

GEEELONG BASEBALL CENTRE FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SUMMARY REPORT - FEBRUARY 2026



Figure 1: Wadawurrung Country
Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, 2020



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We Acknowledge the Wadawurrung People as the Traditional Owners of the Land, Waterways and Skies.

We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

We Acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are part of our Greater Geelong Community today.

PROJECT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Otium Planning Group would like to acknowledge the staff, user groups and community from the Geelong Baycats Baseball Club, Guild All-Stars Baseball Club, Saints Baseball Club and the City of Greater Geelong that have provided their expertise and input to the **Geelong Baseball Centre Facility Development Plan**.

Their valuable insights and feedback have been instrumental in shaping the strategic directions for the Plan.

Contents

Introduction	1
Project Methodology	2
The Geelong Baseball Centre	3
Facility Features	5
Current Use	6
Strategic Alignment	7
Facility Review	8
Why Invest in the Geelong Baseball Centre	9
What is Proposed?	10
How much will it cost and how will it be implemented?	13
Who Will Benefit?	15
How will it be Funded?	16



Introduction

The Geelong Baseball Centre (GBC) is a well-utilised venue that attracts a range of community competition and national and international level training. The facility is the home ground for several local baseball clubs, including the Geelong Baycats Baseball Club (GBBC), Guild All-Star Baseball Club (GASBC), and East Belmont Saints Baseball Club (EBSBC), and plays a pivotal role in supporting programming hosted by the Geelong Baseball Association (GBA). The GBA organises senior and junior competitions for clubs and teams from various locations, including Greater Geelong, Colac Otway, Werribee, Bacchus Marsh, Lara, Newport, and Ballarat.

In addition, the GBC's location and infrastructure means the venue hosts various baseball events, such as the Provincial Series, Japanese and Korean Premier League Baseball teams spring training camps, international friendly games, the AAA series, Claxton Shield games, and the Masters Series.

The Facility Development Plan (the Plan) will help stakeholders understand the facility's needs and future direction for community and commercial benefit.

The Plan outlines improvements that will achieve a facility standard (level) enabling the GBC to attract Premier League Asian baseball teams for spring training (not for ABL competition) and State and National Championships, while also considering improvements that will enhance community baseball use.

The Plan is underpinned by evidence-based decision making and includes a review of baseball participation and facility use, a review of facility requirements for proposed uses, a review of the capability of the facility to meet these requirements and identifies what is required to deliver a facility to achieve this stated aim and support Geelong baseball participation into the future.

The Plan has involved detailed discussions with key stakeholders including local baseball clubs, Geelong Baseball Association, KT Wiz, Baseball Victoria, Baseball Australia, Melbourne Aces, Sport and Recreation Victoria and the City of Greater Geelong.



Project Methodology

The project involved the following key tasks:



The Geelong Baseball Centre

The Geelong Baseball Centre (GBC) is situated in the City of Greater Geelong, approximately 50km from Melbourne. The facility is recognised as the regional baseball facility in the Barwon and Surf Coast region.

The facility is located in Grovedale and is accessible to the Princes Freeway and Geelong Ring Road and public transport via the train and bus services. It is about one hour's drive from Melbourne and within 30 minutes of Avalon Airport.

The Geelong Baseball Club (now the Geelong 'Baycats' Baseball Club) co-operatively established a facility with East Belmont 'Saints' Baseball Club on the land south of Waurin Ponds Creek in the early 1900's – now referred to as 'Pioneer Park Reserve'. It was not until the turn of the century that the building of a regional baseball facility (now known as the Geelong Baseball Centre) that included diamonds on the north side of the creek was undertaken. This part of GBA now hosts co-tenants 'Baycats' Baseball Club in Summer and Guild 'All Stars' Baseball Club in Winter.

The GBC underwent extension and upgrades in 2002 to align with the World Masters Games held in Victoria. It is widely recognised as one of the premier baseball facilities in Australia.

The GBC is situated near other sporting and recreational facilities, including the Leisurelink Aquatic Centre, tennis courts, and skate parks. Leisurelink is a modern aquatic and leisure facility featuring an indoor 50-meter pool, a health and fitness centre with gym and program rooms, and program pools that include a warm-water pool, spa, and sauna for recovery purposes.

The GBC is also located in close proximity to accommodation options, including Waurin Ponds Estate, just five minutes away from the facility. The Estate features 60 accommodation rooms, eight conference rooms, breakout areas, and a restaurant. Additionally, the Deakin Student Residences have been utilised by baseball players of baseball events.



The figure below illustrates the GBC's location in relation to the surrounding area.

Figure 2: Site Context



Facility Features

The GBC includes the following features:



Four baseball diamonds, with two receiving significant upgrades in 2007. There are three irrigated natural grass diamonds and one synthetic grass field (Diamond 3).



The main diamond (Diamond 1) is a natural grass field offering terraced seating with 330 permanent seats, accommodating approximately 900 spectators. Previous improvements include international standard lighting, an electronic scoreboard, an elevated commentary box, outfield sight boards, and bullpen.



The international standard games lighting on the main diamond provides a horizontal illuminance average of 1366 lux for the infield and 570 lux for the outfield; the vertical illuminance stands at 1161 lux for the infield and 570 lux for the outfield.



Two indoor hitting facilities are available, featuring three enclosed batting tunnels and pitching machines.



The main pavilion has change rooms, a first aid room, meeting and dining areas, and kitchen and bar facilities.



A secondary pavilion offers a first aid room, social rooms, and kitchen and bar facilities.



50 permanent car parks and 500 temporary spaces are available, along with six coach parking spaces and four accessible car parking spaces.



Current Use

The facility hosts the Geelong Baycats Baseball Club, East Belmont Saints Baseball Club, and Guild Allstars Baseball Club.

The Geelong Baycats Baseball Club participates in the Victorian Summer Baseball League competition, while the East Belmont Saints Baseball Club and Guild Allstars Baseball Club participate in the Geelong winter baseball competition. The Baycats are the sole baseball club in the Greater Geelong region during the summer season.

The venue supports domestic competitions, international training sessions, and exhibition games. It has hosted the Australian under-aged baseball tournaments, the annual Victorian Masters Carnival, Provincial Carnivals, and an international “Friendship” series. These championships bring 1,000 to 1,500 players, officials and spectators to Geelong for up to three to five days.

The facility has also hosted training camps for Japanese and Korean Premier League Baseball teams during preseason preparations. KT Wiz, a Korean KBO team, has an agreement to hold the spring training camp at the GBC until January 2026. However, the GBC needs critical field improvements for KT Wiz to continue holding future training camps at the venue.

The facility mix of the GBC delivers a similar or higher usage and capacity compared to other State Facilities and Key Baseball Hubs in Australia. It is well-positioned to enhance its use in future years if investment is made to cater to the facility requirements of these activities.



Strategic Alignment

There is strategic support for the renewal of the Geelong Baseball Centre to host community baseball and Premier League Baseball teams' spring training camps.

The City of Greater Geelong, Baseball Australia, and the State Government share aligned goals and aspirations for hosting major sporting events and advancing the development of regional sports precincts.

The GBC is recognised as a key regional sporting facility and is vital in enhancing the Geelong and Bellarine region's capacity to attract regional, state, national, and international programs, competitions, and events.



Facility Review

Below is a summary of the outcomes from consultations with key stakeholders, detailing the necessary considerations to meet the growing demand for baseball participation and facility usage at the Geelong Baseball Centre.



Improvements to the facility standard are required to meet the needs of a state facility and key baseball hub

The GBC's service standards should be consistent with those of local and regional baseball competitions. The facility's primary purpose is to support community-level baseball participation, and infrastructure improvements should aim to improve access and capability for local and regional baseball activities.

When feasible, improvements should be made to increase the capability of hosting preseason training camps for international teams and state and national championships. Although the Plan is designed to accommodate international baseball team training, it is not intended as a home venue for an ABL team.



Multi-Use Opportunities

The GBC has the potential to become a versatile venue that enhances community programming by incorporating synthetic fields and lighting. This would support diverse activities throughout the year, particularly during the off-season. This would increase year-round utilisation, broaden community engagement, and strengthen the justification for capital investment.

Fields 2 and 3 could be designated multi-use spaces, particularly with an opportunity to install lighting on synthetic Field 3, which would facilitate training for various North American sports such as softball, flag football, and lacrosse. These sports help cross-promote participation with baseball membership.



Infrastructure Improvements

Field 1 and Field 3 are currently non-compliant and unsafe due to uneven surfaces, lips, mounds, and inadequate warning tracks. Upgrading to LED lighting for Field 1 would address the deficiencies in training illumination and reduce long-term costs. The drainage system throughout the GBC precinct is a concern that should be addressed in future infrastructure planning to ensure field usability and safety during wet conditions. Various improvements to the pavilion and other infrastructure have been suggested, including gender-inclusive change rooms, kitchen upgrades, enhanced storage facilities, and improved field accessibility. Stage 1 works to address non compliance of Field 1 have been completed.



The current governance model is not delivering a sustainable operational position

The GBC's current management model may not be appropriate for a shared regional venue. It involves multiple volunteer user-group clubs managing individual tenancies while attempting to collaborate to achieve precinct-wide goals. Many volunteer hours are essential to offset expenses, maintain the facility, develop international partnerships, and facilitate major events.

The current management structure should be reviewed to ensure the venue's long-term sustainability and capacity to host events and international preseason training camp partnerships. The new management model should consider obtaining external expertise in baseball field maintenance and balancing a sustainable management structure for community and elite use.

Why Invest in the Geelong Baseball Centre

The Geelong Baseball Centre (GBC) is recognised as a State Baseball Hub in Australia and as a regional sporting precinct by the City of Greater Geelong. It is well-used and attracts a range of community competitions and national and international level training. The GBC is a vital regional sporting precinct, hosting local clubs, state and national championships, and international spring training camps. However, the facility's infrastructure is now outdated and non-compliant with modern standards, limiting its ability to attract elite teams and major events.

Key issues include deteriorating playing surfaces, inadequate lighting, insufficient and non-inclusive amenities, and poor drainage. Without significant investment, the GBC risks losing international partnerships and cannot fully support growing community participation, especially among juniors and women. Improvements are essential to maintain Geelong's reputation as a premier baseball destination and to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population.

To ensure the continued use of the venue by international teams such as KT Wiz for preseason training camps, critical upgrades are now essential.

Like many local governments, Council faces the challenge of managing ageing community infrastructure. With many assets approaching the end of their lifecycle, there is a growing need to balance capital renewal investment across the community. The focus remains on maintaining and enhancing existing facilities to maximise usage, ensure safety, and meet modern user expectations.



What is Proposed?

The Facility Development Plan has identified the following key facility components:

FIELD 1:

A premier, floodlit baseball field featuring bullpens, spectator seating and LED scoreboard, rectifying all noncompliance and condition issues.

FIELD 2:

Maintain as a community-level baseball field, with the potential to convert into a synthetic baseball with sports field lighting as a future enhancement. Consider small increase in size to create two junior fields.

FIELD 3:

A community-level synthetic baseball field with multi-sport overlays and sports field lighting to community competition standards. Consider small increase in size to create two junior fields.

FIELD 4:

Maintain as a community-level baseball field, with the potential to install sports field lighting as a future enhancement.

REGIONAL PAVILION:

A multi-user facility designed to accommodate various groups simultaneously, offering independent spaces, shared-use areas, and universal design changing rooms. The change rooms should consider two levels where players and referees can directly access the field, separated from spectators.

STANDALONE CHANGEROOMS:

Servicing fields 3 and 4 with independent changing rooms to improve access to amenities for users of these fields. The change rooms should include an accessible toilet. Consider modular pavilion solution.

INDOOR TRAINING AREAS (BATTING TUNNELS):

Maintain indoor batting tunnels, equipped with three lanes and retractable netting. Consider climate control solutions.

OUTDOOR BULLPENS:

Upgrade with lighting, with consideration of cover, and provide seating in front of bullpen with shade.

SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE:

This includes a separate external storage shed for baseball, wash down facilities, clear delineation of paved pathways that connect activity areas, sealing car parking and install security lighting, provision of shade across facility and a precinct drainage plan and improvements.

The Facility Development Plan includes a precinct plan and pavilion concept plans that show what is proposed.

Figure 3: Facility Development Plan



How much will it cost and how will it be implemented?



Implementation of the Facility Development Plan is required to be staged. An implementation plan and funding strategy has been prepared with recommendations prioritised as High, Medium or Low to support funding advocacy.

Priority works will focus on Field One and the new regional pavilion, followed by upgrades to other fields, including the replacement of the synthetic surface at Field Three, the installation of lighting and change rooms to service Fields Three and Four.

The Plan aligns with the Council Plan and will be considered within the City of Greater Geelong’s long-term financial plan. In addition, Council and Club will seek funding through Local, State and Federal grants and other potential funding partnerships.

The delivery of the Plan will involve a collaboration between the City of Greater Geelong, local clubs, Baseball Victoria, Baseball Australia, and international partners.

The following table provides the Implementation Plan and indicative estimated costs, including landscaping, paving, shelter and car parks. It excludes escalation, contingencies and fees.



Table 1: Implementation Plan Priority Recommendations and Costs

No.	Recommendations	Priority	Estimated Cost
1	Existing pavilion to be demolished and new pavilion proposed including improvements to spectator seating area (improved seating and shelter)	High	Site Works and Demolition = \$392,000 Regional Pavilion = \$5,840,000
2	Existing bump in and out area, demolish existing sheds and upgrade space. To include additional shelter and address accessibility.	High	Incorporated in Regional Pavilion (Recommendation 1) costs above \$135,000 (hardstand)
3	Mound works, fix drainage and reshape to meet pavilion design and accessibility standards	High	Incorporated in Regional Pavilion (Recommendation 1) costs above
4	Field 1 Upgrades upgrade as per SportENG assessment (2 stages) and LED scoreboard Upgrade. Stage 1 works include drainage, irrigation and diamond surface. Stage 2 works include surface grate removal, backstop fence and dugouts	High	Stage 1 completed Stage 2: \$135,000 Scoreboard: \$120,000
5	Upgrade field lighting to 1500 Lux infield and 1000 Lux outfield standards. Note: Lighting to be LED and dimmable	High	\$320,000
6	Proposed bullpen upgrades including new proposed seating and shelter. Consider lighting as a delivery option.	Medium	\$17,500 (lighting \$20,000 per bullpen)
7	New proposed storage sheds	Low	\$160,000
8	New proposed path connections	Medium	\$550,000
9	Increased external seating capacity	Low	Incorporated in Site Works and Facilities (Recommendation 18) costs below
10	Maintain and improve drainage to existing Field 4 as per SportENG field assessment including upgrade to backstop fence to meet baseball facility standards	Medium	Field works: \$145,100 Backstop fence: \$70,000
11	Drink fountains and connections	Low	\$45,000
12	Field 2 upgrade works to consider synthetic surface, investigate increase size to accommodate two junior fields and allow for multi-sports Field 2 natural turf redevelopment option	Medium	\$3,530,000 \$500,000
13	Field 3 upgrade works to synthetic surface, increase size to accommodate two junior fields and allow for multi-sports	High	\$3,530,000
14	New proposed field lighting to 500 Lux infield and 300 Lux outfield to fields 3 & 4	Medium	\$240,000 (per field)
15	New footpath/hardstand area	Low	\$250,000
16	New change and amenities pavilion	High	\$2,220,000
17	Car park upgrades and sealing surface	Low	\$1,200,000
18	Site upgrades to landscaping, pathways and seating, including consideration of climate control to both batting tunnels	Medium	Cost incorporated across site works. Climate control: \$50,000 per batting tunnel
19	New Scorer's Box shelter	Low	\$40,000
20	New Players shelters	Low	\$100,000

Who Will Benefit?

The GBC is one of the most highly used baseball facilities in Victoria. The improvements will benefit current user groups and bring state, national and international teams and events to the Greater Geelong region. Specifically:



Local Baseball Clubs and Regional Baseball Association: Geelong Baycats, Guild All-Stars, East Belmont Saints, and the Geelong Baseball Association will benefit from improved access to a high-quality and inclusive sports facility that will support increased participation and athlete development pathways.



State and National Baseball teams and championships: The redevelopment accommodates the event requirements of State and National championships.



International Premier League Teams: Premier League teams such as KT Wiz will continue to use the venue for spring training, boosting the international profile of Greater Geelong region.

The facility generates a significant economic and tourism impact on the Greater Geelong region. Major events and international training camps are projected to generate millions in tourism and local spending, with an estimated cumulative benefit of \$25 million over 15 years.

The redevelopment will enhance Geelong's status as a leading sports city, attracting further investment and partnerships.



How will it be Funded?

Funding for the construction and ongoing operational cost of major sport facilities are derived from both government and private organisation sources.

The following funding options are identified for the project.



GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Otium Planning Group benchmarking of major sports facilities shows that the largest funding contribution is from government.

From a government perspective, providing major sport infrastructure is strategically supported and defined in Local, State and Federal Government policy documents; and the cost of sport facilities is justified by the outcomes they deliver. This includes social capital, community development, economic impact, employment, health and education outcomes and tourism.

Government funding of public access sports facilities in Australia generally comes from departments/agencies overseeing infrastructure. Depending upon the location, funding is generally supported when linked to urban or regional planning strategies and are supported by a robust feasibility study and business case.

Funding grants from either state and/or federal governments to local government authorities focus on social infrastructure and economic development that delivers multiple benefits including for public health, community development, employment, regional tourism and economy, education, etc. Each State/Territory generally has three streams of facility planning:

- Departments of Sport and Recreation have funding programs/strategies to help Local Government authorities or State Sporting Organisations to develop facilities.
- A major sports facility strategy that aligns with other policy areas (employment, tourism, transportation, etc.)
- Departments of Education prioritise facility plans as part of capital investment in schools.

In Victoria, Sport and Recreation Victoria have made funding bids through the State Government budgetary process to fund major sports precinct projects. They have also provided funding through the Local Sports Infrastructure Fund. Also, some major sports facilities are funded through election commitments.

Major sporting codes may receive grants from government agencies or departments such as the Australian Sports Commission for specific programs or initiatives, including infrastructure projects. This may include funding from the Office for Sport, within the Department of Health and Aged Care.



NAMING RIGHTS SPONSORSHIP

Several major sports facilities attract sponsorship for naming rights that may be an opportunity to attract private organisation funding. Private businesses invest in naming rights for brand awareness, brand loyalty and free advertising to a captive audience.



FUNDRAISING INVESTMENT

The “fundraiser” model for major sports facility development is an option where a Local Government or sports organisation seeks public donations to fund new sports facility projects and improvements.

The Australian Sports Foundation has helped fundraise for athletes, sporting clubs and organisation projects for 35 years. The Foundation gained charitable status to enable private and public ancillary funds to invest in sport. They are the only organisation in Australia to have Deductible Gift Recipient status for sport. This means any donation of \$2 or more is tax-deductible.

Australian Sports Foundation website: <https://asf.org.au/>



PRIVATE INVESTMENT

A private investor may be willing to invest in the capital development of a major sport facility. Private Public Partnerships are not new to Australia and sees private investors contributing capital funding to projects in return for a proportion of revenue or a major benefit i.e. spring training facility, over a period of time.

This can include naming rights sponsorship, a capital improvement (long term) lease to use or operate the facility, the development proposal incorporates residential or retail properties.

CITY OF GREATER GEELONG

WADAWURRUNG COUNTRY
PO Box 104, Geelong VIC 3220
P: 5272 5272

E: contactus@geelongcity.vic.gov.au
www.geelongaustralia.com.au

CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

Wurriki Nyal
137-149 Mercer Street, Geelong
8.00am – 5.00pm

LATEST NEWS:

 [@CityofGreaterGeelong](#)

 [@GreaterGeelong](#)

 [@CityofGreaterGeelong](#)

 [CityofGreaterGeelong](#)