



REPORT: Macquarie River CBD Master Plan

AUTHOR: Liveability Architect
REPORT DATE: 28 March 2020
TRIM REFERENCE: ID20/275

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the Ordinary meeting of Council held on 25 June 2018, the Mayor tabled a Mayoral Minute "Focusing on the Beautification of the Macquarie River Corridor of the Dubbo Central Business District." It was subsequently resolved in part that:

- "4. That savings identified at the December 2017 Quarterly Operational Plan and Budget Review allocate \$60,000 to the development of a Master Plan for CBD parks and reserves that are between the LH Ford and Serisier bridges.
5. That the Dubbo Stampede and Titan Macquarie River Mud Run Committee be invited to be integral contributors to the new masterplan in view to their former proposed upgrades to the river corridor be an equally significant component of the new CBD plan.
6. That Council consider the allocation of \$500,000 to the embellishment and improvement of CBD parks and reserves that are between the LH Ford and Serisier bridges during the development process of the Draft 2019/2020 Operational Plan and Budget and associated draft Delivery Program".

Following initial internal and external meetings with stakeholders, Group GSA developed two (2) well considered conceptual plans for Council's consideration, for the Macquarie River CBD masterplan, defined as the *Wandering Stage* and *Dubbo Borough*.

At the December 2019 Ordinary Council meeting, a report was submitted by Director Liveability recommending that the two concept plans prepared by Group GSA be placed on public exhibition and the community be invited to provide further feedback to assisting in development of the final master plan.

Following the public exhibition period, Council had received 72 submissions from the community, as well as further input from internal stakeholders and industry and event organisers. As a result of the feedback received, the preferred option identified, "*Wandering Stage*," was then modified to reflect the community's preferences.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The project, in its entirety, has been costed at more than \$3.5 million. This figure is likely to change due to a number of factors, including the results from geotechnical investigations and design issues to withstand flooding, approvals and development.

To assist in funding the redevelopment and activation of the Event Precinct component, Council has a total budget of \$3,514,849, through the NSW State Government (Regional Growth: Environment and Tourism Fund for “Destination Dubbo: International Ready”) and a supporting contribution from Dubbo Regional Council.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Development and implementation of a Macquarie River CBD master plan is consistent with Dubbo Regional Council’s *Community Strategic Plan*, Community Leadership theme 4.3, “the resources of Council are appropriately managed”; Liveability theme 5.5, “the community has an opportunity to participate in a diverse range of lifestyle, sporting and passive recreational pursuits”; and the economy theme 3.8 “the Dubbo Central Business District... is strategically managed to promote occupation, activity and investment”.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the information contained within the report of the Liveability Architect, dated 28 March 2020, be noted.
2. That the Macquarie River CBD Master Plan be formally adopted without further change.
3. That the Event Precinct, as identified, be adopted with the existing funds expended exclusively in this area.
4. Dubbo Regional Council seek further external funding opportunities to enable the further implementation of the Macquarie River CBD Master Plan.
5. That, where contact details have been provided from the public submissions, a letter be sent out acknowledging input towards the final Macquarie River CBD Master Plan.
6. That Council staff meet the Dubbo Triathlon Club to identify their future needs and develop funding strategies to assist them.
7. That Council staff meet with the Wiradjuri Technical Advisory Panel with a view to incorporating local Wiradjuri themes into the structural elements of the Macquarie River CBD Master Plan.

Ian McAlister
Liveability Architect

BACKGROUND

The genesis of this project was a Mayoral Minute tabled at the Ordinary Council meeting held 25 June 2018. This Mayoral Minute had a dual focus. First, rescission of the Regand Park Master Plan. Second, development of a master plan which would beautify and further activate the Macquarie River corridor (eastern side) between the LH Ford Bridge and the Seriser Bridge. A Councillor Workshop was then held during February 2019 to suitably define the area for which the master plan would be developed and to provide Councillors with an early opportunity to identify opportunities, areas of concern and general feedback pertaining to the approach which was being undertaken.

Following a two-step competitive quotation process, Group GSA was engaged to undertake the preparation of the Macquarie River CBD Master Plan. The objectives for the master planning process included the development of a design that would provide an increased level of access to the Macquarie River for all members of our community, the creation of a high level event precinct that would have the ability to attract large community and commercial events that would help drive economic activity within the Central Business District, enhance the environmental benefits of the river corridor through broadscale rehabilitative and restorative plantings and provide strong connections both to Macquarie Street (CBD) and recreation activities (Tracker Riley Cycleway).

To assist in the development of conceptual plans for public exhibition, a community consultation workshop occurred on Friday 20 September 2019, with more than 40 participants, Council staff and Group GSA representatives attending. Broader community consultation was sought through a pop-up stall at the Farmer's Markets on Saturday 21 September 2019. A total of 30 submissions were received from this targeted community consultation. A further Councillor workshop occurred on Monday 29 September 2019 where Macquarie River CBD master plan discussion ensued. At this workshop, three concepts were presented to the Elected Members for their consideration. From these discussions, two base concepts were chosen and, following further modifications, they were submitted to the December 2019 Ordinary Meeting of Council with the recommendation that they be endorsed for the purposes of public exhibition. This recommendation was subsequently adopted and the plans publicly exhibited from 4 February 2020 to 9 March 2020.

The public exhibition was promoted through print media (Daily Liberal, 12 February 2020), radio (ABC, 5 February 2020, and 2DU, 6 February and 5 March 2020) as well as via Council's and the Mayor's social media pages (please see Appendix 1). This resulted in 72 submissions that demonstrated a clear preference for the Wandering Stage as the preferred base concept, and almost unanimous support for the project.

REPORT

The Macquarie River CBD Master Plan was placed on public exhibition from 4 February 2020 through to 9 March 2020 and community members were invited to decide on their preferred concept (Wandering Stage or Dubbo Borough), to identify key preferred elements within the concept plans and suggest other inclusions or omissions to assist in the finalisation of the master plan. Included in the information provided to the community were a number of “structural nodes” for installation at key locations within the Macquarie Riverside Precinct and Macquarie Street to strengthen connection between the Central Business District and the river corridor.



Figure 1. Macquarie River CBD Concept Plans for public exhibition.

Conceptual designs for three different structural elements were also provided – Structural Roundabout, Plaza Node and Play Element. The Structural Roundabout node was proposed for inclusion into the existing roundabouts along Macquarie Street (Bultje Street, Wingewarra Street and Talbragar Street) that would provide opportunities for additional lighting and shading in the area, as well as providing a sculptural element within the streetscape. The Plaza Node and Play Element would be incorporated into the overall community open space. Together these three nodal elements would provide a higher level of connectivity between the river precinct and Macquarie Street.

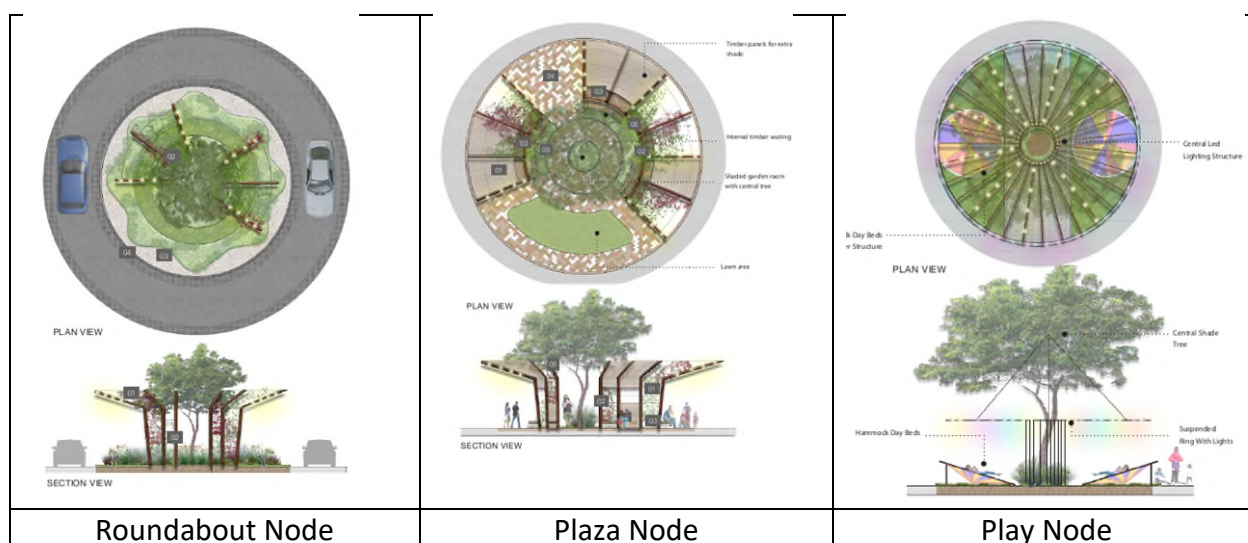


Figure 2. Proposed structural elements.

At the close of the public community exhibition period, Council had received 72 submissions, with all but one highly supportive of the enhancement of the riverside precinct. The community's preferred concept was clearly identified – with the Wandering Stage picking up 63% of the vote, Dubbo Borough 36% and neither option 1%.

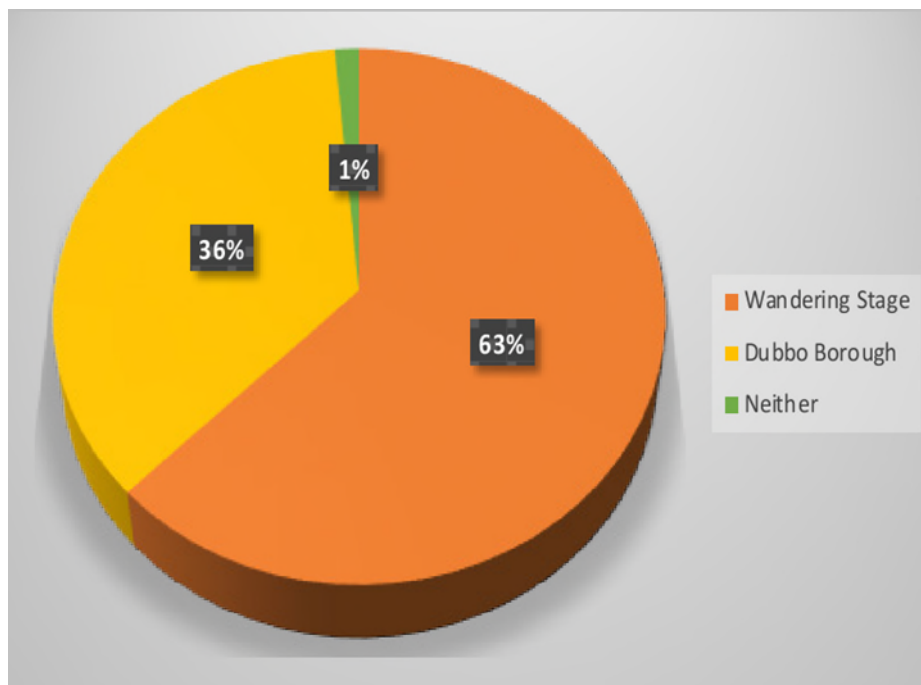


Figure 3. Results from Community Consultation – Preferred Concept.

As part of the process, the community was requested to identify which of the key elements of their preferred plan that they liked, as well as any of the elements from the alternative plan. These were then collated as primary and secondary preferences regardless of their preferred concept. The results of this poll was then tabulated (see Table 1 below) to assist in further informing the development of the final master plan.

Table 1. Primary and Secondary Preferences identified through Community Consultation.

Element	TOTAL
Boardwalk	47
Riverside stage	43
Disabled compliant amenities	43
Native corridor plantings	40
Connections to Tracker Riley	38
Increased street trees	36
Linkages to Macquarie Street	36
Natural terracing	35
Disabled compliant ramps	33
Play elements	33
Pedestrian plazas	30
Pedestrian Access from LH Ford	30

Repositioned pontoons	25
Arbour around seating area	25
Relocated boat ramp	25
Interpretative signage	21
Plaza node structures	21
Wayfinding signage	20
Retention of football fields	20
Functional design	16
arbour along Bligh Street	14
Mud Run / activated space	13
Small market space	12

In summary, the comments can be largely grouped in the following categories; Riverfront Comments, Events Precinct Comments, Sports and Recreation Comments and Other Comments.

Submissions have been attached as Appendix 2 and have been numbered in the top right hand corner of the page for convenience and cross referencing. The numbers in the section below relate to the submission number.

Riverfront Comments

NB: comments are unedited.

Flooding

8. If you build too much along the river I hope it will be able to survive flooding, as the bill to remix will no (sic). The river is beautiful and I love a lot of your plans. Just hoping what ever gets put in can be an easy not real expensive fix when we get flooding.
- 7/8. The boardwalk would be tricky around floods and impacts to riverbanks and riparian vegetation.
39. I like the addition of a toddler/child play area in this location, could it be possible for this area to be fenced in due to the high traffic flow in the locality?

Response:

All infrastructure constructed within this precinct will be designed to withstand flooding, and minimise repairs or reinstatement costs. The event stage area has been relocated from the western edge of Ollie Robbins Oval, adjacent to the breach point at times of flood, to the southern bank of the oval. The height differential is approximately 2 metres that reduces flood impact to the proposed structure, and will assist in reducing construction costs.

Installation of fencing around the event precinct, and playgrounds, are not considered viable options due to the high risk of damage during floods.

Trees / Vegetation

4. Native planting, an area of bush tucker to give those the experience of the food native to our land! Plant lots and lots of native plants, trees, ground covers! No more exotics!
8. This summer has certainly shown the importance of shade. Trees should be planted everywhere possible.
10. Water efficiency should also be a big factor as we live in an arid environment so that the opportunity to educate and create awareness of drought tolerant plant species to the community should not be passed up on.
17. Increased native corridor plantings and street tree plantings essential. Dubbo needs more trees everywhere. This summer has certainly shown the importance of shade. Trees should be planted everywhere possible.
57. Like idea of pontoon to the river, lots of tree planting, areas to sit and walk. Perhaps include sensory plants. Any BBQs? Exercise area? Keep it as natural as possible.
65. The development must consider the challenges of the climate in both hot and cold weather.

Response:

Significant plantings of predominately endemic species are proposed within the river corridor of the master plan. Increases in street tree plantings are also identified in accordance with the adopted Dubbo Street Tree Master Plan. Additional shade structures, including arbours and structural nodes, will assist in providing respite to Dubbo's hot summers.

Events Precinct Comments

NB: comments are unedited.

Stage area:

1. Stage in below concept plans are facing due east/west – all back stage talent & support are in full sun (a great deal of international talent tour in summer). Audience is facing west, sinking sun will be in their eyes. View of the river is blocked at all times by the stage

Riverbank leaves very limited room for backstage functionality, movement, green rooms, light & sound equipment/movement. Tiered seating and stage positioning similar to Munro Martin Parklands might be something to consider. Cycleway junction to maximise event capacity, facilitate backstage logistics

8. I would like to see more information on how an outdoor stage could work in this location around the proposed addition residences at 1 Church Street, Old Bank and noise complaints. It would be great to see musicians consulted on the stage design via SOMAD. There appears to be no vehicular access to the stage in the Borough option.
43. We don't need any more stages, spent enough money on cultural centre and theatre.
50. Terrible orientation. Most events on the stage will be held at sunset (or in the lead up to night) – guests would be staring directly into sun at many of the events. Should include pedestrian bridge across river to west. Sculptural - Good idea, but requirement for more shade and infrastructure for event organiser. Catering, power etc.

Response:

As a result of community and industry feedback, the stage has been moved from the western side of the Ollie Robbins Oval to the top of the southern bank. This provides a north south orientation that was identified as being the preferred option, as well as raising the stage approximately 2 metres above the base level of the oval. This will provide an improved outcome for spectators and performers alike. The southern bank location has the advantage of being closer to water and sewer connections that will assist in managing the costs of the project. It also has the advantage of pushing the noise along the river corridor to the north, which is comparatively sparsely populated.

The other advantage of the southern location is that it has been possible to merge the stage area, amenities and food outlet into the one structure. This enhancement should provide economies of scale in its construction, reduces the visual impacts of built structures along the river corridor and help support event organisers.

Food Outlets

10. One key element that is missing is food and beverages. To have a playground, sporting fields, amphitheatre and not a café is a missed opportunity for local businesses and should definitely be considered. It is often over looked in the redevelopment of urban green space and has a significant impact when not provided.
65. I have experienced the value of the Tamworth leisure areas on the banks of the Peel River which is a great attraction for not only the Tamworth community but the general surround region. The key to the attractiveness of the Tamworth leisure area is the location of a very well designed and managed café (Hop Scotch) in the centre of the attractions. The attraction of a café facility draws the parents and other groups without children. If there is no food facility it will not achieve the same drawing power.

Response:

The original concepts included a food outlet that was associated with the amenities block. As a result of the community feedback, the café and amenities have been merged with the stage area.

Additionally a "Market and Food Promenade" has now been included running along the western side of Ollie Robbins Oval. This area will be serviced with water, sewer and electricity and will be able to support event organisers and pop-up businesses.

Sports and Recreation comments

NB: comments are unedited.

5. Losing two soccer fields to the Mud Run is stupid. Don't lose too much space to the amphitheatre either
- 7/8. 1 prefer Option B – I cannot see justification for conversion of two sports fields to cater for a one-off, for-profit event like Mud Run
10. Keeping the existing sporting fields and incorporating that into Option A design would offer more functional and multipurpose green space for the community. The boat ramp would become an attraction in itself for kayakers, fishermen, and stand up paddle boards
21. Soccer fields are essential unless you are moving them to an alternative spot.
44. Option A is too busy. Keep it simple. Quality over quantity. Do not relocate the boat ramp, rather make a feature of it, people like watching people use it for boating/kayaking and triathlons. Just enhance its functionality/integration, and make it a swimmable natural pool/play area.
68. Dubbo triathlon club is in receipt of state government grants to put some concrete steps in for river swimming access.
69. Boat ramp doesn't need relocation, large expense small benefit. Dubbo Triathlon club is in receipt of a grant to upgrade swim access to the river in a few locations along the frontage that these plans apply to. Can we please arrange a face-to-face catch up to discuss.

Response:

Dubbo Regional Council is currently constructing additional sports fields further south at Pavan's Land. These soccer, touch and cricket fields will be ready for sport within 12 -18 months. A commitment has been to the Dubbo District Soccer Association that the fields at Hans Clavan will remain available to them until sports lights (minimum 2 fields) are installed.

It is the intent of the master plan to further activate the Hans Clavan Fields to extend its usage opportunities. For example, installation of a Ninja exercise course or high level gym equipment. It can, however, continue to support community events such as the Mud Run (that donates the majority of its proceeds to further community based projects along the river corridor), markets and gala days.

The boat ramp has been moved further to the south, with improvements to access roads, parking etc. It is the intent of the master plan to still provide limited river access at the current site of the boat ramp. Council will work closely with the Triathlon Club to help ensure suitable access is provided.

Other Comments

NB: comments are unedited.

3. Parks for toddlers and seniors should be next to each other as people can't be in two places at once with more than one child.

Response:

It is the intent of the master plan to create a number of play nodes/gathering spaces that are distributed along the riverside precinct, rather than grouping them together.

8. Pedestrian access across Wingewarra Street needs to be resolved in either option, possibly with traffic calming or a roundabout at Wingewarra Street and Bligh Streets.

Response:

Pedestrian crossing points have been identified in the master plan. These will need to go through the formal process, including Traffic Committee, to determine their need.

10. Option A incorporates great design with the natural landscape creating a more active city space and environment for people to utilise on a daily basis.

Singapore Gardens by the Bay is the perfect example of built environments replicating natural structures becoming functional in their application to capture rainwater and store for irrigation use. Solar installations should be implemented to provide clean energy to LED path, garden and street lights. How great would it be to have redeveloped this space and claim it to be carbon neutral in 10 years!

Response:

Noted.

19. I prefer Option A overall – it looks more interesting and diverse use of space. For Option A I can't see the Pedestrian access from LH Ford Bridge marked on the map to understand how this fits in? With the potential increase in usage of the area Option A appears to retain parking on the river side of Bligh Street where Option B shows no parking on the river side. I think parking needs to be retained on the river side, and potentially increased. Good idea, adds interest and is functional.

Response:

Proposed access from LH Ford bridge is included on the plan. This requires further discussions with the RMS.

24. Think 'Tamworth' and you'll get it right! Their park is amazing and the community make use out of the area in a huge way. They have a nearby restaurant – which I'm sure is not on Dubbo's plans but allowing a café would be great. Overall, what a wonderful and exciting area it will be for Dubbo Residents. Well done Ben and Greg.

Response:

Noted.

32. Great space to be used very frequently by a very wide spread of the community.

Response:

Noted.

34. Option B seems a more natural design. I like how they are both promoting natural spaces and habitat with signage.

Response:

Noted.

36. Option B seems a more natural design. I like how they are both promoting natural spaces and habitat with signage for people to read. Are there picnic areas?

Response:

Yes.

39. Will this area also include a filtered water station?

Response:

Yes.

41. Can't wait to see it when it's completed.

Response:

Noted.

43. Believe this design has the potential to bring events to Dubbo and also will allow us to show off our best natural feature – the river.

Response:

Noted.

44. A random idea/suggestion is that 'a river illumination' walk shining coloured lights/lasers on the river at night in this area (during winter dream festival) could be a unique feature.

Response:

Lighting integration as suggested can be considered as more detailed designs are developed.

48. At last a tribute to our amazing Macquarie River. A relaxing family orientated and tourist friendly area. Sculptural - Excellent idea.

Response:

Noted.

49. The river is significantly underutilised, access direct to the river via pontoon is a start but is it enough? Was the West Dubbo Park next to bridge looked at? It has a natural reverse amphitheatre and potential for significantly more new parking spaces if an event is on?

Response:

The parameters of the Mayoral Minute were that the master plan was to concentrate on the eastern bank of the Macquarie River between the LH Ford Bridge and Seriser Bridge.

Sculptural elements

8. The sculptural elements look okay, please make them natural, organic shapes, not hard, and artificial. Use local trades' people and artists to do the work. Most importantly just do it, don't talk about it and do nothing (Regand Park pie in the sky plans).

43. Sculptural - Great idea, however think they should celebrate a connection of place to the local Wiradjuri people.
44. Sculptural - By all means get sculptural, but don't go nuts – Sculptural round about pontoon is a bit much.
49. Sculptural - Use of extensive solar lighting for extended usage and security purposes should be the focus with sculptural art work something that can be added over time, and perhaps an event could be held to encourage artists to submit designs and construct at own cost for an award? This would give us greater use of ratepayer funds.
54. Sculptural - It's good place for community events.
57. Sculptural - Love to see some Aboriginal designs and stories. Maybe something that talks about the Aboriginal land, which tribe people.

Response:

The structural elements designs are still to be finalised. However, there is an opportunity to include indigenous design elements into them to recognise Dubbo's Aboriginal cultural history. Council will engage with the local Aboriginal community through the Wiradjuri Technical Advisory Panel.

As part of the proposed designs, the structural elements will include LED lighting to add both decorative and additional security lighting into areas, as well as the incorporation of features such as misting systems (plaza nodes), to add an additional cooling mechanism to combat the heat of summer.

Clubhouse

59. I would really like to see a two storey clubhouse with café incorporated into the amenities building. This could serve as a shared clubhouse for the Triathlon club, Dragon boat club, future rowing club and maybe a running club. Ground level could be boat and bike storage, lockers (public use?) as well as toilets and showers. Upstairs could be the café and clubhouse (sort of like the rugby clubhouse in Victoria park but nicer). Easy access to the river will be essential for users to get boaters in and out. I think this will be perfect addition to the site and will promote fitness and help support existing clubs as well as providing the perfect meeting place. (Picture Southbank in Melbourne along the Yarra) people rowing, running and cycling and meeting for coffee in the morning. If council will consider this idea I am happy to pay for an architectural concept design. Please consider this idea.
60. I think a really good addition to this could be the addition of clubhouse/café to provide increased amenity of the area to the public and provide clubhouse facilities to the likes of the Dragon boat club, the triathlon club and the soccer association.

62. It should still allow Triathlon Club to use the area as a base along with other Clubs. In Bathurst the Triathlon Club and two other sporting clubs have a joint clubhouse behind the swimming pool. A "home" with separate storage. It is very accessible to existing parking and Macquarie Street. It must retain the existing running/walking track that also includes off road cycling with gravel surface. Access to toilets but not hidden by trees to make it socially more secure from attacks behind trees. The running park lights were installed for greater safety, particularly for women in case that is lost by a forest that is also fire prone to anti-social behaviour which does occur. It should be safe from flooding with a 1:14 walking ramp to the upper floor. There are good ideas in second option which could be incorporated and drop some random ideas in first.
63. Two story clubhouse for the Triathlon club, Dragon boat club, running club and even a rowing club with boat/bike storage, lockers, toilet showers down stairs and café/clubhouse upstairs. Like the rugby clubhouse but much nicer. Picture the rowing club houses along the Yarra in Melbourne.

Response:

The request for a double clubhouse has not been included within this master plan. While it is acknowledged that clubs such as the Triathlon Club, Dragon Boat etc. would benefit from a clubhouse, there may be better sites available that need to be investigated. One site that has been investigated previously is Sandy Beach, with designs already completed for a second storey on the existing amenity block. Another possible site could be on the opposite bank of the Macquarie River, away from the event precinct. Council will meet with these clubs in an effort to identify their future needs.

RV Dump Point

Although not submitted within the latest round of community consultation, this issue of installing a RV Dump Point within this precinct has been raised on a number of occasions with Council staff.

Response:

A dump point has not been included in the prepared master plan as RV Dump Points are operational and are generally attractive and unhygienic sites.

The overall objective of the Macquarie River CBD Master Plan is to reactivate the area, and to make it more attractive for our community and encourage higher usage through events and improved connections to the CBD.

The Macquarie River CBD Master Plan has been amended by Group GSA to incorporate a significant number of suggestions, as discussed above, made by the community and industry/event managers. The overall riverside precinct is shown in Figure 4 below. At this macro level, the major changes from the Wandering Stage concept plan are:

1. The removal of the soccer fields for community events and activation space.
2. The relocation of the boat ramp from the end of Church Street to just north of the LH Ford Bridge.
3. Relocation of stage area to the south end of Ollie Robbins Oval and incorporation of amenities and café into the one structure.
4. Improved connections between Council carpark and back of the stage area.

3.3 WANDERING STAGE FOLLOWING PUBLIC EXHIBITION



Figure 4. Macquarie River CBD Master Plan following Community Consultation

Figure 5 provides a more detailed view of the central area that is largely based on the existing Ollie Robbins Oval. It shows a clear connection between the relocated stage area and the Council controlled carpark that provides event support vehicles a conveniently located parking area, proposed pedestrian access across Bligh Street as well as the Market and Food Promenade along the western side of the oval.

3.4 DETAIL MASTER PLAN

THE WANDERING STAGE
DETAIL PLAN OF CENTRAL AREAS



Figure 5. Detail View of Central (Ollie Robbins Oval) Area



Figure 6. Event Precinct

As identified in the Financial Implications, Dubbo Regional Council has a total budget of \$3,514,849, through the NSW State Government (Regional Growth: Environment and Tourism Fund for “Destination Dubbo: International Ready”) and a supporting contribution from Dubbo Regional Council. The Event Precinct for which these funds are applicable to are shown in Figure 6.

As a result of extensive stakeholder engagement, both internal and external of Council, a strong Macquarie River CBD Master Plan has now been prepared and is submitted for consideration (Appendix 3).

SUMMARY

The Macquarie River CBD Master Plan is the culmination of extensive consultation with internal and external stakeholders and utilisation of the professional experience and knowledge of Group GSA.

Dubbo Regional Council has \$3.51 million to commence work on the Macquarie River CBD Master Plan, with this work largely focussed on the Event Precinct under the funding agreement between the NSW State Government (Regional Environment: Growth and Tourism Fund – “Destination Dubbo: International Ready”) and Dubbo Regional Council. To complete the overall master plan, further funds will be required through external funding streams, Dubbo Regional Council, or a combination of these streams.

Appendices:

- 1** Media - Macquarie River CBD Master Plan
- 2** Community Feedback - Macquarie River CBD Master Plan
- 3** Macquarie River CBD Master Plan April 2020