

# North Midlands Regional Club Development Plan 2022.



Welcome to the  
**Shire of Coorow**



Shire of  
**Perenjori**  
Embrace Opportunity



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## Introduction

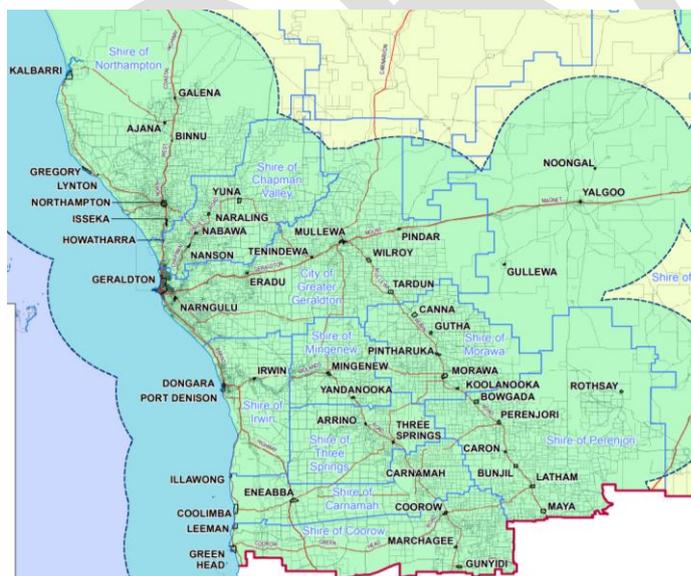
This report provides information regarding the North Midlands Regional Club Development Plan which was developed with the recreation and wider community of the North Midlands during 2022.

North Midlands is considered a region of the Mid-West of Western Australia and comprises the shires of Carnamah, Coorow, Mingenew, Morawa, Perenjori and Three Springs. The region also has recreational and community connections with surrounding local government areas including but not limited to the City of Greater Geraldton and the Shire of Irwin. The area is unique due to the rural and environmental landscapes including broad acre farming community, mining, government services as well as low population density and vast distances between populations.

The purpose of this report is to identify key issues associated with clubs in this region, identify strengths and future ambitions to allow for sustainable and successful recreation.

The consultation period comprised of face-to-face meetings and workshops, surveys, phone calls and email communications.

It was established that the sporting clubs provide much wider benefits than pure physical fitness with human connection and wellbeing key outcomes possibly to a greater degree than in the city. It was noted that working together at a regional level is beneficial for all.



Map 1: North Midlands and Surrounding Areas.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [MidWest Region - Map of gazetted townsites and surrounding 50 km boundary \(dplh.wa.gov.au\)](https://dplh.wa.gov.au/midwest-region-map-of-gazetted-townsites-and-surrounding-50-km-boundary)

## Background

### Grant Funding

In April 2021 an Every *Club Grant Scheme* from the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) was funded to assist with developing a North Midlands Regional Club Development Plan. The funding was also supplemented by contributions from the six shires which included direct and in-kind support.

The goal of the plan was to help deliver regional outcomes to sporting associations and clubs in the North Midlands region. Having a more regional focussed approach can improved advocacy for recreational support from State and Federal governments. The Plan will also help with sharing ideas, knowledge and issues as well as identifying areas for collaboration in the region. The Plan will enable the shires to work collaboratively and leverage regional funding for training, governance and opportunities as are regional cohort.

### Regional Characteristics

Regional areas can often be unique places to work, live and play due to the natural and built environment which can differ significantly to higher density urban areas.

The natural environment also allows for a diversity of sports perhaps not considered traditional such as shooting and speedway clubs which are present in the North Midlands.

Often the sporting club or sportsground is a main central meeting point for rural populations and brings people together with community members travelling long distances to attend and play sport. The lower number of participants can lead to a smaller cohort of volunteers, but it can also form a creative and strong culture.

Population trends in areas such as the North Midlands have gone through recent declines due to a number of factors including but not limited to:

- Larger farms with smaller staff numbers required to manage the business;
- Smaller family size and delaying of having families;
- Post primary school children moving away from town for education ; and
- Fluctuating business activities.

## Demographics of the North Midlands<sup>2</sup>

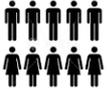
	Carnamah	Coorow	Mingenew	Morawa	Perenjori	Three Springs
<b>Population</b>  	527	961	418	661	567	561
<b>Area</b>  <b>(Hectares)</b>	287 092	418 987	193 489	351 059	830 136	265 669
<b>Major Towns</b>	Carnamah Eneabba	Coorow Leeman Green Head	Mingenew	Morawa	Perenjori Latham	Three Springs Arrino Dudawa Kadathinni

Table 1: Population, Area and Towns of the North Midlands.

### Strategic Influences - State and National Level

Some key points from the *Sport West Strategic Priorities for WA Sport Document*<sup>3</sup> include:

- Sport is an essential part of Western Australian way of life, helping to strengthen social connections, support local economies and improve health outcomes.
- Children in metropolitan Perth have higher participation rates in sport & physical activity than in regional and remote WA.
- Governance models which are not fit-for-purpose are adversely impacting community sports.
- The complexity and demands of administering community sport places a burden on key volunteering roles including coaches, officials and administrators.
- Sports and other service deliverers need to collaborate better to improve access to sport in regional areas.

<sup>2</sup> [Data by region | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au)

<sup>3</sup> [https://sportwest.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SW\\_Strategy-06-DIGITAL\\_07JUL20\\_compressed.pdf](https://sportwest.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SW_Strategy-06-DIGITAL_07JUL20_compressed.pdf)

A recent document by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural industries called *Sport and Recreation Industry Priorities*<sup>4</sup> talk about:

- The Industry needs to understand the unique locations, demographics and differences within the Western Australian community and take into account differing needs during product/program development.

Relevant information supporting keeping options open for older people to engage in sport and recreation can be found in *Getting Australia Active 111- Department of Health, Australian Government*<sup>5</sup>

- The challenge is to modify and adapt traditional sporting offers to attract new less active population groups, such as older adults or those with existing chronic disease.

Relevant point about volunteers and the strength and challenge with this role is noted in *Sport 2030- Sport Australia*<sup>6</sup>

- Individuals in a position of power or influence within a sport are temporary custodians, there to “protect the sport” and “pass the baton” onto the next generation of leaders and decision makers.

The North Midlands sits within the Mid-West zone of the Department for Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries. Support for the North Midlands clubs comes from the staff located in the Geraldton office. Most sporting associations also have regional development officers which can be based in Geraldton.

Although the Shires of the North Midlands are defined by Carnamah, Coorow, Morawa, Mingenew, Perenjori and Three Springs, specific sporting codes can be linked in with clubs outside of these shires (such as Football and Hockey).

At a community development level, the proportion of Shire staff time that can be attributed directly to Sport and Recreation needs to be shared with other community priorities. This can reduce contact between staff officers and clubs. Staff also work collaboratively with other North Midlands shires to improve outcomes, share experience and resources.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/sport-and-recreation/sport-and-recreation-industry-priorities.pdf?sfvrsn=d1d37878\\_23](https://www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/sport-and-recreation/sport-and-recreation-industry-priorities.pdf?sfvrsn=d1d37878_23)

<sup>5</sup> <https://preventioncentre.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Getting-Australia-Active-III-April-2020.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.sportaus.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/677894/Sport\\_2030\\_-\\_National\\_Sport\\_Plan\\_-\\_2018.pdf](https://www.sportaus.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/677894/Sport_2030_-_National_Sport_Plan_-_2018.pdf)

## **Strategic Influences- Regional Level**

### *Morawa Sport and Recreation Plan 2011*

- Need to provide more opportunities for young people to participate in sport outside of school hours.
- Recommended the establishment of Sport and Recreation Advisory Committee to improve communication.

### *Shire of Perenjori Strategic Community Plan (2017- 2027)*

- Actively work to partner with other Shires and regional organisations.
- Support for volunteers.

### *Shire of Three Springs Strategic Community Plan 2018- 2028*

- Values-To have a regional focus.
- Community ranked Community Halls and Recreation Facilities as very important.

### *Shire of Mingenew Strategic Community Plan 2019- 2029*

- Loss of population, seasonal work and drift towards metro centrism are challenges.
- Need to work better with the regions.

### *Shire of Carnamah Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan 2021- 2031*

- Improve the standard and utilisation of community and recreation facilities.
- Improve communication, effective community partnerships and advocacy.

## Consultation Methodology

A positive, constructive and engaging consultation process occurred with relevant stakeholders in the North Midlands between February and May 2022 to provide practical information to support the development of the North Midlands Regional Club Development Plan (the Plan).

The purpose of this report is to communicate the findings from consulting with clubs and their members as well as the local government staff and with this information support a regional focus to club development.

The consultation included a variety of engagement mediums including a survey, workshops in each major town, and face to face information gathering. Over 100 stakeholders were consulted.

The data obtained during this consultation period has helped to establish a strengths and barriers list as well as potential recommendations for strategies for clubs to improve work regionally. There were local issues and activities specific to individual shires but overall strong opportunities to share knowledge and work together due to common themes that reoccurred during the consultation.

As well as gathering community knowledge around key characteristics of the area the process allowed the community to be further connected to their Shire's community development officer as well as share relevant information about local and regional clubs.

The consultant worked closely with the community development officers and other staff at each Shire. This was essential as it enabled contemporary information to be captured at the start of the consultation due to the established relationships. Working with shire staff also provided an ongoing feedback loop throughout the consultation.

The month of March was determined as a suitable period for consultation. The region typically has a high number of community members involved in crop farming resulting in busy periods around April/May for seeding and November/December for harvesting. The Summer months can also provide extreme heat and a reduction in population numbers with people travel or spending time in centres such as Perth and other coastal regional towns.

### Surveys

The consultant worked with shire staff to establish a set of survey questions that would drill down on some of the key issues that have been raised in recent times.

An electronic survey was developed, and paper base options were also available to be completed. The Shire staff and consultant promoted the survey via social media, word of mouth and direct contact.

A QR code and hyperlink were used to reduce any barriers to completion. The survey was open during the months of March 2022.

### **Visioning Workshops**

A visioning workshop was held at each main town to allow for organic conversations to occur and for information that is not captured during surveys to be raised.

Timing of workshops:

- Week 1 (23-25 March 2022). Coorow, Carnamah and Three Springs.
- Week 2 (28-30 March 2022). Perenjori, Morawa and Mingenew.

Consideration for that fact that people would need to travel to attend the workshops dictated the timing of the workshops with most workshops held outside of office hours.

Workshops were held at the local community sporting locations with adherence to COVID 19 protocols such as social distancing and mask wearing.

The consultant worked with community members to establish themes around “what’s working”, “what’s a barrier” and “what are some of the goals”. A regional focus was encouraged but at the local level.

### **Individual contact**

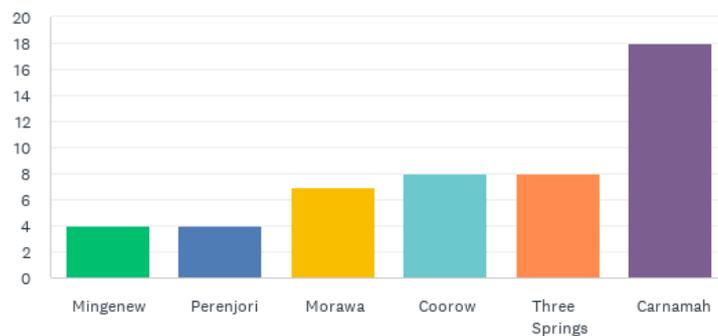
Some community members were unable to attend a workshop and provided direct feedback to the consultant around some of the strengths, barriers and suggestions for club development in the region.

## Consultation Findings

### Surveys

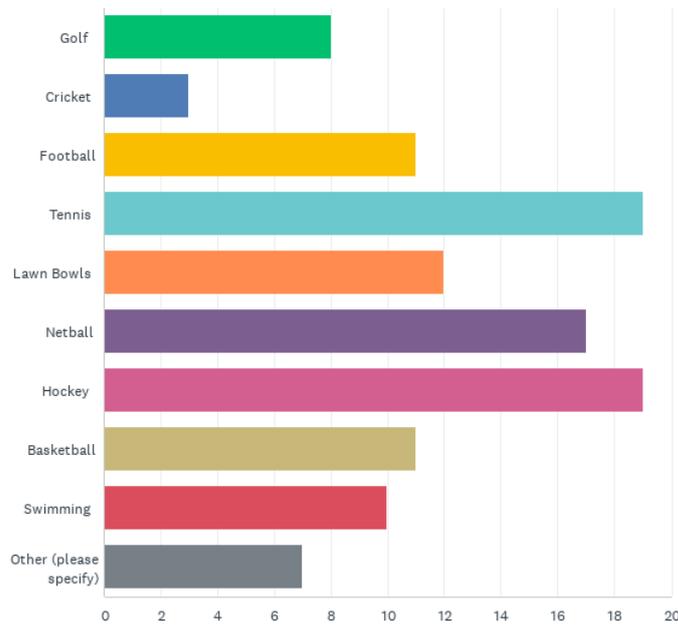
48 surveys were completed during the consultation period, 47 online and 1 hard copy version with multiple respondents from each shire and from a variety of sports. Some of the data is displayed below.

Q1 Which local Shire do you live in?



**Key Finding: People from each shire completed the survey with the Shire of Carnamah providing the most responses.**

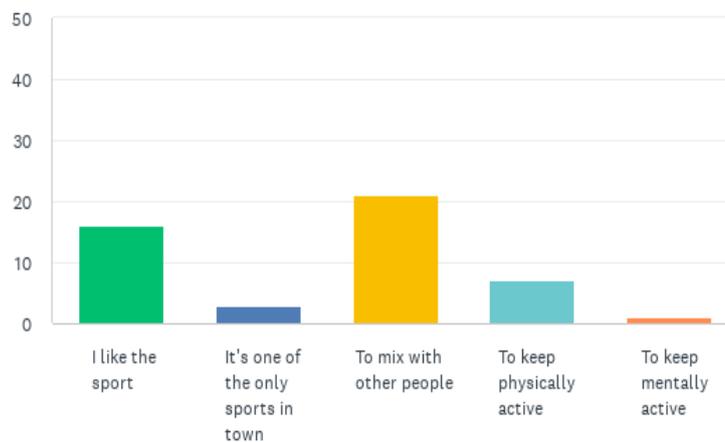
### Q2 Which club(s) are you a member?



**Key Finding: A cross section of sports provided input into the survey.**

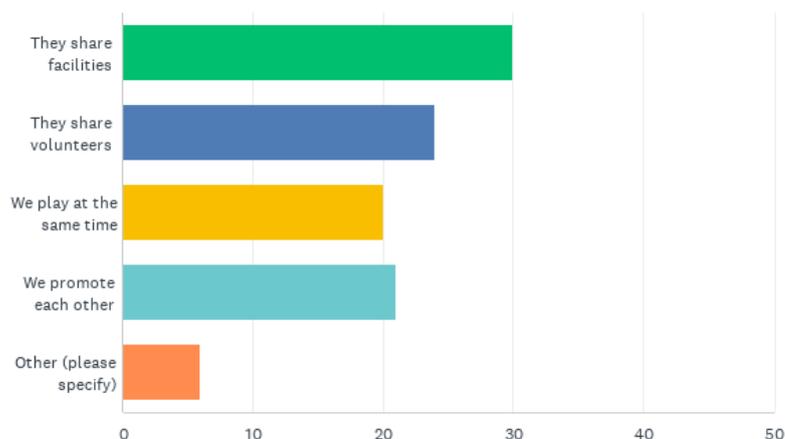


### Q5 What are the things that attracted you to join the club(s)?



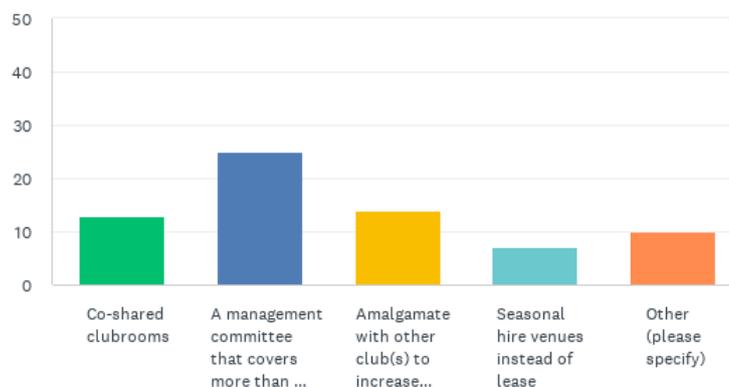
**Key Finding: Mixing with other people was an important reason for joining a sporting club.**

Q6 If your club collaborates with another club describe how the collaboration looks like.



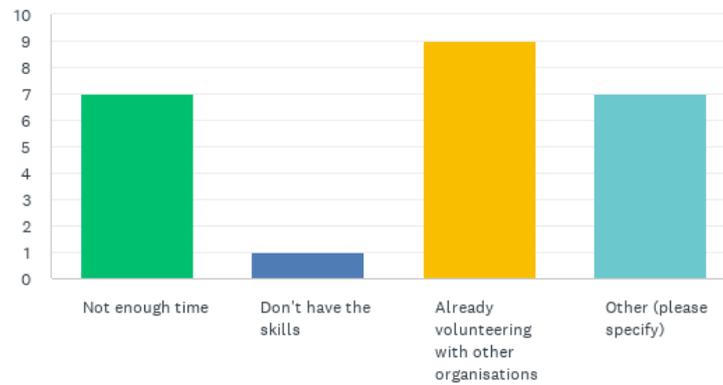
**Key Finding: Clubs often shared facilities and volunteers.**

Q7 Would your club consider any of the following to improve operations at club level?



**Key Finding: Clubs were open to sharing management committees that covered multiple sports.**

### Q13 If No, what stops you from volunteering?



**Key Finding: Many volunteers perform several roles.**

### Q16 What are some barriers to your club development?



**Key Finding: Lack of members and volunteers was seen as a key barrier to development.**

## Q17 What is your preferred communication format between your club and local shire?



**Key Finding: Clubs wanted a mixture of communication formats including online and face to face.**

### Visioning Workshops

Six workshops were held at each Shire over the two weeks and a breakdown of some of the themes that were identified during each workshop are collated below.

#### Carnamah

Date: 24 March 2022

Location: Carnamah Recreation Centre

Attendances: 10

STRENGTHS	BARRIERS	GOALS
Good Facility Usage.	Population	Improve Communication.
Strong Sports Culture.	Younger volunteers	Increase numbers participating.
Hockey, Netball, AFL work together.	Distance travelled for games	Increase presence of Sport & Rec officer, State Sporting association visiting.

<b>Year-Round Options</b>	<b>Injury Risk</b>	<b>Decrease Red Tape.</b>
<b>Parents Involved</b>	<b>~13-year age group gaps</b>	<b>Events that bring people to town.</b>
		<b>Grant knowledge</b>

### Coorow

Date: 23 March 2022

Location: Maley Park Function Centre

Attendances: 6

STRENGTHS	BARRIERS	GOALS
<b>Good AFL Participation numbers.</b>	<b>Volunteer burnout- same people doing same job</b>	<b>Increase volunteer through reducing red tape, work earlier with schools.</b>
<b>Proactive volunteers.</b>	<b>Too much red tape</b>	<b>Join forces with different sports codes.</b>
<b>Different sports train on similar days.</b>	<b>Lack of people stepping up.</b>	<b>Improve communication.</b>
<b>Flexibility of pool hours helps with cross training.</b>	<b>Distance to play</b>	<b>Improve access to funding.</b>
	<b>Injuries- impact on employment</b>	
	<b>Inflexible business</b>	

### Mingenew

Date: 30 March 2022

Location: Mingenew Recreation Centre

Attendances: 4

STRENGTHS	BARRIERS	GOALS
<b>Great Sports Culture.</b>	<b>12-18 y.o not in town</b>	<b>Increase Population.</b>

Winter sports on one day.	Increased distance from other North Midlands Towns.	Increase presence in town of specialist skills & coaches.
Clubs allow 12-15y.o to train with adults.	Volunteer burn-out.	More support for volunteers.
Flexible/progressive tennis club.	Population numbers.	Infrastructure maintenance funding
Family oriented.	Funds for maintaining facility.	

## Morawa

Date: 29 March 2022

Location: Morawa Football Oval Function Room

Attendances: 8

STRENGTHS	BARRIERS	GOALS
Good facilities.	Volunteers- same people doing the role.	More accessible funding.
Committed families.	Awareness & communication of sports.	Attract more volunteers.
Rotating town tournaments in golf.	Not enough people.	Cater for all ages.
Winter sports all in one day.	Gap for younger adults.	Improve club governance.
Long standing speedway.	Funds to maintain facilities.	
	Town planning- facilities spread out.	

## Perenjori

Date: 28 March 2022

Location: Perenjori Sporting Club

Attendances: 3

STRENGTHS	BARRIERS	GOALS
Good facilities	Multiple committees that one person may have to attend.	Look at overarching sports committee.

Facilities co-located.	Low numbers.	Communication and promotion.
Pistol club events attract people.	Red tape for volunteers.	Flexible and progressive fixturing.
Diversity of options.	Diluted pathway for young adults.	Modifying formats and rules.
Local mining company contributes (Mt Gibson)	Costs across layers of associations.	Improve options for 12-15 y.o.
	Some users of facilities don't contribute.	

### Three Springs

Date: 24 March 2022

Location: Three Springs Sporting Club

Attendances: 7

STRENGTHS	BARRIERS	GOALS
Considering winter sports committee.	Low numbers participating.	Increase Numbers playing.
Variety of services in town.	Lack of younger people involvement.	Promotion and communication.
Volunteers knowledgeable in tasks.	Lack of summer sports options.	Maintain facilities.
Rifle club.	Distance to travel to play.	Flexible events.
	Season length too long.	Improve finances.
	Injuries and impact on work.	

## Limitations of the Consultation

This report provides a snapshot of information gathered through conversations and surveying of stakeholders during the months of February, March and April 2022 and based upon previous strategic community consultation and relationship building.

Some of the limitations of the consultation and opportunities to be aware of in future consultations include:

- Minimal feedback from the Aboriginal population;
- Travel distance resulted in condensing the face-to-face discussions to one day rather than the ability to have these meetings across the week;
- Holding one of the consultations in the early morning prevented some stakeholders from travelling to that particular workshop;
- Reduced input from non-recreational based stakeholders- e.g., purely business owners.
- Reduced input from neighbouring local government stakeholders.
- Reduced input from State Sporting Associations.

## North Midlands Regional Club Development Strategies.

### **VOLUNTEERING**

Reduce red tape and become more flexible with administration and coaching duties.

Share people resources across sporting clubs such as joint committees.

Encourage opportunities for younger people to be involved.

Sports Associations and Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to come to shires and upskill/run programs.

### **FUNDING**

Maintain contact with Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries Mid-West officer.

Communicate between clubs and share ideas for event funding and fixture scheduling.

Strengthen relationships and promotional opportunities with tourism/business/mining.

### **COMMUNICATION and INFORMATION**

Work as regional focus and promote each other.

Strong communication within North Midlands local government community development officers.

Strong relationship with Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries Mid-West Officer.

Synchronize game times.

Establish multi-sports committees.

### **CONSIDER the ENVIRONMENT**

More flexible seasonal fixtures e.g., shorter or “bubble- like” games.

More summer sport options.

More hybrid models for younger and older (AFL 9’s etc.).

Continue to reduce travel through fixturing and use of videoconferencing for meetings.

### **INCREASE POPULATION (Acknowledging this strategy sits outside of traditional Recreation)**

Activities and events that increase people working, living and staying in shire.

Increase opportunities for more accommodation.

Work with State and Federal departments to increase populations.