WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL

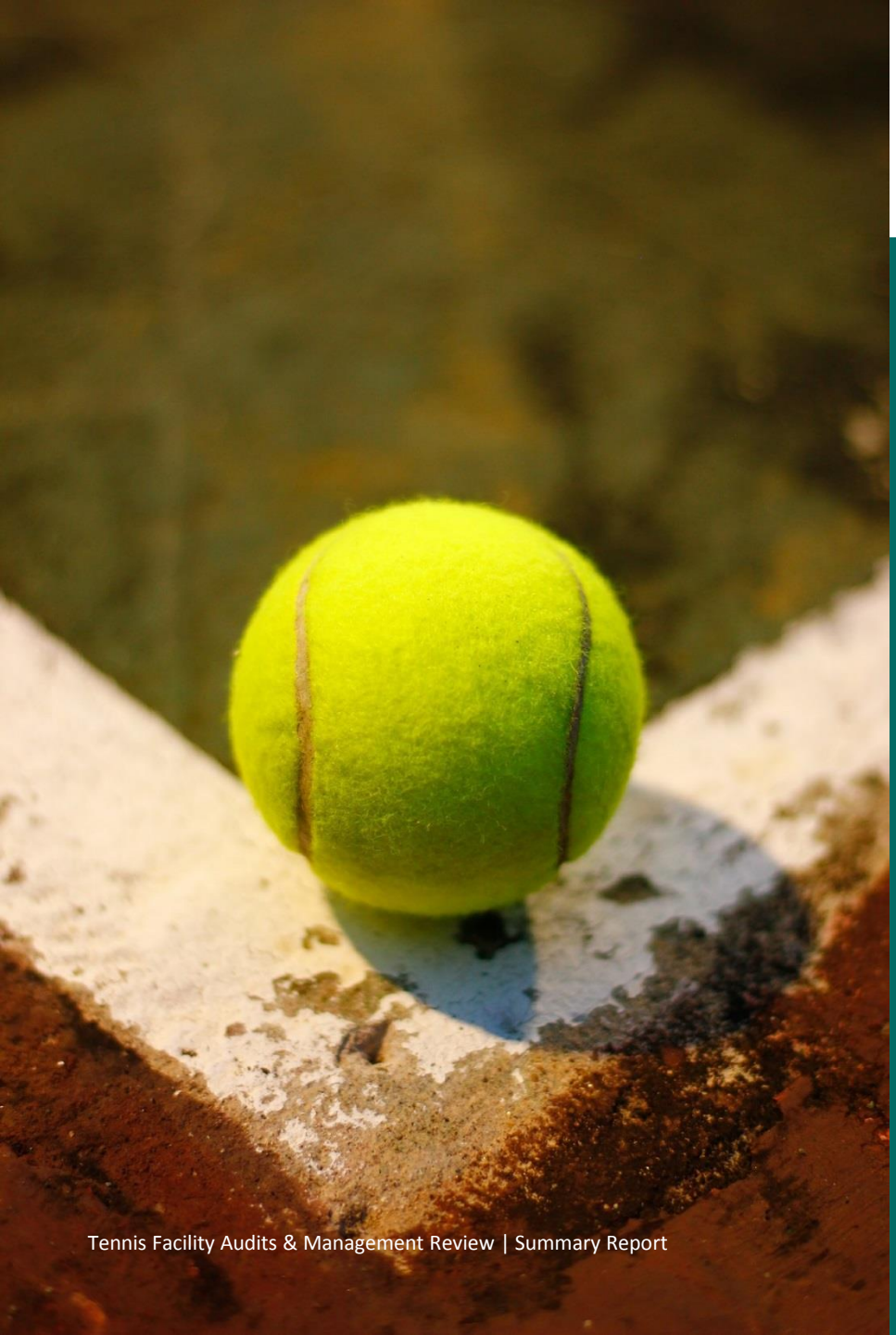
City of Diversity

TENNIS FACILITY AUDITS & MANAGEMENT REVIEW

SUMMARY REPORT

DECEMBER 2018





CONTENTS

Introduction 3

Provision and condition of existing tennis venues 4

Tennis venue usage levels 6

Options for Council managed tennis venues 8

Other potential uses for tennis venues 11

Increasing the capacity of existing tennis venues 14

Tennis infrastructure renewal and capital improvement program 15

Tennis Action Plan 16

Appendices

Appendix 1: Tennis venues in Willoughby

Appendix 2: Individual site summaries

Appendix 3: Management principles, guidelines and criteria

Appendix 4: Infrastructure renewal program

Appendix 5: Consultation notes

Appendix 6: Court utilisation by venue

INTRODUCTION

Willoughby City Council has commissioned the development of a Tennis Facilities Audit and Management Review to better understand the condition and capacity of tennis venues, and to identify the most effective and efficient management models for facilities.

This project analyses the current provision, use and condition of existing tennis facilities and consults with key user groups and local tennis providers to identify facility development priorities and opportunities for increased use.

Council's *2013 Open Space and Recreation Plan* identified the need to conduct a detailed assessment of tennis facilities to determine if these important community assets were functional, meeting the needs of users and operating at capacity.

Continued population growth in the City is creating additional pressure on Council's sport and recreation facilities and open space. With limited land to develop new facilities and increasing community demand for more diverse and unstructured physical activity opportunities, Council must investigate ways to share tennis facilities and maximise their use.

The physical activity shift towards informal and social recreation activities over structured sport will be a key consideration for Council when planning for the future of tennis facilities. The way in which people are choosing to exercise and the level of importance they are placing on their general health and well being is driving the need for more flexible and accessible community facilities.

Investigating alternative and compatible recreational uses for under- utilised tennis courts and the potential conversion to multi-sport synthetic surfaces catering for a range of uses is a key driver for this project.

Consultation was undertaken with a range of stakeholders including Council, club and tennis providers and Tennis NSW. Consultation identified that high quality facilities, efficient management practices and access to motivated coaches are the keys to increasing tennis participation. Several not for profit clubs are finding it difficult to maintain facilities and many are seeking longer leases to enable greater security and revenue generating opportunities.

All tennis venues were audited for their condition, functionality and compliance against Tennis Australia facility guidelines and standards. Audit findings were combined with the needs of tennis providers and the demand for more multipurpose facilities to form the basis of individual site recommendations.

Detailed facility data collected will be used to inform Council's asset register for tennis related infrastructure. The asset register will help to ensure that lessees of tennis facilities are fulfilling their maintenance and capital works obligations and avoid the risk of Council needing to fund unplanned asset improvement works. Detailed information on stakeholder consultation, facility provision and use, venue management, sharing facilities and individual venue summaries are provided in the appendices.

This summary report provides an overview of:

- State and condition of tennis venues
- Usage levels at existing tennis venues
- Management options for Council venues
- Other potential uses for tennis venues
- Future renewal program

PROVISION AND CONDITION OF EXISTING TENNIS VENUES



There are 15 individual tennis venues in Willoughby offering 65 courts. 60 courts have a synthetic surface (92%), 3 are acrylic, 2 are asphalt and 65% (42 courts) are floodlit.

Only two courts are multi-lined for alternative use, two venues have the publicly accessible Book a Court system and there are no venues offering dedicated Hot Shots courts.

Just under half of the tennis venues are located on Council land with four venues are on Crown land with Council acting as the Committee of Management. There are two venues on private land and two located within schools on Department of Education land.

Most courts were rated as good or adequate with six courts identified as requiring immediate intervention due to their current condition. Only two courts meet the TA recommended minimum run-off dimensions.

Clubrooms are generally ageing, lack the basic amenity required and are not functional. Clubs are also finding it increasingly difficult to maintain facilities as they reach their end of life.

Basic synthetic court maintenance such as grooming, sweeping and algae removal was below the standard required.

Connection between courts, clubrooms and car parking at several tennis venues is via stairs rather than ramps, creating issues with access and DDA compliance.

A snapshot of the current provision and condition of key tennis infrastructure in Willoughby is provided in a diagram on the following page.

SUMMARY CONDITION AND COMPLIANCE ISSUES



Only two courts meet the recommended minimum run-off dimensions.



8 courts were assessed as having a remaining lifespan of less than 1 year

Less than half of the tennis fencing assessed was rated as good or very good

6 clubrooms did not have appropriate wheelchair access





TENNIS VENUE USAGE LEVELS

Tennis participation numbers in the City of Willoughby has been difficult to determine due to the level and accuracy of reporting by clubs and tennis providers to Tennis NSW.

Registered player numbers obtained from Tennis NSW identified a total of 607 players living in Willoughby post codes. It is expected that the actual number of people participating in tennis on a regular basis is much higher, as this number excludes clubs not affiliated with Tennis NSW and some participation and coaching programs not being recorded.

Following is a high-level summary of participation and court usage information supplied by local tennis providers and the adjacent table outlines indicative participation numbers and use for each venue.

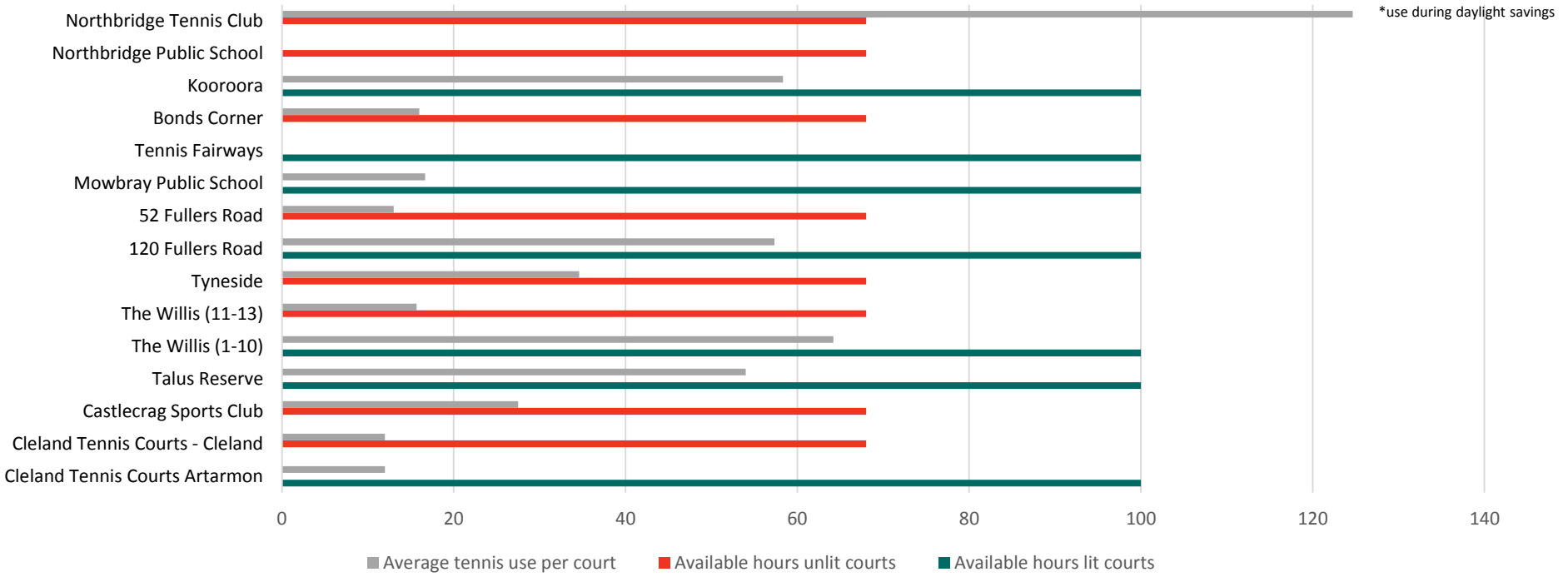
- Heavy on-court usage in a range of competitions, coaching and participation based programs is being experienced during peak times.
- Club membership numbers are relatively stable with many reporting an increase in social tennis.
- Coach driven entry level programs and lessons are the most popular activities, with competition tennis experience a decline in recent years.

Due to the challenges with tracking actual tennis participation and the number of participants at each venue, Tennis Australia recommend the use of Operational Health Checks which measures occupancy by estimating hours of use and visitation numbers. The Operational Health Check establishes baseline data of court use which can be benchmarked annually.

Council undertook a process of obtaining hours of use information for each court and venue directly from the clubs and tennis provider. A typical weekly and weekend court schedule form was completed to better understand the allocated hours of tennis use at each venue and to identify any gaps by day and by hours. A summary of this information is provided on the following page.

Venue	Indicative tennis participation and use
Cleland Tennis Courts – Artarmon District Tennis Club	261 registered players with overall venue usage exceeding 11,000 via Artarmon Community Tennis.
Bonds Corner	Unknown.
Castlecrag Sports Club	Membership increase of 13% (seniors) 17% (juniors) since 2015.
Chatswood Tennis Club (52 Fullers Road)	Membership increase from 209 in 2013 to 285 in 2018. Growth in organised social tennis.
Chatswood Tennis Club (120 Fullers Road)	As above.
Cleland Tennis Courts – Cleland Tennis Club	Unknown.
Kooroora Tennis Club	Membership decline of 7% in 2018. Participation in competition and weekend social tennis is strong.
Mowbray Public School	Increase in social and competition tennis. External court hire numbers remain stable.
Northbridge Public School	Participation stable with social tennis popular.
Northbridge Tennis Club	Membership, casual court hire and junior coaching numbers are stable.
Talus Tennis Courts	Weekday tennis stable, decrease in junior numbers. Weekend court use solidly booked.
Tennis Fairways (in the golf course)	Steady increase in participation with high junior coaching and online booking numbers.
The Willis - Willoughby Leisure Centre	In excess of 1,000 tennis participants on a weekly basis during school term and 500 during holidays.
The Willis - Willoughby Leisure Centre	Court usage approximately 2,250hrs per year and has remained stable.
Tyneside Tennis Courts	Over 3,000 bookings and 44,000 hours of use since Book a Court was installed in April 2017.

TENNIS VENUE USAGE LEVELS



The graph above provides an indication of the current usage levels by clubs at existing tennis venues. Clubs were provided with a spreadsheet and asked to include usage for a range of key tennis markets including competition, coaching, schools, social play and casual hire.

The total amount of hours courts were being used was benchmarked against available hours of lit and unlit courts. For this exercise it was assumed that lit courts are available 16 hours per weekday (7am to 11pm) and 8 hours on weekends (10am to 6pm) and unlit courts can be used from 7am to 5pm weekday (10 hours) and 8am to 5pm weekends (9 hours). A copy of the completed spreadsheets for each venue is provided in the appendices.

Key findings and observations regarding the use of existing tennis courts include:

- Data was received for all venues except for Northbridge Public School and Tennis Fairways.
- All clubs, with the exception of Northbridge, appear to be operating below the available hours of use, demonstrating a capacity for clubs to expand their court usage.
- Northbridge (125), Koorora (58) and Chatswood – 12 Fullers Road (57) have the highest total hours per court usage. The Willis and Talus Reserve are also well utilised venues.
- Tyneside is used as a coaching venue only and does not host tennis competitions.
- Talus Reserve (351 hours) and The Willis (247 hours) are used heavily for competition tennis.

OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL MANAGED VENUES



The management of tennis venues is determined by who owns the facility. The following information provides a brief description of tennis venue ownership in Willoughby, with further detail regarding ownership and occupancy provided in the appendices.

- **Council owned** – seven tennis venues located on public land owned by Willoughby City Council.
- **Crown owned Council managed** – four tennis venues located on Crown land being managed by Willoughby City Council.
- **Department of Education owned** – two tennis venues located on Department of Education Land.
- **Private** – two private tennis venues in Willoughby.

Tennis venues in Willoughby operate under a range of different management models and occupancy arrangements - including long term leases, short term and long term licence agreements and permanent and casual hire arrangement.

Council owned facilities are either directly managed by Willoughby Leisure or leased directly to clubs and associations for a period of 10 years or more. Several clubs are seeking longer term agreements to provide tenure security and enable appropriate revenue generation to contribute to capital works projects.

Willoughby Council, via Willoughby Leisure, manage a range of community sport and recreation facilities on behalf of Council, including four tennis venues - The Willis, Tyneside and the Cleland Tennis Courts (2 separate sites). Willoughby Leisure enter into licence agreements or hire arrangements with community clubs and commercial tennis providers such as *Love'n Deuce and Artarmon Community Tennis.*

In addition to *Love'n Deuce*, there are a number of other commercial tennis providers operating in Willoughby that are appointed directly by the land owners or managers - *Tennis World Chatswood, Inspire Tennis, KeNo Tennis and GPA Tennis Academy.*

CLELAND TENNIS COURTS

Council license the Cleland Tennis Courts to the Artarmon Tennis Club and Cleland Tennis Club. Two other smaller clubs use the courts via licence agreements. Artarmon Community Tennis operate under a commercial lease agreement with Council and provide facility management, maintenance and tennis related services at the venue.

THE WILLIS (COURTS 1 TO 10)

A similar model exists at The Willis where local club Tennis Valley occupy the courts during allocated times under a licence agreement with Council. The remaining times are allocated to commercial tennis provider Love'n Deuce who offer a range of tennis programs, competitions and tournaments.

THE WILLIS (COURTS 11 TO 13) AND TYNESIDE TENNIS COURTS

These two venues are under the direct management responsibility of Council. Both venues have a community focus and provide Tennis Australia's remote on-line Book a Court system. No permanent third party club or commercial lease or licence agreements exist at these venues.

There is no one size fits all management model for tennis venues. It will be important for Council to evaluate the options based on the proposed facility hierarchy, services, and the outcomes and objectives that Council is seeking to achieve. It is recommended that Council use the venue management guidelines, principles and criteria provided in the appendices in order to identify and evaluate the best mix of venue management scenarios for the City of Willoughby.

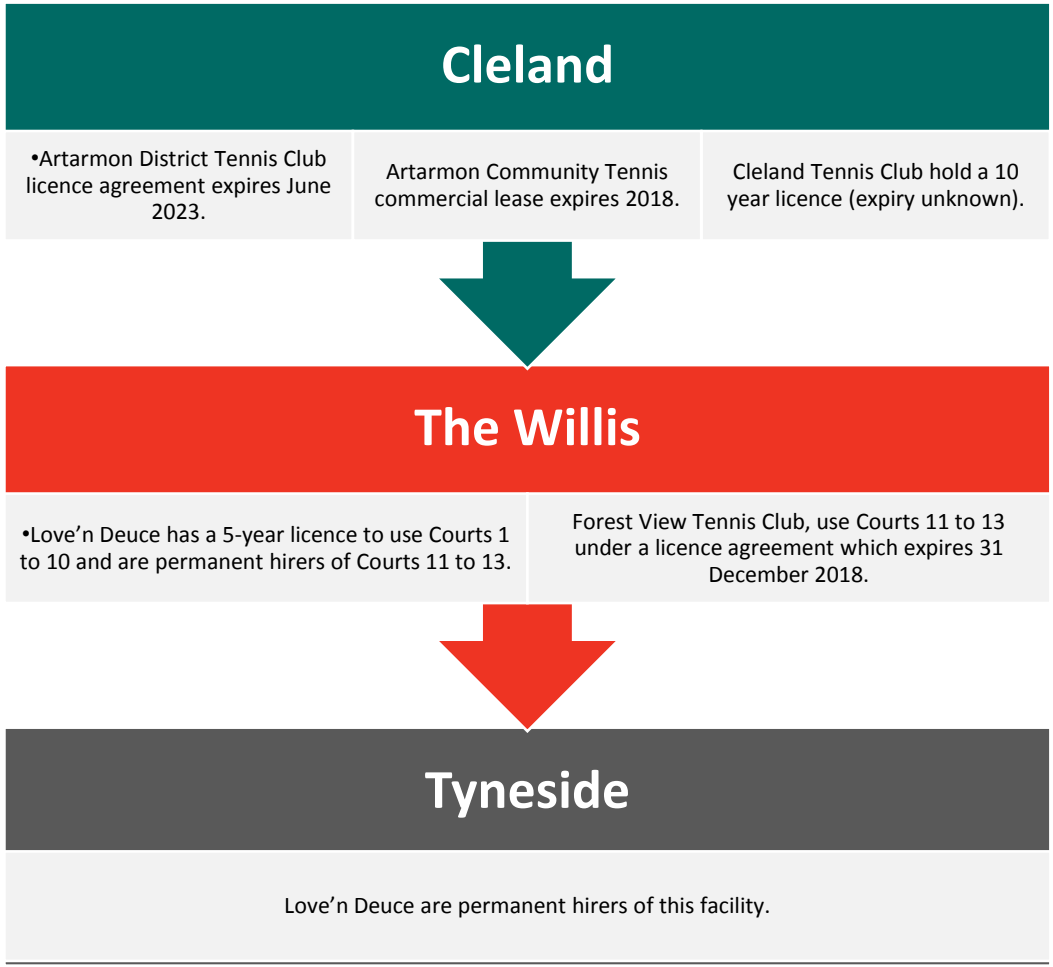
An alternative to leased or licensed venues are venues that operate under a **management agreement** between the site owner and the management entity. In a tennis context, this could be a professional coach or other commercial management provider such as a leisure facility operator.

The management agreement model is generally best suited where tennis courts form part of a larger sports complex or leisure centre and where management of the tennis courts is packaged into the overall venue mix. Organisations such as the YMCA, Belgravia Leisure and Aligned Leisure are all leisure facility operators that are currently or have in the past operated tennis venues.

In Victoria, Aligned Leisure operate an 18-court tennis facility on behalf of the Cardinia Shire Council. Like Willoughby Leisure, the Cardinia Shire has established Cardinia Leisure to oversee the management of its leisure facilities, including the **Pakenham Regional Tennis Centre**. The Pakenham Regional Tennis Centre offers a similar range of tennis services as The Willis, with the exception of a pro shop and a licensed bar and café. Pakenham also provides 18 fully floodlit acrylic courts which accommodates wheelchair tennis and hosts major regional events.

Some of the benefits a leisure management operator with a specific background and skill set in managing tennis facilities includes:

- Relationship and connection with national and state tennis bodies to support participation programs such as Hot Shots, Cardio Tennis and community access to social/casual play.
- Proven network and knowledge of the industry and leveraging off the benefits of being an affiliated venue.
- Appointment of TA qualified coaches (includes all insurance, training and screening).
- If a contractor is managing multiple venues on behalf of Willoughby Leisure, it allows for cross-promotion to occur more easily and increases exposure to programs and services at the venue.
- Exposure to other forms of sport, leisure and active recreation and an understanding of community need.



Current community and commercial agreements in place at Council managed tennis venues.

The Pakenham Regional Tennis Centre in Victoria is owned by the Cardinia Shire and operates under a management agreement with specialist leisure facility manager Aligned Leisure.





OTHER POTENTIAL USES FOR TENNIS VENUES

Council's community sport and recreation facilities are at capacity and solutions are needed as to how facilities could be optimised to address current and future community sporting needs. Building the capacity and making better use of existing tennis facilities to provide for a more diverse range of activities is one way that Council can offer more opportunities for its residents.

Currently, there is only one tennis venue in the City that could be considered multi-purpose. The courts at the Northbridge Golf Club have additional line marking that provides for a 3 on 3 basketball half court and a Hot Shots court. Council has also successfully converted two underutilised public tennis courts to futsal courts at The Willis Tennis Centre.

Tennis facilities have traditionally been single use with tennis only lines offering tennis only activities. The size, shape and varying surface types makes tennis less compatible with other sports. However, at the community (non-competition) level tennis shares courts successfully with other sports such as **netball, hockey and futsal**. The following pages provide examples of where tennis courts have been shared with these sports and opportunities to increase the capacity of venues for tennis.

Multi-lined courts are generally considered suitable for low level competitions and social play. In some instances netball and/or tennis competitions have specific rules that may restrict the use of multi-line courts. Consultation with local tennis providers in Willoughby identified little appetite for multi-lined courts.

The governing bodies for tennis and netball have collaborated on projects that enable both sports and facility providers to plan and deliver facilities to meet community demand. Both sports have a range of resource documents and facility development tools designed to assist Councils to identify facility needs and support the delivery of safe, accessible and inclusive projects.

In Victoria netball and tennis have collaborated with the Department of Education on an MOU that is designed to guide and support the development of compliant facilities across the public school network. A Netball Tennis Fact Sheet has also been developed to provide stakeholders and contractors with practical advice and guidance for the redevelopment or construction of outdoor multi-lined netball and tennis courts.

Tennis Australia and Tennis NSW support the shared use of tennis facilities and have demonstrated this through their key pillars for successful tennis venues - accessibility, community benefit and sustainability.

Catering for **Wheelchair Tennis** is another way that tennis facilities can enhance their diversity and offering to the community. Increasing the number of accessible clubs and venues that can better cater for Wheelchair Tennis is a key strategic direction for tennis.

Further investigation into the need and demand for Wheelchair Tennis in Willoughby is required before significant investment is made into upgrading existing or developing new purpose built facilities. Very few existing tennis facilities in the City of Willoughby are suitable for Wheelchair Tennis due to access issues to courts and buildings, and the significant lack of hard courts. Hard court or acrylic surfaces is a key requirement for Wheelchair Tennis and the Mowbray Public School has the only hard courts in City at present.

Underutilised former bowls club buildings such as The Willis also provide an opportunity for Council to make better use of facilities. Determining the market for the future use of these facilities by local community groups, businesses and health and wellness type programs will enable Council to plan for future upgrades, and address the various access issues that currently exist at tennis venues.



Multi-lined acrylic tennis and netball courts - Epsom Huntly Reserve, Bendigo





The Willis – Tennis Courts 11 to 13. Courts 14 to and 15 converted to futsal courts

Combined synthetic tennis and hockey pitch – Pulteney Grammar, Adelaide



Further planning and feasibility work will be required to ensure the development of multi-purpose tennis facilities meets local need and demand.

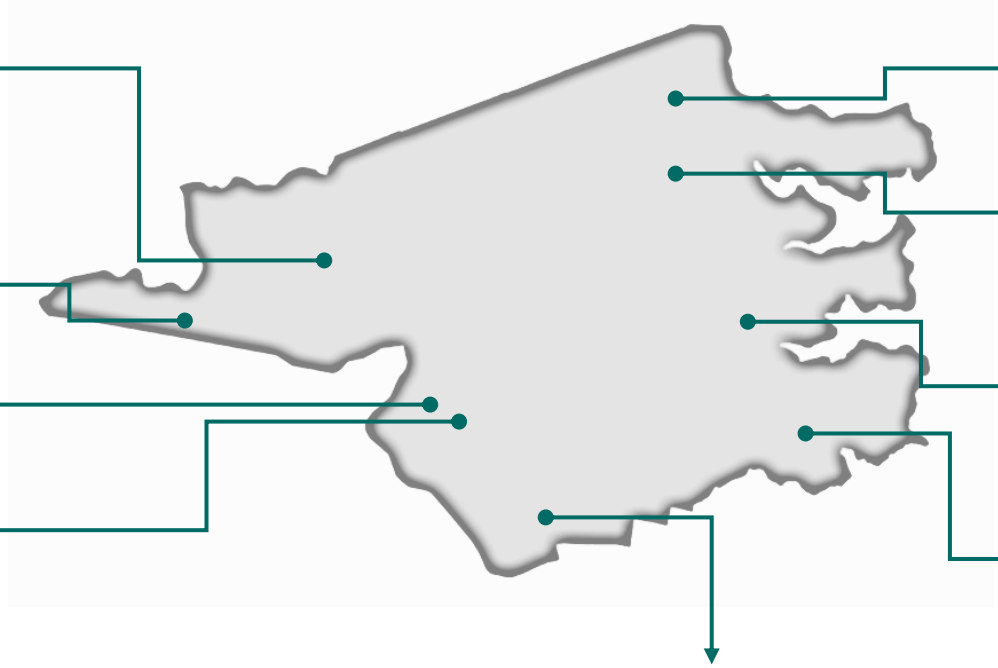
INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF EXISTING TENNIS VENUES

Chatswood (52 Fullers) *is an underutilized facility with the club prepared to consider sharing the site. Consider installing lights to capitalise on popularity of social tennis*

Install blended Hot Shots lines on one court at ***Mowbray Primary School***

Install court lighting at ***Cleland Tennis Club***

Investigate opportunities for dedicated Hot Shots Courts between ***Artarmon and Cleland Tennis Clubs***



Consider converting two synthetic courts at ***Talus Street*** *to acrylic and install blended lines for Hot Shots. Broader competition program and demand for synthetic courts should also be understood first.*

Consider multipurpose acrylic courts at ***The Willis (lower)*** *offering a range of community facilities such as hit up walls and 3 on 3 basketball courts.*

Consider converting two synthetic courts ***Tyneside*** *to acrylic and install lighting.*

Install court lighting at ***Castlecrag Tennis Club*** *and consider conversion to acrylic with blended lines for Hot Shots.*

Investigate opportunities to activate underutilised courts at ***Northbridge Public School****.*

FUTURE RENEWAL / IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

A fully costed renewal program has been developed to guide Council's future budget allocations for all existing tennis venues. The renewal program and associated facility development opportunities are provided in the appendices. The renewal program includes estimated costs and timing of court surface renewal (not upgrade), replacement net posts, replacement enclosure fencing and new lighting infrastructure. The key highlights of the renewal program include:

- It is projected that an immediate investment of $212,200 into tennis infrastructure is required to ensure facilities remain safe and playable. The bulk of this investment ($160,000) is for court surface renewal at the Chatswood Tennis Club (52 Fullers Road), Castlecrag Tennis Club and The Willis.
- A large portion of the total investment required will be needed in the short to medium term (Year 2 to 5). Approximately $1.7 million of funding from a range of stakeholders is required during this period to renew courts surfaces, enclosure fencing, net posts and lighting.
- $680,000 worth of lighting renewal has been identified over the 10 year period. This is an investment of $85,000 per venue considering only eight of the 15 venues have floodlights. Future capital investment into lighting projects will be required to build the capacity of existing venues in line with recommendations provided.
- Due to the large number of courts at The Willis, this facility will require the largest investment from stakeholders. Over the 10 year period almost $500,000 will be needed to renew courts and lighting, and replace fencing.

The adjacent table provides a summary of the top 3 renewal or new capital projects recommended for each tennis venue. These recommendations are designed to enable these venues to become more functional, accessible and sustainable, and to better meet the needs of tennis users and the local community.

Venue	Classification	Top 3 renewal / capital projects		
Cleland Tennis Courts - Artarmon District Tennis Club	Local	Court 3 surface	Access paths	Clubroom storage
Bonds Corner	Public access	Court surfaces	Public amenities	Enclosure surrounds
Castlecrag Sports Club	Public access	Court surfaces	Player amenities	Lighting
Chatswood Tennis Club (52)	Local	Court surfaces	Lighting	Drainage
Chatswood Tennis Club (120)	Local	Asbestos roof	Access paths	Court surfaces
Cleland Tennis Courts - Cleland Tennis Club	Local	Lighting	Net posts	Clubrooms
Kooroora Tennis Club	Local	Court algae	Lighting upgrade	Enclosure gates
Mowbray Public School	Public access	Blended lines	Net posts	Player amenities
Northbridge Public School	Public access	Court surfaces	Fencing	Court access
Northbridge Tennis Club	Local	Lighting	Court surfaces	Car parking
Talus Tennis Courts	District	Lighting upgrade	Drainage	Alternate surface
Tennis Fairways	Local	Enclosure surrounds	Paving and paths	Root invasion
The Willis - Willoughby Leisure Centre (1-10)	District	Court 1	Access paths	Enclosure surrounds
The Willis - Willoughby Leisure Centre (11-13)	Public access	Clubrooms	Fencing	Alternate surface
Tyneside Tennis Courts	Local	Alternate surface	Lighting	Player amenities

TENNIS ACTION PLAN

The following action plan aligns with Tennis Australia's four key pillars for successful tennis venues - accessibility, sustainability, community benefit and accountability.



Accessibility – improve community access to tennis venues across Willoughby by:

- Increasing the number of floodlit courts to support the popularity of night tennis and provide more opportunities for social play.
- Providing a better mix of court surfaces (currently 60 of the 65 courts are synthetic with two acrylic and two asphalt). For local level facilities Tennis Australia recommend a minimum of 50% of courts are ITF approved – acrylic, clay or natural grass.
- Supporting the installation of the Book a Court system at more tennis venues to improve community and non-member access and increase physical activity opportunities.
- Improving the connection between courts, clubrooms and car parking at existing tennis venues to address access issues and meet DDA compliance.

Sustainability – support clubs with their future planning and sustainability by:

- Collaborating with clubs and supporting funding applications that deliver priority infrastructure renewal recommendations and projects that create revenue generating opportunities.
- Contributing to future tennis infrastructure renewal projects and promoting the use and application of Tennis Australia's National Court Rebate to support project delivery.
- Conducting an audit of all tennis venues every 5 years to guide future renewal and capital works projects and maintaining current facility and participation data.
- Supporting the sustainability of clubs by requesting the completion of Tennis Australia's Operational Health Checks (OHC) as part of existing user agreements. Ensure a copy of the OHC is provided to Council on an annual basis.

Community benefit – support clubs to deliver services that improve social interaction by:

- Providing more acrylic courts with blended lines to provide a range of multi-use sport, recreation and programming opportunities such as Hot Shots, futsal, netball and 3 on 3 basketball courts.
- Incentivising clubs to offer programs and engagement opportunities with external groups, non members and the broader community, via a reduction in fees.
- Providing a sharper focus on the tennis clubhouse environment and prioritising renewal projects provides opportunities for social interaction and use by external community groups.

Accountability – achieve consistent and regular reporting from tennis clubs by:

- Monitoring participation, membership and the affiliation status of tennis clubs through ongoing engagement with Tennis NSW.
- Ensuring all tennis clubs have a current venue user agreement, remain affiliated with Tennis NSW and have a strategic plan that responds to the findings from the Club's Annual Operational Health Check.
- Using available Tennis Australia resources and guidelines to incorporate clear and concise venue management and maintenance responsibilities into revised venue usage agreements.



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TENNIS FACILITY AUDITS & MANAGEMENT REVIEW

APPENDICES

