medium (2041)	0.3	-0.3
			High (2041)	0.4	-0.4
Government Special Schools					
Government Specialist School	1 school per 50,000 residents	0	Low (2041)	0.3	-0.3
			Medium (2041)	0.3	-0.3
			High (2041)	0.3	-0.3
Tertiary education					
TAFE	1 per 150,000 residents	0	Low (2041)	0.1	-0.1
			Medium (2041)	0.1	-0.1
			High (2041)	0.1	-0.1
University	1 per 2 municipalities	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

### Recommendation(s)

- Government secondary schools: Continue to engage with the Department of Education regarding improved secondary school transition support and transport from Romsey.

## 5.4 Early Years

### Existing infrastructure

There are currently four Long Day Care (LDC) providers in the SA2 – three in Romsey and one in Lancefield. Of these, three currently offer government-funded kindergarten programs, and the fourth (Little Stones Early Learning Centre) has applied for funding to provide a Kindergarten service from 2024. The capacity of the three existing privately-run services is unknown; it has been assumed that they each have one room for kindergarten program provision, as a conservative estimate. In addition, Council runs two kindergarten programs in the area – one in Romsey and one in Lancefield. The Shire-run kindergarten program in Lancefield will be a new 3-room facility, opening 2024 at the Lancefield Primary School to replace the existing Lancefield Kindergarten.

There are three playgroups across Romsey and Lancefield. These are operating out of kindergartens and community meeting spaces. There is only one Toy Library in the region, which is located at the Romsey Hub with the library and neighbourhood house.

In relation to Maternal Child Health (MCH) facilities and services, Romsey has one MCH facility (the Romsey & Lancefield Maternal and Child Health Centre) which is located in the same location as the Romsey Kindergarten. Lancefield residents will also have access to MCH services in the new Kindergarten facility from 2024.

**TABLE 9: EXISTING EARLY YEARS FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Kindergarten				
#	Facility	Location	Ownership	Additional information
6	Romsey Early Education Centre	Romsey	Private	Henry Education Pty. Ltd. – 3-year-old Kindergarten only, assumed one room; planning to add 4-year-old service from 2024.
7	Romsey Early Learning	Romsey	Private	Yarra Valley Education Pty Ltd – 3-year-old and 4-year-old service, assumed one room.
8	Romsey Kindergarten	Romsey	MRSC	60 places/ 2 rooms
12	Lancefield Kindergarten	Lancefield	MRSC	25 places/ 1 room (currently); 90 places/ 3 rooms (new facility, from 2024)
13	Lancefield Early Education Centre	Lancefield	Private	Assumed one room.
Childcare (Long day care)				
6	Romsey Early Education Centre	Romsey	Private	Henry Education Pty. Ltd.
7	Romsey Early Learning	Romsey	Private	Yarra Valley Education Pty Ltd
9	Little Stones Early Learning	Romsey	Private	
13	Lancefield Early Education Centre	Lancefield	Private	
Playgroup				
10	Romsey Hub	Romsey	MRSC	Smalltalk Playgroup (at the Romsey Community Hub)
10	Romsey Hub	Romsey	MRSC	Romsey Playgroup

12	Lancefield Kindergarten	Lancefield	Community	Currently operating from a standalone building, and will be relocated to the new Kindergarten site from 2024.
<b>Maternal and Child Health</b>				
8	Romsey & Lancefield Maternal and Child Health Centre	Romsey	MRSC	
12	Lancefield Kindergarten (New)	Lancefield	MRSC	Opening 2024.
<b>Toy Library</b>				
10	Romsey Hub	Romsey	MRSC	

### Forecast demand for infrastructure

Below is an overview of the forecast demand for early years infrastructure. For further details see Table 10.

#### *Kindergarten*

The State Government Kindergarten Reform has mandated that 15 hours of three-year-old kindergarten and 30 hours of four-year-old kindergarten will be available within the next ten years (doubling existing four-year-old services and the introduction of a new service for three-year-olds).<sup>14</sup> This will put significant pressure on the delivery the kindergarten services and existing infrastructure across the state. Macedon Shire Council has advised that they are already providing 15 hours of three-year-old kindergarten and will be increasing services over the next five to 10 years to meet the four-year-old service requirements. They have also noted that services in the Romsey area are currently over capacity.

Based on SGS provision ratios (which accounts for changes in service reforms) there are minimal service provision gaps for the low and medium growth scenarios (-0.6 and -0.9 rooms respectively), and a gap of less than two rooms appears in the high growth scenario. Should either of the private LDCs with kindergarten programs have greater capacity than what was assumed, this gap would be smaller, or potentially disappear. The introduction of a kindergarten program at the Little Stones Early Learning centre will also address any gap.

Council had previously resolved to maintain (not expand) its existing footprint in the Shire in kindergarten service provision, however this was prior to the state government’s announcement of reforms to expand four-year-old services to 30 hours. Council is now re-considering its role in the service. It will be important to ensure that a mix of service providers can continue to operate in each community to meet the needs of different families and children. Given the high supply of services in the SA2 (including two Council-run services), Council need not provide any additional kindergarten infrastructure under the low, medium, or high growth scenario.

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<sup>14</sup> State Government of Victoria (2023), ‘Give your child the best start’, <https://www.vic.gov.au/give-your-child-the-best-start-in-life>

It should be noted that even with the hard infrastructure (rooms) in place, the early childhood education and care sector is facing workforce shortages, and there may be challenges in recruiting the staff to deliver the number of services required to meet demand. This is an even greater challenge in areas such as Macedon Ranges Shire where housing costs are high, and may explain some of the current workforce pressures felt by services in the Romsey area. Council should monitor demand and engage with providers and sector representatives to better understand these challenges and ensure that facilities are able to run services to their capacity to meet demand.

### *Childcare*

Childcare services are run and managed by the private market. Based on current supply, across all growth scenarios there is sufficient supply of childcare centres. Council can also engage with these services to support their integration of a kindergarten program, as is already in place at some centres.

### *Playgroups*

Playgroups can be run by Council, private and or not for profit sector. Based on the three programs that are currently running in the Romsey area, there will be sufficient supply through to the high growth scenario.

Playgroups can be integrated into other community infrastructure if they have the required children friendly attributes/multipurpose spaces. Spaces can also typically accommodate multiple groups.

### *Maternal Child Health*

The Romsey SA2 has one MCH facility, and a second will open in 2024 with the delivery of the new Lancefield Kindergarten facility. Based on forecast demand, these facilities will provide sufficient capacity to accommodate the high growth scenario.

While MCH facilities and services can be a standalone service, they benefit from being integrated with other early years services such as kindergarten and other allied health services.

### *Toy Library*

There is currently one toy library within the Romsey area that is integrated into the Romsey Hub. While increased population will put additional pressure on this service, it is forecast that this service will be adequate. However, if community providers do note unmet demand for the service, an additional/expanded service could likely be accommodating within existing early years facilities, or at multipurpose community spaces.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Based on the forecast demand for early years facilities in the Romsey SA2, the following is recommended:

- Kindergarten: Continue to monitor demand and engage with existing private providers to support them in increasing provision and addressing any workforce challenges, particularly under the higher growth scenarios.

**TABLE 10: FORECAST DEMAND FOR EARLY YEARS FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Early Years – Facility/Service	Provision rate	Current supply	Growth scenario	Demand	Gap / Surplus
<b>Kindergarten</b>					
Kindergarten (3+4-year-old) per room	Total rooms	9*	Low (2041)	7.6	-0.6
			Medium (2041)	7.9	-0.9
			High (2041)	8.4	-1.4
<b>Childcare</b>					
Childcare Centre - Long Day Care	1 facility per 9,000 residents	4	Low (2041)	1.6	2.4
			Medium (2041)	1.6	2.4
			High (2041)	1.7	2.3
<b>Other</b>					
Playgroup	2 groups per 1,000 children aged 0-5	3	Low (2041)	2.3	0.7
			Medium (2041)	2.4	0.6
			High (2041)	2.5	0.5
Maternal and Child Health (MCH)	1 dual facility (2 rooms) 16,000 residents	2+	Low (2041)	0.9	1.1
			Medium (2041)	0.9	1.1
			High (2041)	1.0	1.0
Toy Library	1 facility per 25,000 residents	1	Low (2041)	0.6	0.4
			Medium (2041)	0.6	0.4
			High (2041)	0.6	0.4

\*Based on the assumption that each private provider currently has one room for Kindergarten programs, in a conservative estimate, and with the inclusion of the 2 additional rooms at the Lancefield Kindergarten, opening 2024, and one room at Little Stones Early Learning Centre, also likely commencing provision in 2024.

\*Includes provision of the new MCH service at Lancefield Kindergarten, opening 2024.



## 5.5 Services for older people

### Existing infrastructure

In relation to seniors' centres, there are no dedicated seniors' centres located within the Romsey SA2. Older people can however access existing services and programs in community facilities (e.g library, neighbourhood house, and meeting room spaces).

A new residential aged care facility is proposed in Romsey (a permit has been issued but the facility is not constructed), which will provide an expanded range of options for residents. The new facility will provide 120 beds, though the split between low and high care is unknown.

While Council is no longer a Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) provider, there are numerous other CHSP services in Romsey – including Intereach, Benetas, and Central Rural Highlands Health. Karinya Homes also provides services to older persons as an assisted pension level facility. These services are not benchmarked in the same manner as seniors' centres and residential aged care facilities, but rather directly provided on an as-needed basis.

**TABLE 11: EXISTING SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN ROMSEY SA2**

Residential Aged Care				
#	Facility	Location	Ownership	Additional information
14	<i>Proposed Aged care</i>	Romsey	Private	120

### Forecast demand for infrastructure

#### *Seniors' centres*

The Romsey SA2 currently has no dedicated seniors' facilities, with the nearest facilities in Riddells Creek and Macedon. Based on the provision ratios, there is some demand for a meeting space for seniors. Best practice indicates that these facilities should be integrated within boarder facilities, rather than the standalone centres that were provided historically. Council should consider if there are current existing facilities that may be able to accommodate seniors' groups.

#### *Residential aged care facilities*

The demand for Residential Aged Care is forecast to be 68 total beds in the low growth scenario, and 70 and 75 total beds for the medium and high growth scenarios respectively. With the delivery of the proposed facility, which includes 120 beds, much of this demand is likely to be addressed, dependent on how many low- and high-level beds are supplied. In addition, there are five aged care facilities that are planned or being developed in Gisborne. These additional facilities will accommodate demand from a number of other Shire townships, including Romsey.

### Recommendation(s)

Based on the forecast demand for seniors' facilities in the Romsey SA2, the following is recommended:

- Seniors' facilities: Review existing community facilities to investigate how they can be used to support seniors' groups (e.g. a meeting room dedicated to seniors at a specific time during the week for them to gather, socialise and connect).
- Residential aged care: Continue to support the allocation of residential aged care within the Shire, including in Romsey.

**TABLE 12: FORECAST DEMAND FOR SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN ROMSEY SA2**

Services for older people	Provision rate	Current supply	Growth scenario	Demand	Gap / Surplus
Seniors Groups Facilities - (within designated Multi-Purpose Community Centre): 1 large multi-purpose meeting space	1 facility per 30,000 residents	0	Low (2041)	0.5	-0.5
			Medium (2041)	0.5	-0.5
			High (2041)	0.5	-0.5
Residential Aged Care - Low Care (44 low-level beds)*	44 beds per 1,000 residents aged 70+	0	Low (2041)	68	-68
			Medium (2041)	70	-70
			High (2041)	75	-75
Residential Aged Care - High Care (44 high-level beds)*	44 beds per 1,000 residents aged 70+	0	Low (2041)	68	-68
			Medium (2041)	70	-70
			High (2041)	75	-75

\* The current supply of residential aged care facilities does not reflect the additional proposed facilities, which would result in an additional 120 beds (unknown if low or high care)

## 5.6 Arts and cultural facilities

### Existing infrastructure

There are currently no arts and cultural facilities in Romsey. The majority of the Shire’s arts and cultural facilities are concentrated in and around Kyneton – a 25-minute drive to the north-west.

### Forecast demand for infrastructure

There are gaps in community arts facilities across all scenarios and very small gaps for community arts centres, noting the absence of any dedicated facilities in the Romsey area (Table 13). Smaller community arts facilities (where the gap is moderate, between -1.6 and -1.7 facilities across all growth scenarios) are often spaces within other facilities such as multi-purpose community centres, libraries, neighbourhood houses, or even schools.

There may be opportunities to integrate these services within existing and planned facilities in Romsey and Lancefield. The Romsey Mechanics Institute and the Lancefield Mechanics Institute and other flexible, multi-purpose spaces can support smaller-scale arts activities such as craft groups, learning courses, and dance groups. Access to wet spaces (rooms with taps/sinks) and storage are important to support these groups.

There is no requirement for a new dedicated centre under any of the scenarios, and the existing and planned facilities elsewhere in the Shire (including the new Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct) can host more large-scale events and programs. Regional arts centres are benchmarked at the municipal level, and are therefore more strategically provided rather than triggered by local communities. Moreover, these are more appropriately located in Kyneton, which will continue to function as the arts and cultural hub for the region, as designated in policy.

In addition, the Structure Plan presents an opportunity to incorporate public art that reflects local character and promotes a sense of identity and pride.

### Recommendation(s)

- Ensure existing multipurpose community facilities integrate spaces that can support arts and cultural activities through the inclusion of wet spaces and storage.

**TABLE 13: FORECAST DEMAND FOR ARTS AND CULTURAL FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Arts and cultural facilities	Provision rate	Current supply	Growth scenario	Demand	Gap / Surplus
Community Arts Facility	1 facility per 9,000 residents	0	Low (2041)	1.6	-1.6
			Medium (2041)	1.6	-1.6
			High (2041)	1.7	-1.7
Community Arts Centre		0	Low (2041)	0.3	-0.3
			Medium (2041)	0.3	-0.3

	1 facility per 50,000 residents		High (2041)	0.3	-0.3
Regional Arts Centre*	1 facility per municipality	0	Low (2041)	NA	NA
			Medium (2041)	NA	NA
			High (2041)	NA	NA

*\*this facility is benchmarked only at the municipal level, rather than for individual communities*

## 5.7 Community Meeting Spaces

### Existing infrastructure

There are five facilities in the Romsey SA2 with community meeting spaces. These range from smaller rooms as in the Romsey Library, to single room halls such as the Bolinda Community Hall and larger facilities with multiple spaces such as the Lancefield and Romsey Mechanics Institutes, hosting everything from community events and functions to groups such as the CWA Romsey/Lancefield Social Group and Carol's Line Dancing. More formal adult education services and other social activities are supported through the Neighbourhood House Service in the Romsey Hub and the Neighbourhood House in Lancefield.

In addition, both Romsey and Lancefield have a men's shed, and Romsey also has a scout hall. Unlike multipurpose facilities, these are for dedicated use by certain groups rather than the broader community.

Similarly, there are two sports pavilions in the SA2. One is located at the Romsey Recreation Reserve and one in Lancefield at the Lancefield Recreation Reserve. Council does not have a lease arrangement with sporting clubs to share these facilities with the general community outside of club use therefore they have been excluded as community meeting spaces. It should also be noted that the Romsey Sports Precinct Master Plan includes the upgrade and inclusion of new social rooms within the AFL and Netball Pavilion.

**TABLE 14: EXISTING COMMUNITY MEETING SPACES FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Meeting Space				
#	Facility	Location	Ownership	Notes
10	Romsey Hub	Romsey	MRSC	Meeting Space - Small (1-20 people)
11	Romsey Recreation Centre	Romsey	MRSC	The centre has several rooms available for hire. 1 x small – medium room (51-100 people) 1 x large room (200+ people) Taken together, this facility qualifies as a <b>Multi-purpose community centre – Level 1</b>
21	Romsey Mechanics Institute	Romsey	MRSC	Managed by Committee of Management Has multiple rooms, a kitchen, stage, and can accommodate 200 patrons. Taken together, this facility qualifies as a <b>Multi-purpose community centre – Level 1</b>
23	Lancefield Mechanics Institute	Lancefield	MRSC	Managed by Committee of Management The facilities consist of a Main Hall + Supper Room + Commercial Kitchen and an Annex area + Kitchenette at the rear of the complex along with the common areas – Foyer and Toilet Taken together, this facility qualifies as a <b>Multi-purpose community centre – Level 1</b>
22	Bolinda Hall	Bolinda	MRSC	Managed by Committee of Management Meeting Space - Medium to Large (101-200 people), includes a kitchen.

Neighbourhood House Service				
10	Romsey Hub	Romsey	MRSC	
2	Lancefield Neighbourhood House	Lancefield	Community	

### Forecast demand for infrastructure

Based on the current supply of 10 meeting spaces across five facilities, there is a shortfall of medium-sized rooms, reaching nearly two rooms in the high-growth scenario. For small and large meeting rooms, there is a slight surplus, and when viewing multipurpose centres rather than individual rooms, the SA2 is in surplus under all scenarios. This suggests that any growth in demand can likely be balanced across the existing spaces. For some spaces, this might require slight changes to their fit-out or configuration to make them more flexible, e.g. through incorporation of dividing walls. Council can also review the utilisation of the existing rooms and potential changes to hiring policies (i.e. rates and the booking system) or the location of different programs/activities to maximise use of each space.

Moreover, some dedicated use facilities such as scout halls and men’s sheds could be converted in future to accommodate broader community use.

The Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health Centre in Romsey offers youth services, but there are no other youth-dedicated spaces in the SA2. Given that current best practice seeks to avoid inefficient standalone facilities, and that any dedicated youth spaces and higher-order services would likely be better located in Gisborne (the largest and most accessible centre in the Shire), demand for youth spaces should be addressed within the existing spaces. This includes at the Romsey Library, which is discussed in the next section.

### Recommendation(s)

- Community meeting spaces: Review utilisation, hiring policies, and the design/fit-out of the existing multipurpose spaces to ensure use can be maximised.

Youth facilities: Engage with young people and review existing community meeting spaces to see if they can be used to better address the needs of young people..

**TABLE 15: FORECAST DEMAND FOR COMMUNITY MEETING FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Community Meeting Spaces - Facility/Service	Provision rate	Current Supply	Growth scenario	Demand	Gap / Surplus
<b>Meeting Spaces</b>					
Meeting Space - Small (1-20 people)*	1 facility per 4,000 residents	4	Low (2041)	3.5	0.5
			Medium (2041)	3.6	0.4
			High (2041)	3.9	0.1
	1 facility per 8,000 residents	2	Low (2041)	1.7	0.3
			Medium (2041)	1.8	0.2

Meeting Space - Small to Medium (21-50 people)*			High (2041)	1.9	0.1
Meeting Space - Medium (51-100 people)	1 facility per 8,000 residents	0	Low (2041)	1.7	-1.7
			Medium (2041)	1.8	-1.8
			High (2041)	1.9	-1.9
Meeting Space - Medium to Large (101-200 people)	1 facility per 8,000 residents	3	Low (2041)	1.7	1.3
			Medium (2041)	1.8	1.2
			High (2041)	1.9	1.1
Meeting Space - Large (>200 people)	1 facility per 20,000 residents	1	Low (2041)	0.7	0.3
			Medium (2041)	0.7	0.3
			High (2041)	0.8	0.2
<b>Youth Spaces</b>					
Youth Space (as part of Level 1 multi-purpose community centre)	1 facility per 8,000 residents	0	Low (2041)	1.7	-1.7
			Medium (2041)	1.8	-1.8
			High (2041)	1.9	-1.9
<b>Neighbourhood House</b>					
Neighbourhood House Service	1 facility per 15,000 residents	2	Low (2041)	0.9	1.1
			Medium (2041)	1.0	1.0
			High (2041)	1.0	1.0
<b>Community Centres</b>					
Multi-Purpose Community Centre – Level 1	1 facility per 9,000 residents	3	Low (2041)	1.6	1.4
			Medium (2041)	1.6	1.4
			High (2041)	1.7	1.3

\*The three Multi-purpose community centres have been counted across multiple facility types in the forecast demand assessment, including its individual room provision (Meeting Spaces) and overall as a Multi-Purpose Community Centre – Level 1.

## 5.8 Libraries

### Existing infrastructure

There is one library facility in the Romsey SA2, located in Romsey. This facility is located within the Romsey Hub and has been redeveloped to be integrated with other spaces and services including a Neighbourhood House, playgroups, MCH (temporarily housed here, usually located at the Kindergarten), the toy library, hireable meeting rooms, and a Council customer service centre. The library service is provided by Goldfields Library Corporation.

Consultation with Goldfields confirms that this library is much more modernised than the nearby library in Gisborne, with more breakout meeting spaces. Though the library is one of the quieter branches in the Shire, it is built to be future-proofed to accommodate the growth in the area.

A library survey was conducted for Romsey last year that indicated demand for extending opening hours to weekends. The library now opens Monday to Friday (9.30am to 5pm) and Saturday (9.30am to 12.30pm). It is also noted that previous feedback from young people indicated that they feel that libraries do not cater to their needs and interests.

**TABLE 16: EXISTING LIBRARY FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Library				
#	Facility	Location	Ownership	Additional information
10	Romsey Hub	Romsey	MRSC	Operated by Goldfields Library Corporation

### Forecast demand for infrastructure

For library services, Romsey is in surplus across all growth scenarios (Table 17), including demand from the wider Romsey SA2 catchment. With its service mix and presence of multipurpose community rooms for hire, the library offers opportunities to meet the needs of many different user groups, including seniors and young people. Further extending opening hours in the evenings could also support increased activation.

#### Recommendation(s)

- Consider how to better utilise the library facility to meet a wider range of needs and interests from the community – including though expanded programming, evening opening hours, and introduction of programs and services for young people.

**TABLE 17: FORECAST DEMAND FOR LIBRARY FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Libraries	Provision rate	Current supply	Growth scenario	Demand	Gap / Surplus
Library	1 facility per 45,000 residents	1	Low (2041)	0.3	0.7
			Medium (2041)	0.3	0.7



## 5.9 Community Health

### Existing infrastructure

There is one Level 2 health centre that services the Romsey SA2 (Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health Centre). Level 2 facilities are typically minor, standalone health facilities that provide a base for dedicated outreach health services providing primary care.

Though not strictly defined as community health facilities, there are a number of private sector medical and health services located in Romsey. These include the Lifeline Medical Centre Romsey, and the Parkwood Green medical centre Romsey, which further support the health needs of the Romsey community.

For higher-order health services, there is a new private day hospital in Sunbury (25-minute drive to the south) that provides day medical / surgical / chemotherapy and haemodialysis, as well as a range of specialist clinics. Kyneton Health (25-minute drive to the north-west) also offers both a full range of hospital and community-based health services..

**TABLE 18: EXISTING COMMUNITY HEALTH FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Community Based Health Care - Level 2				
#	Facility	Location	Ownership	Additional information
16	Sunbury and Cobaw Community Health Centre	Romsey	Sunbury and Cobaw	Offers adult health, child and youth health, youth services, counselling and mental health, LGBTIQ+, NDIS and disability, housing support, community connections, and Aboriginal engagement.
NA	Lifeline Medical Centre Romsey	Romsey	Private	Offers a variety of general and family health services, pathology, vaccinations, podiatry, chiropractor, clinical psychology.
NA	Parkwood Green medical centre Romsey	Romsey	Private	Offers a variety of general and family health services, pathology, vaccinations, podiatry, dietary, physiology, and psychology.

### Forecast demand for infrastructure

With the presence of a Level 2 facility, the Romsey area is generally well-served by lower-order community health services across all scenarios (Table 19). Higher-order health services are typically provided more at the regional level. A very small part of a Level 3 facility (more General Practice care and diagnostic services-focused than Level 2) is triggered under all growth scenarios. However, it is noted that some private facilities exist in Romsey that provide these services however are not considered 'community health care'.

While additional lower-order or higher-order facilities are not necessitated by even the high growth scenario for the SA2, it is important to note that local policy identifies mental health as a key challenge in the Shire, particularly among young people. It was recommended under the community needs assessment for Gisborne to explore the potential for a Headspace located there to support young people in the Shire.

**Recommendation(s)**

- *None*

**TABLE 19: FORECAST DEMAND FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Community health facilities	Provision rate	Current supply	Growth scenario	Demand	Gap / Surplus
Community Based Health Care - Level 2	1 facility per 30,000 residents	1	Low (2041)	0.5	0.5
			Medium (2041)	0.5	0.5
			High (2041)	0.5	0.5
Community Based Health Care - Level 3	1 facility per 75,000 residents	0	Low (2041)	0.2	-0.2
			Medium (2041)	0.2	-0.2
			High (2041)	0.2	-0.2
Community Based Health Care – Large (higher-order)	1 facility per 150,000 residents	0	Low (2041)	0.1	-0.1
			Medium (2041)	0.1	-0.1
			High (2041)	0.1	-0.1

## 5.10 Emergency Services, Law and Order, Hospitals

### Existing infrastructure

The Romsey SA2 is home to four main emergency services, two in Romsey and two in Lancefield. At present, there are no hospitals or court services in the area. There are hospitals located at Sunbury, Kyneton, and Daylesford, and the nearest court is located in Kyneton.

**TABLE 20: EXISTING EMERGENCY SERVICES, LAW AND ORDER, AND HOSPITAL FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Emergency Services			
#	Facility	Location	Ownership
15	Ambulance Station	Romsey	State
19	Romsey Police Station	Romsey	State
29	Lancefield Police Station	Lancefield	State
17	Romsey CFA	Romsey	State
28	Lancefield CFA	Lancefield	State

### Forecast demand for infrastructure

Only minor gaps emerge in provision for law and order and hospital services, as these are typically higher-order infrastructure that service large populations.

The majority of emergency services for the Romsey SA2 will be adequate to service the population growth across all scenarios.

#### Recommendation(s)

- Continue to liaise with local service providers in relation to forecast population growth and to ensure services have adequate access and broader infrastructure (road network) to access future residential developments and respond to extreme events in the context of climate change.
- Review public transport links to hospitals and law courts to ensure they are appropriate to meet current and future community needs.

**TABLE 21: FORECAST DEMAND FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES, LAW AND ORDER, AND HOSPITAL FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Emergency Services, Law and Order, Hospitals	Provision rate	Current supply	Growth scenario	Demand	Gap / Surplus
Ambulance Station	1 facility per 55,000 residents	1	Low (2041)	0.3	0.7
			Medium (2041)	0.3	0.7
			High (2041)	0.3	0.7
Fire Station/CFA	1 facility per 15,000 residents	2	Low (2041)	0.9	1.1
			Medium (2041)	1.0	1.0
			High (2041)	1.0	1.0
Police Station	1 facility per 37,500 residents	2	Low (2041)	0.4	1.6
			Medium (2041)	0.4	1.6
			High (2041)	0.4	1.6
SES	1 facility per 100,000 residents	0	Low (2041)	0.1	-0.1
			Medium (2041)	0.1	-0.1
			High (2041)	0.2	-0.2
Law Courts	1 facility per 400,000 residents	0	Low (2041)	0.0	0.0
			Medium (2041)	0.0	0.0
			High (2041)	0.0	0.0
Hospital - Public	1 facility per 500,000 residents	0	Low (2041)	0.0	0.0
			Medium (2041)	0.0	0.0
			High (2041)	0.0	0.0

## 5.11 Indoor and outdoor recreation facilities

### Existing infrastructure

There are currently 12 indoor and outdoor recreation facilities across five locations in the Romsey SA2. The majority are distributed in Romsey but there are a number in Lancefield. There are many facilities in nearby Gisborne, including an indoor Aquatic Centre and the Shire has also been successful in securing funding from the State Government to deliver the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct that will be delivered in New Gisborne. Stage 1 of construction has commenced, which will deliver a mix of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities including a stadium that can cater for basketball, netball, badminton and volleyball, and a new oval. These new facilities are intended to service a more regional competition than the local needs of the population of the Gisborne District.

Not included in the table, as it does not conform to any of the facility categories, are three indoor gyms in Romsey which specifically facilitates weight and fitness training.

In relation to aquatics facilities, the Lancefield Memorial Swimming Pool is located in the catchment; this is a seasonal outdoor pool. The next closest indoor aquatic centre is within Gisborne.

The Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2018-2028 advocates for partnerships and joint-use with schools to allow community use of the ovals. In a 2018 review of the 2013 Council Aquatic Strategy, Council resolved to revisit the financial capacity around providing an aquatic facility in Romsey again in 2027.

**TABLE 22: EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Recreation and aquatic facilities				
#	Facility	Location	Ownership	Additional information
11	Romsey Recreation Centre and Reserve	Romsey	MRSC	Pavilion – Level 1; Tennis courts; Outdoor netball courts; Lawn Bowls facility within the Reserve.  Indoor multipurpose court and squash court at the Recreation Centre
24	Parkside Avenue Reserve	Romsey	MRSC	1 x Tennis court
25	Lancefield Memorial Swimming Pool	Lancefield	MRSC	This is an outdoor 25m pool with change rooms and toddler pool
26	Lancefield Bowling Club	Lancefield	MRSC	Lawn Bowls facility
27	Lancefield Recreation Reserve	Lancefield	MRSC	Pavilion - Level 1; Tennis Facility – Higher Order (6-10 courts, with pavilion); Outdoor Netball Facility – Small (2 courts)

### Forecast demand for infrastructure

For the most part, the study area is well-serviced by recreation facilities, with most in surplus for all growth scenarios (Table 23).

The only facility types that show gaps across all growth scenarios are the larger Indoor Recreation and Aquatic/Leisure Centres, and pavilions. Importantly, the new indoor recreation facilities will be provided at the Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Complex will service demand for courts from a broader regional catchment, including Romsey. Regarding aquatic facilities, findings are consistent with the 2013 review – there remains in sufficient demand to justify provision of a full indoor facility. In fact, the Lancefield Memorial Pool effectively functions as a partial facility to meet local demand for this service.

Level 1 pavilions are the largest gap in the high growth scenario for recreation. While the gap only reaches approximately half of a full facility under the high growth scenario, Level 3 pavilions are also a small gap area – and combined, there may be need for an additional pavilion to support sport activity at active open spaces. This will be dependent on participation in sport, and would only be required in conjunction with provision of additional active open spaces fields/pitches to support cricket/ soccer/ football, as the existing active recreation reserves in Romsey and Lancefield both already include a pavilion.

Synthetic tracks are typically only provided on a municipal basis, and a fitness loop is included as part of the new Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct.

#### Recommendation(s)

- Pavilions: Monitor active open space use/participation in sport and consider provision of additional infrastructure under high growth scenario. Any new active recreation infrastructure should be co-designed with children and young people and cater to demand for a wide variety of sport and more informal recreation activities.

**TABLE 23: FORECAST DEMAND FOR RECREATION FACILITIES IN ROMSEY SA2**

Indoor recreation facilities	Provision rate	Current supply	Growth scenario	Demand	Gap / Surplus
<b>Indoor recreation and aquatic facilities</b>					
Indoor Recreation Centre / Stadium (Hard Court) - Lower Order (2 courts)	1 facility per 25,000 residents	1	Low (2041)	0.6	0.4
			Medium (2041)	0.6	0.4
			High (2041)	0.6	0.4
Indoor Recreation Centre / Stadium (Hard Court) - Higher Order (4-6 courts)	1 facility per 50,000 residents	0	Low (2041)	0.3	-0.3
			Medium (2041)	0.3	-0.3
			High (2041)	0.3	-0.3
Indoor Aquatic / Leisure / Fitness Centre (25m pool)	1 facility per 45,000 residents	0*	Low (2041)	0.3	-0.3
			Medium (2041)	0.3	-0.3
			High (2041)	0.3	-0.3
<b>Outdoor recreation facilities</b>					

Outdoor Netball Facility – Overall Provision	1 court per 3,500 residents	5	Low (2041)	4.0	1.0
			Medium (2041)	4.1	0.9
			High (2041)	4.4	0.6
Tennis Facility – Small / Low-Order (2 courts, no pavilion, free to public)	1 facility per 30,000 residents	1	Low (2041)	0.5	0.5
			Medium (2041)	0.5	0.5
			High (2041)	0.5	0.5
Tennis Facility – Higher Order (6-10 courts, with pavilion)	1 facility per 30,000 residents	2	Low (2041)	0.5	1.5
			Medium (2041)	0.5	1.5
			High (2041)	0.5	1.5
Lawn Bowls Facility (4 greens)	1 facility per 40,000 residents	2	Low (2041)	0.3	1.7
			Medium (2041)	0.4	1.6
			High (2041)	0.4	1.6
Synthetic Athletics Track*	1 facility per municipality	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pavilion - Level 1	1 facility per 6,000 residents	2	Low (2041)	2.3	-0.3
			Medium (2041)	2.4	-0.4
			High (2041)	2.6	-0.6
Pavilion - Level 3	1 facility per 50,000 residents	0	Low (2041)	0.3	-0.3
			Medium (2041)	0.3	-0.3
			High (2041)	0.3	-0.3

\*does not include the Lancefield Memorial Pool

\*this facility is benchmarked only at the municipal level, rather than for individual communities

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1 Summary of recommendations

As an established regional township, the Romsey SA2 area is already well-serviced by community infrastructure and services. Under all growth scenarios being explored for the Romsey Structure Plan (low, medium, and high), very little additional community infrastructure will be required.

That said, the utilisation, condition, accessibility, and fitness-for-purpose of existing infrastructure should be reviewed to ensure that all population groups can access required infrastructure and services to meet their needs. This should be done in consultation with key groups such as older people and young people.

Adaptability of infrastructure should also be reviewed to consider alternative activities such as arts and cultural activities that may want to use existing spaces.

Key recommendations are summarised in Table 24 by service area.

**TABLE 24: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Facility/service	Recommendation(s)
<b>Education</b>	
Government secondary schools	Continue to engage with the Department of Education regarding improved transition arrangements and transport to government secondary schools from Romsey.
<b>Early Years</b>	
Kindergarten	Continue to monitor demand and engage with existing private providers to support them in increasing provision and addressing any workforce challenges, particularly under the higher growth scenarios.
<b>Services for older people</b>	
Seniors' facilities	Review existing community facilities to investigate how they can be used to support seniors' groups (e.g. a meeting room dedicated to seniors at a specific time during the week for them to gather, socialise and connect).
Residential aged care	Continue to support the allocation of residential aged care within the Shire, including in Romsey.
<b>Arts and cultural facilities</b>	
Arts and cultural facilities	Ensure existing multipurpose community facilities integrate spaces that can support arts and cultural activities through the inclusion of wet spaces and storage.
<b>Community Meeting Spaces</b>	
Community meeting spaces	Review utilisation, hiring policies, and the design/fit-out of the existing multipurpose spaces to ensure use can be maximised.



Youth	Engage with young people and review existing community meeting spaces to see if they can be used to better address the needs of young people.
<b>Libraries</b>	
Libraries	Consider how to better utilise the library facility to meet a wider range of needs and interests from the community – including though expanded programming and opening hours, and introduction of programs and services for young people.
<b>Community health facilities</b>	
<i>None</i>	
<b>Emergency Services, Law and Order, Hospitals</b>	
Emergency services	Continue to liaise with local service providers in relation to forecast population growth and to ensure services have adequate access and broader infrastructure (road network) to access future residential developments and respond to extreme events in the context of climate change.
Hospitals and law and order	Review public transport links to hospitals and law courts to ensure they are appropriate to meet current and future community needs
<b>Indoor recreation facilities</b>	
Pavilions	Monitor active open space use/participation in sport and consider provision of additional infrastructure under high growth scenario. Any new active recreation infrastructure should be co-designed with children and young people and cater to demand for a wide variety of sport and more informal recreation activities.

# Appendix A: Provision ratios

Infrastructure type	Benchmark	Details & Assumptions
<b>Education</b>		
Government Primary School	1 school: 9,000 residents	<p>Government primary schools are owned and run by the state government. New schools are typically built to an enrolment capacity of 475, with a preferred minimum site area of 3.5ha.</p> <p>The Department of Education (DoE) and the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) have recently committed to providing a Kindergarten facility on-site or next door to every new Victorian primary school, and are also planning and building a pipeline of new Kindergartens at existing schools. However most do not currently have Kindergarten spaces.</p>
Government Secondary School	1 school: 27,500 residents	<p>Government primary schools are owned and run by the state government. Schools are typically built to an enrolment capacity of 475, with a preferred minimum site area of 8.4ha.</p> <p>Secondary schools often include sport and recreation and performing arts facilities that may be shared with the community, however this is on a site-by-site basis.</p>
Catholic Primary School	1 school: 5,000 households	<p>Catholic schools are owned and run by the Catholic Education Office in Victoria. Primary school sites have a preferred minimum site area of 3ha.</p>
Catholic Secondary School	1 school: 16,000 households	<p>Catholic schools are owned and run by the Catholic Education Office in Victoria. Secondary school sites have a preferred minimum site area of 7ha.</p>

Government Specialist Secondary School	1 school: 50,000 residents	<p>Specialist Schools cater for students aged 3 to 18 years with significant developmental delay and/or intellectual disabilities.</p> <p>Within this group there are several sub-groups including day special schools (including two junior secondary special schools), and special developmental schools.</p>
TAFE	<p>1 TAFE: 150,000 residents</p> <p><i>*This is a provision ratio set by the VPA for growth areas</i></p>	<p>Traditional greenfield models of provision indicate that campuses can range from 10 to 30 ha.</p> <p>Higher education facilities should ideally be located within or in close proximity to higher order activity centres that have / will have good access to public transport (at least two forms preferably – bus and tram or bus and train).</p>
University	1 university: 2 municipalities	<p>Traditional greenfield models of provision indicate that campuses can range from 10 to 30 ha.</p> <p>Higher education facilities should ideally be located within or in close proximity to higher order activity centres that have / will have good access to public transport (at least two forms preferably – bus and tram or bus and train).</p>
<b>Early years</b>		
Kindergarten (3- and 4-year-old)	75 3-year-old children at 15 hours per week per room, 37.5 4-year-old children at 30 hours per week per room	<p>A 3-year-old Kindergarten program provides up to 15 hours per week, and a 4-year-old Kindergarten program provides up to 30 hours per week<sup>+</sup>, planned and delivered by a qualified teacher and funded by the State Government. Provision is on a 1:1 basis based on the average participation rate for children of 93 per cent.</p> <p>The Kindergarten service may be integrated in an early years centre with complementary services (e.g. MCH) or may be in a standalone facility. It may be run by Council or a private or community provider.</p>
Playgroup	2 groups: 1,000 0–5-year-olds	Playgroups are more informal activity groups for babies, toddlers, and preschools and their parents and carers. Participation is optional,

		<p>and groups typically meet for 1-2 hours per week. Based on participation rates, 2 groups should be provided for every 1,000 0–5-year-olds.</p> <p>They typically operate from a multipurpose room at an early years centre or other community facility.</p>
Long Day Care (LDC)	1 facility: 9,000 residents	<p>LDC is a centre-based childcare service for 0–5-year-olds. The benchmark assumes that a centre contains 2 rooms, each room with 30 licensed childcare places. LDC centres often integrate Kindergarten programs to the services so that a child participates in a program as part of their attendance at childcare.</p> <p>This service is typically provided by a private or community provider, and in some instances by Council.</p>
Maternal and Child Health (MCH)	1 dual room facility: 16,000 residents	<p>The provision ratio assumes that a facility contains two MCH consulting rooms, operating a dual-nurse service. Each room can service approximately 140 infants (0-year-olds) per year, for a total of 280 at each facility. MCH services are Council-run in each local government area.</p> <p>The MCH service may be integrated in an early years centre with complementary services (e.g. Kindergarten) or may be in a standalone facility.</p>
Toy Library	1 facility: 25,000 residents	<p>This is not an individual category found in the ASR provision standards, but is identified as an item of Early Childhood infrastructure. Toy libraries provide toys to families on loan and can be found in a wide selection of other community infrastructure such as municipal libraries, community centres or scout halls.</p>
<b>Services for older people</b>		
Seniors Groups Facilities - Lower Oder (within designated Multi-Purpose Community Centre) 1 large multi-purpose meeting space	1 facility: 9,000 residents	<p>These provide for a range of activities for special interest groups or active ageing groups and should be located in a multi-purpose community centre with access to accessible</p>

		<p>toilets, a small kitchen, appropriate storage in addition to the main meeting space (200sqm).</p> <p>These spaces should be located with good walking and public transport links.</p> <p>Refer to Community Meeting Spaces below.</p>
Seniors Groups Facilities - Higher Order (within designated Multi-Purpose Community Centre) 1 multi-purpose meeting space	1 facility: 9,000 residents	<p>These provide for a range of activities for special interest groups or active ageing groups and should be located in a multi-purpose community centre with access to accessible toilets, a larger kitchen, appropriate storage in addition to a large meeting space (400sqm).</p> <p>Flexible meeting spaces that provide rooms that can be divided or opened into larger spaces could accommodate both high and lower order spaces.</p> <p>These spaces should be located with good walking and public transport links.</p> <p>Refer to Community Meeting Spaces below.</p>
Residential Aged Care - Low Care (44 low-level beds)	44 beds: 1,000 residents aged 70+	<p>Federally funded and often privately run (subject to the Aged Care Act 1997), residential aged care facilities, low care typically provides accommodation and support services such as cleaning, laundry and meals, and personal care with activities like dressing, bathing and mobility.</p> <p>Many aged care homes offer both low and high care facilities.</p>
Residential Aged Care - High Care (44 high-level beds)	44 beds: 1,000 residents aged 70+	<p>Federally funded and often privately run (subject to the Aged Care Act 1997), residential aged care facilities, high care facilities typically provide, beyond the low care services, 24 hour care, and nursing care and access to allied health services such as physiotherapy.</p> <p>Many aged care homes offer both low and high care facilities.</p>
Adult Day Respite / Planned Activity Group Facility	1 facility: 50,000 residents	<p>Similar to Seniors Group Facilities above, Planned Activity Group Facilities should be delivered as part of a multifunction community facility. High support services should be integrated into higher-order</p>
Planned Activity Group	1 facility: 50,000 residents	

community facilities and may require additional modification to be accessible.

### Community Meeting Spaces

Small multipurpose meeting rooms (Level 1)	1: 4,000 residents	Community meeting rooms take different forms and sizes. Multiple rooms are provided within a new community centre buildings. Rooms are designed and outfitted to be flexible – able to be shared between many groups for a wide range of activities, services, and programs, such as:
Medium multipurpose community rooms (Level 2-4)	1: 8,000 residents	
Large multipurpose community rooms (Level 5)	1: 20,000 residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Seniors citizens and planned activity groups (PAGs)</li> <li>– Playgroups</li> <li>– Some indoor recreation and cultural activities (e.g. dance, and yoga)</li> <li>– Professional meetings and workshops</li> <li>– Outreach youth services and programs</li> <li>– Wet spaces (areas with sinks and hard floors) for arts and cultural activities</li> <li>– Community events and gatherings (e.g. birthday parties, fundraisers)</li> </ul> <p>Councils typically provide many of the multipurpose rooms in a community, but others are provided through the private market and community organisations, such as at residential aged care centres and churches.</p>
Neighbourhood House Program	1 program: 15,000 people	<p>Traditionally operating from modified dwellings, Neighbourhood Houses (also referred to as Learning Centres/ Neighbourhood Centres/ Community Houses) deliver a wide range of programs that promote lifelong learning, inclusive participation, and civic engagement.</p> <p>The service is best integrated at libraries and multipurpose community centres that are outfitted with technology.</p>
Youth Space	1 facility: 8,000 residents	Youth spaces can offer a range of formal and informal services for young people, including recreation, counselling, advocacy and legal advice, health advice, personal support programs, or general information and referral. Whereas they were often delivered as a stand-alone facility in the past, they are

		now commonly integrated into multi-purpose community centres.
Multi-Purpose Community Centre - Lower Order	1 facility: 9,000 residents	Lower order multi-purpose community centres commonly form the backbone of community hubs and will be able to accommodate a multitude of services such as early years facilities, youth spaces, seniors activities, and any of the other community services that multi-purpose meeting spaces can host. They should be co-located with open space and schools and have good access to public and active transport.
Multi-Purpose Community Centre - Higher Order	1 facility: 45,000 residents	Higher order multi-purpose community centres are larger versions of lower-order centres to cater for service delivery for a larger catchment of people. They may have spaces that are more dedicated to specific services such as arts, planned activity groups, meals delivery dispatch, spaces for larger events, and can include council services.
<b>Libraries</b>		
Library	1 facility: 45,000 residents	<p>This refers to a branch library that includes a combination of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Print collections</li> <li>- Digital collections</li> <li>- Flexible/multipurpose rooms</li> <li>- Technology equipment (e.g. computers and printers)</li> <li>- Informal social/relaxing spaces</li> </ul> <p>The branch library can be supplemented by other types of library services, e.g. click-and-collect or mobile libraries.</p> <p>Library buildings are Council-owned, and may be run by Council or a regional library service provider.</p>
<b>Arts and Cultural Facilities</b>		
Community Arts Facility	1 facility: 9,000 residents	Community arts facilities are often spaces within other facilities such as multi-purpose community centres, libraries, neighbourhood houses, or even primary schools.

		Facilities may include wet/dry activity spaces, a lit stage with sound system, and an activity space, and specialist arts equipment.
Community Arts Centre	1 facility: 50,000 residents	Community arts centres are dedicated facilities with specialised programming staff, typically located in higher-order large community and civic precincts. They can be integrated into a multipurpose facility or standalone.  Centres should include a mix of spaces for performing and visual arts – this can include exhibition, rehearsal, and workshop spaces.
Regional Arts Centre	1 facility: municipality	Serving a much larger population catchment, these facilities offer professional grade performing and visual arts spaces including auditoriums, exhibition spaces, function rooms, rehearsal areas, and administration spaces. They are typically a stand-alone facility but co-located with other prominent community or civic hubs.

#### Emergency Services, Law and Order, Hospitals

Ambulance Station	1 facility: 55,000 residents	Depending on population size, these are often standalone services but may be integrated with another service or co-located as part of an emergency services precinct (as in the case of Gisborne).
Fire Station	1 facility: 15,000 residents	
Police Station	1 facility: 37,500 residents	
SES	1 facility: 100,000 residents	
Law Courts	1 facility: 400,000 residents	The need for Judicial services are also dependant on population size, are often standalone facilities or integrated with or co-located with police stations.
Hospital - Public	1 facility: 500,000 residents	Public hospitals service large population catchments and as such must provide the highest level of care with acute specialisation, emergency departments and the capacity for



		procedures with a high degree of clinical risk, and radiotherapy.
<b>Community health</b>		
Community Based Health Care - Level 2	1 facility: 30,000 residents	<p>These are typically minor, stand-alone facilities that provide a base for dedicated outreach health services providing primary care.</p> <p>It includes services such as drug and alcohol services, counselling services, community nursing, allied health services, and integrated health promotion and primary prevention.</p>
Community Based Health Care - Level 3	1 facility: 75,000 residents	A level 3 facility provides more specialist services than a level 2. Care provided in these facilities may include GP care, nursing, some specialist care, access to diagnostic services, some procedural services and observation facilities.
Community Based Health Care - Large	1 facility: 150,000 residents	Building on Level 3 facilities, a large Community Based Health Care facility would also provide day procedures and additional specialist services. They should be located as part of a designated health precinct or a larger service precinct and highly accessible by private and public transport.
<b>Indoor and Outdoor Recreation Facilities</b>		
Indoor Recreation Centre / Stadium (Hard Court) - Lower Order (2 courts)	1 facility: 25,000 residents	<p>Lower order indoor recreation facilities have limited capacity but still cater for a range of more informal court-based activities such as basketball, netball volleyball, badminton, indoor soccer, and other activities.</p> <p>These facilities can be council run and operated or facilities that operate under a shared agreement with secondary schools, for example.</p>
Indoor Recreation Centre / Stadium (Hard Court) - Higher Order (4-6 courts)	1 facility: 50,000 residents	Higher order indoor recreation centres provide more courts than lower order facilities, but also typically provide a wider range of ancillary facilities such as weight rooms, spectator seating, change rooms, or a café/kiosk area.

		These are typically located adjacent to higher order recreation reserves or secondary schools.
Indoor Aquatic / Leisure / Fitness Centre (50m pool) with elements such as warm water pool, water slide, etc.	1 facility: 45,000 residents	<p>Council aquatic/leisure/fitness facilities serving a regional population are mostly multifunctional facilities with one or more pools, gymnasium, health and fitness areas, meeting space, crèche and café.</p> <p>These are large facilities that should be co-located with higher order sporting infrastructure and/or an activity centre.</p>
Outdoor Netball Facility – Overall Provision	1 facility: 3,500 residents	Outdoor netball facilities can range from 1-2 courts located within smaller recreation reserves or schools that provide for public use, to district or regional level facilities that include a pavilion, lighting, and spectator seating and shelter.
Tennis Facility – Small / Low-Order (2 courts, no pavilion, free to public)	1 facility: 30,000 residents	Small tennis facilities are typically a two-court facility with no further elements and can be located within active open spaces such as sporting reserves or schools. They are typically free to use by the public.
Tennis Facility – Higher Order (6-10 courts, with pavilion)	1 facility: 30,000 residents	Along with more courts, higher order facilities are often for club use or public hire and have access to a managed community facility.
Lawn Bowls Facility (4 greens)	1 facility: 40,000 residents	Bowls facilities are found in a range of settings, from residential areas to passive and active open spaces and parklands. Four green facilities should include lighting, a pavilion with change areas and social facilities, spectator seating, fencing and landscaping, and car parking.
Synthetic Athletics Track	1 facility: municipality	<i>No further description provided</i>
Pavilion - Level 1	1 facility: 6,000 residents	<p>Pavilions will always be located within or adjacent to active open space, but should be available for non-sport related community activities.</p> <p>Smaller level 1 pavilions should include change rooms for male and female players</p>

Pavilion - Level 3	1 facility: 50,000 residents	<p>and will typically have rooms for storage, first aid, and umpires room, a kiosk, and a social room.</p> <p>Larger level 3 pavilions may add a larger kiosk or kitchen facility, an administration office, media room, external viewing areas with a hard surface, externally accessible toilets, and a community meeting space.</p>
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# Appendix B: Detailed policy review

State	
<p><b>Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy (2016)</b></p>	<p>Safe and Strong is Victoria’s Gender Equality Strategy which sets out a framework to reduce violence against women and deliver gender parity. The plan emphasises that gender equality delivers social benefits, as inequality in society is associated with lower community cohesion and higher rates of anti-social behaviour, social isolation, and violence. Relevant directions from this policy include:</p> <p>Provide access to early childhood education and care</p> <p>Promote equitable treatment of men and women in the provision of and access to infrastructure and facilities</p>
<p><b>Absolutely Everyone – State Disability Plan (2017-2020)</b></p>	<p>The State Disability Plan (2017-2020) promotes the inclusion of Victorians with a disability and tackles barriers to social and recreational exclusion. The Plan includes the following relevant directions:</p> <p>Incorporate universal design principles and investment for people with a disability into infrastructure, programs, and projects</p> <p>Engagement of people with a disability in planning processes</p>
<p><b>Victoria’s Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2051</b></p>	<p>Victoria’s Infrastructure Strategy (2021-2051) provides a practical roadmap for action over the next 30 years, identifying the top infrastructure priorities for the State.</p> <p>The Strategy includes the following general recommendations relevant to social infrastructure in the scope of this assessment:</p> <p>Adapt existing infrastructure for modern needs</p> <p>Align social infrastructure with better service delivery</p> <p>Update, repurpose or retire outdated community infrastructure</p> <p>Prioritise and oversee infrastructure delivery in growth areas</p> <p>The Strategy acknowledges the unique challenges of providing community infrastructure in regional areas, where Councils spend more on facilities per person than their metropolitan counterparts despite smaller populations. Councils often struggle to afford facilities updates required for efficient service delivery, and communities often have strong attachments to old assets, even if they are no longer meeting wider community needs.</p>

	<p>In regional areas, the following types of community infrastructure are prioritised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Youth foyers</li> <li>▪ Libraries with internet access</li> <li>▪ New multipurpose shared facilities</li> <li>▪ Updating, repurposing, or retiring outdated community infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Climate-adapted facilities</li> </ul> <p>For the Macedon Ranges, the strategy highlights the importance of building designated, accessible climate-adapted community buildings to manage the health impacts of extreme heat and bushfire smoke. Facilities can be retrofitted, or purpose-built.</p>
<p><b>Macedon Ranges Shire</b></p>	
<p><b>Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-2028</b></p>	<p>The Strategy guides support and investment for the arts and culture across the Shire over a ten-year period. Gisborne and surrounds (including Romsey) are identified to host much of the Shire’s future population growth, increasing demand for improved cultural facilities as well as arts and cultural activities.</p> <p>The Strategy received inputs from community consultation and some of the relevant ambitions include new cultural spaces in Gisborne and summer cultural events in the Shire’s parks, gardens and open spaces, however there is no specific discussion of arts and culture within the Romsey area.</p>
<p><b>Council Plan 2021-2031 (Year Two 2022-2023)</b></p>	<p>The Council Plan outlines Macedon Ranges Shire Council’s strategic priorities and updates the actions to be undertaken to achieve these. One of Council’s four-year strategic priorities is to <i>provide well-designed, fit-for-purpose, multi-use open spaces and infrastructure where the community can connect, engage and participate in a financially responsible way.</i></p> <p>Key actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Optimise accessibility and usage of open space and facilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Disability Action Plan 2021-2025</b></p>	<p>The Disability Action Plan identifies ways in which Council can improve their access and inclusion. Some relevant actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with other community groups and clubs to help them be inclusive</li> <li>▪ Have places to go and be active</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economic Development Strategy 2021-2031</b></p>	<p>The Economic Development Strategy identifies threats and opportunities to the local economy over a ten-year period. The Plan stresses the need to integrate economic development activity with land use planning through Township Structure Plans.</p> <p>A relevant action under the theme of ‘residential development’ is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advocate to other decision makers to ensure the supply of adequate infrastructure to service the resident population and enable employment growth (such as affordable housing, health services and education facilities).</li> </ul>

<p><b>Asset Plan 2021-2031</b></p>	<p>The Asset Plan provides a ten-year planning framework for Council’s assets and includes considerations for maintenance, renewal, acquisition, expansion and disposal.</p> <p>In terms of customer requests relating to Council Assets, the Plan highlights that recreation facilities receive the most requests for maintenance alongside buildings, road and drainage.</p>
<p><b>CREATE: Municipal Early Years Plan 2021-2025</b></p>	<p>The Municipal Early Years Plan is informed by community consultation and identifies priority areas for actions to support a child-friendly community in the Macedon Ranges.</p> <p>The Plan highlights the community’s concern for a limited availability of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Local and easy to access health services such as mental health services (including child psychology), occupational therapy, special needs support and emergency dental</li> <li>▪ Childcare, kinder, daycare and afterschool programs</li> <li>▪ Clubs, groups and activities (including sporting and other hobbies)</li> <li>▪ Schools in general, and limited options for different schools</li> </ul> <p>The Plan also identifies several ideas for making the Shire more child-friendly, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council-run childcare</li> <li>▪ Increased hours for the 3-year-old kinder program</li> <li>▪ Adding new playgrounds and skate park facilities</li> <li>▪ Improving facilities such as BBQ areas and toilets near playgrounds</li> </ul>
<p><b>Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025</b></p>	<p>The Plan defines Council’s role in promoting the health and wellbeing of residents in line with the requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>. A key aspect of this Plan is ‘age and stage planning’, where each stage of life from youth, adolescence and old age should be appropriately considered and catered for.</p> <p>The goals and actions in this Plan relating to community infrastructure are more about making general improvements to existing facilities to ensure healthy participation, rather than identifying gaps in access around specific places. One of the more relevant strategic objectives is to <i>create supportive environments for physical activity</i>, which includes the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invest in infrastructure that provides low-cost activity options that can be used by all members of the community.</li> <li>▪ Continue to improve continuous accessible paths of travel to key destinations, such as recreation and community facilities, through the funding of the Footpath Construction Program.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Open Space Strategy, 2013</b></p> <p><i>Note that an updated Open Space Strategy is currently being prepared</i></p>	<p>The Macedon Ranges Open Space Strategy provides guidance around the planning of open space over a period of ten years. It works in combination with the Shire’s Natural Environment Strategy and numerous Bushland Management Plans.</p> <p>Principles relevant to community infrastructure include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social / family recreation spaces, in addition to off-road trails, sports facilities and conservation reserves are the priority functions of open space that should be available widely.</li> <li>▪ In smaller towns sports reserves could function as the hub for social family recreation for people of all ages and abilities.</li> <li>▪ Maximise the number of playing fields per support facility.</li> <li>▪ Practice facilities be provided in conjunction with outdoor playing fields sports that can be used by the community.</li> </ul> <p>Strategy supports co-location of open space with other community facilities, such as schools, children’s centres, halls, etc. to create ‘whole-of-community hubs’.</p>
<p><b>PARTICIPATE: Positive Ageing Plan 2020-2025</b></p>	<p>PARTICIPATE is Council’s Positive Ageing Plan (2016-2020) and outlines the needs and priorities of older people in the Shire over five years. Through community consultation, PARTICIPATE identifies nine priority areas for an age-friendly Shire including being connected and social and having the ability to access supports they need and contribute to community.</p> <p>Key actions relating to community infrastructure typically involve upgrades to existing infrastructure to become more age-friendly instead of analysing place-specific demand for certain infrastructure types. These actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plan for inclusion of people of all ages and abilities in design and development of the new Macedon Ranges Regional Sports Precinct.</li> <li>▪ Include in improvements to parks and public spaces accessibility considerations for older people, including exploring age and dementia-friendly modifications to these spaces such as reducing trip hazards, improving wayfinding cues.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Settlement Strategy, 2011</b></p>	<p>The Settlement Strategy directs urban growth and development across the Shire up until 2036 in line with environmental constraints, community aspirations and policy. An overall objective outlined within the Strategy is to <i>support infrastructure and community service provision, appropriate business opportunities and local employment growth suitable to each town.</i></p> <p>The Strategy indicates that the east side of the municipality (including Romsey) is less well-endowed with transport, utility services and community services and therefore these settlements are not suited to the same order of growth as other towns in the Calder corridor, though it does encourage medium density residential development close to facilities, transport links and services.</p>
<p><b>Sport and Active Recreation Strategy 2018-2028</b></p>	<p>The Strategy provides principals, strategies and actions to guide the Shire’s priorities in supporting the active recreation and sports needs of the community over a ten-</p>

	<p>year period. The Strategy supports shared usage and flexibility of recreation facilities.</p> <p>Key actions relevant to community infrastructure include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Investigate and support upgrade / improvement requirements at Romsey Park to reinforce the venue as one of the Shire’s three premier AFL/ cricket sporting reserves.</li> <li>▪ Monitor demand for local soccer and outdoor netball provision in Romsey and explore options if demand eventuates.</li> <li>▪ Continue staged implementation of township specific recommendations from Council’s Walking &amp; Cycling Strategy.</li> <li>▪ Support installation of outdoor fitness equipment at suitable locations along Five Mile Creek.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ELEVATE: Youth Strategy 2018-2028</b></p>	<p>Informed by community consultation, the Youth Strategy is a ten year strategy that identifies priority areas and actions to support young people (below 25 years of age) in the Macedon Ranges.</p> <p>The most commonly raised ideas from the Shire’s young people were to provide more multi-purpose youth-friendly spaces, a youth gym and athletics track, more sports courts, and a cinema or outdoor cinema. Relevant Council actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to deliver Council-run youth spaces, as per demand across the Shire.</li> <li>▪ Support the Macedon Ranges libraries to become tech learning hubs for young people.</li> <li>▪ Explore feasibility of converting existing facilities such as halls and/or mechanics institutes to be multipurpose youth centres.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SGS MRSC Early Years Modelling report (2021)</b></p>	<p>Macedon Range Shire Council (MRSC) currently plays a significant provider role within the local early years network, currently operating numerous standalone kindergartens in the Shire. This modelling forecasts demand on early years services.</p> <p>Due to population growth and the roll-out of 3-year-old Kindergarten, Combined demand for kindergarten services will over double from 9,500 hours in 2016 to 23,000 hours by 2041.</p> <p>The Macedon Ranges Shire is, overall, well placed to absorb additional demand that is expected to arise from Three-year-old Kindergarten funding assuming gradual take-up. However, some may be strained, including Romsey. To address this emerging provision gap, MRSC could consider a range of both passive and active roles to ensure local residents continue to have excellent access to early years education. This could be by one or a combination of the following types of initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Running additional programs.</li> <li>▪ Additional facilities or kindergarten rooms built</li> <li>▪ Using different timetables, including running 7.5-hour days.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Changing the delivery model, such as introducing rotational models or mixed-age groups.</li> <li>▪ Having degree-qualified kindergarten teachers, leading integrated kindergarten programs in long-day-care settings.</li> <li>▪ Encouraging and supporting other providers and services in the local government area (LGA) to undertake change in management.</li> </ul> <p><i>Note that this modelling was undertaken prior to the recent announcement that funded 4-year-old Kindergarten programming would increase from 15 to 30 hours per week; this will have further implications for demand that were not considered at the time the report was written.</i></p>
<p><b>Macedon Ranges Shire KISP</b></p>	<p>A Kindergarten Infrastructure and Services Plan (KISP) has been developed in partnership with state government for each local government area to understand increased demand for Kindergarten programs based on the roll-out of the service for 3-year-olds.</p> <p>According to the KISP, the total estimated demand for 3- and 4-year-old Kindergarten places through 2029 that cannot be accommodated by existing services is <b>83 places</b> – all of these are located in Romsey; no other towns have gaps.</p> <p><i>Note that this modelling was undertaken prior to the recent announcement that funded 4-year-old Kindergarten programming would increase from 15 to 30 hours per week; this will have further implications for demand that were not considered at the time the report was written.</i></p>
<p><b>Romsey</b></p>	
<p><b>Romsey Aquatic Centre Feasibility Study Final Report, 2013</b></p>	<p>The Feasibility Study informs and directs Council on the operation of an aquatic centre in Romsey. It also examines the community need and the requirements involved in developing a new facility. The findings from this study show that the capital cost of redeveloping the Romsey Recreation Centre to include an indoor 25m lane pool, beach entry toddlers pool, spa, gymnasium, program room and updated amenities, reception and car parking would be between \$12 - \$13 million.</p> <p>In regard to the redevelopment of an aquatic facility in Romsey the Feasibility Study recommends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ That Council accepts the development of an aquatic centre in the Romsey area at this stage provides significant financial challenges in both capital and operating costs;</li> <li>▪ That Council continue to monitor the Romsey population and area catchment growth to determine the timing for the potential development of an aquatic centre in the Romsey area;</li> <li>▪ That Council investigate options to stage the redevelopment of the Romsey Recreation Centre based on the documented desire of residents for health and fitness facilities in the area;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ That Council investigate opportunities for funding the development of the gym component including a potential management partnership with a private provider.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Romsey Structure Plan Emerging Options Draft Report, 2022</b></p>	<p>The Emerging Options Paper provides further information and analysis to support the development of the new Structure Plan for Romsey.</p> <p>Regarding community infrastructure, need for a local secondary college and local aquatic/gym facilities were considered of high importance given the reliance on services outside of the township according to feedback.</p> <p>The report identifies the following potential responses to community needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the Department of Education to monitor population and preserve the option for a P-9 school on the existing Romsey Primary School site.</li> <li>▪ Identify a potential site for a future high school (dependent on likely population scenario).</li> <li>▪ Review the Council’s need for, and financial capacity to fund, an aquatic facility in Romsey in 2027.</li> <li>▪ Identify locations for additional community meeting places in and around Main Street and other areas that cater for young people’s needs.</li> <li>▪ Ensure community facilities meet the needs of the local community, are accessible, fit for purpose and provide for a range of activities and groups.</li> <li>▪ Investigate the introduction of a community bus to improve community access to the town’s facilities.</li> <li>▪ Investigate the provision of additional medical services, particularly for young people and families, maternal child health and kindergarten facilities.</li> <li>▪ Engage with young people in the design of recreation and other open spaces to provide for their needs.</li> <li>▪ Identify transport, access and telecommunications connectivity improvements to better support young people’s education, training, employment and sporting needs.</li> <li>▪ Create enhanced nature play opportunities for children</li> </ul>
<p><b>Romsey Structure Plan Emerging Options Consultation Report, 2022</b></p>	<p>The Romsey Structure Plan Emerging Options Consultation Report summarises the community engagement submissions to shape the long-term future of Romsey. The overall findings indicate that many community members want a local secondary school. Several submissions argued that despite the number of students required to justify the development of a school, there are other social and regional reasons to provide local learning opportunities.</p> <p>Submissions also voiced a desire for a local aquatic facility and challenged why population growth was first needed to get one developed (links with the Feasibility Study detailed above). There was also a desire for a broader range of sport facilities and play spaces within Romsey. The library and park were both viewed positively by community members.</p>

**Romsey Education  
Review, 2018**

DET & the VSBA reviewed secondary education needs for students in the Romsey area to determine whether Romsey Primary School should expand from P-6 to P-9, and consulted with the Romsey and surrounding Macedon Ranges community.

- Overall, the consultation findings did not establish clear support for expanding Romsey Primary School to P-9. While some were in favour of expanding Romsey Primary School to P-9, significant numbers responded 'no' or 'not sure'.
- The report concluded that there were not enough students in the area to support a secondary school from Years 7-12 up to the medium term, that this would make delivering the pathways needed for students entering Years 11 and 12, and that an additional school would also put a strain on nearby schools.

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