



OUR OPEN SPACES

Mornington Peninsula Shire
Open Space Strategy 2025 - 2040

Community Assembly Report

OCTOBER 2024

Appendix 5



MORNINGTON
PENINSULA
Shire



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bunurong people, who have been the custodians of this land for many thousands of years; and pay respect to their elders past and present. We acknowledge that the land on which we live and work is the place of age-old ceremonies, celebrations, initiation and renewal; and that the Bunurong peoples' living culture continues to have a unique role in the life of this region.

We also acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who now call the Mornington Peninsula home, their rich cultural heritage, and their connection to Country of their homelands. We understand that healing Country through truth-telling, traditional knowledge, and reconciliation will also start to heal cultural divides between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Cultural tradition and knowledge are intrinsic parts of valuing and connecting with the landscape (open space); this knowledge is a gift to be embraced by all.



About this Report

This report outlines the process delivered by Emerge Associates and i.e. community to deliver the Open Space Community Assembly on behalf of Mornington Peninsula Shire (MPS). The deliberative engagement process was part of a broader engagement process delivered by MPS, i.e. community and Emerge Associates.

The Community Assembly was guided by the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020 (the Act). While not required for open space planning, MPS's commitment to deliberative engagement reflects the intention of the Act to increase community input into decision making.

It contains the Community Assembly's recommendations on access to open space to inform the development of the Open Space Strategy.

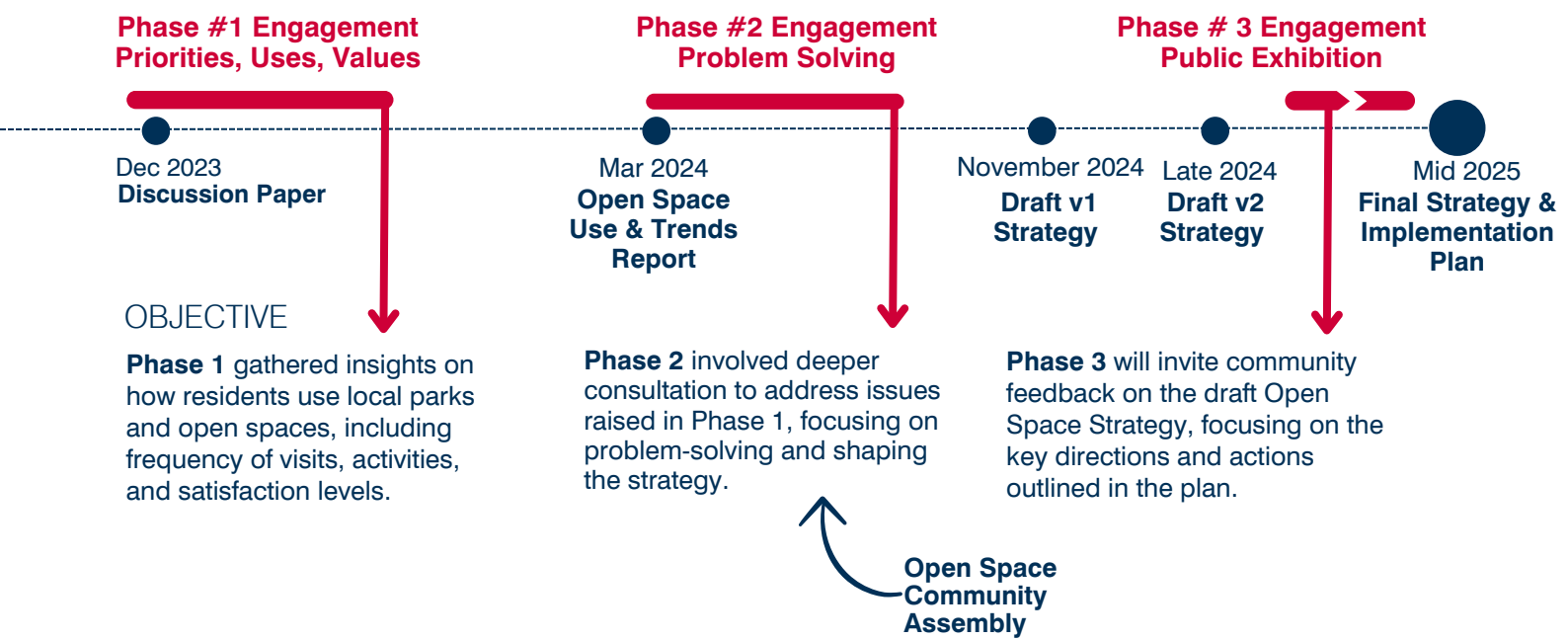
INTRODUCTION

The Open Space Community Assembly was part of a broader two-phased engagement process designed to inform the development of the Shire's Open Space Strategy.

In Phase 1, broad community engagement activities were conducted, including surveys, pop-up sessions, and stakeholder consultations. These efforts gathered initial insights on residents and visitors use of open spaces, identified barriers, and highlighted priorities for the future.

Building on these findings, Phase 2 aimed to explore key issues in greater depth, particularly focusing on barriers to access and underrepresented voices. This phase involved targeted workshops with advisory, community, and business groups. The second phase culminated in the Open Space Community Assembly, which brought together a representative group of residents to provide recommendations on equitable access to open space across the Shire.

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW



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OUR APPROACH

OUR OBJECTIVE

Co-design a deliberative process that builds on broad engagement findings, provides clear guidance to Council, and further builds the capacity of MPS and the community to work together to create a shared future for open space on the Mornington Peninsula.

DESIGNING THE PROCESS

The deliberative engagement process was co-designed with MPS with many touch points from inception to conclusion. This included the developing the remit, recruitment of the Assembly, and design of the deliberative sessions.

The aim of the co-design process was to:

- Align expectations on what would be delivered
- Develop a remit that would be meaningful to Council and the community
- Establish the approach to recruitment and Assembly structure
- Build support for the process and the capability of Council to undertake deliberative engagement.

RECRUITMENT AND REPRESENTATION

The Assembly consisted of 24 members who were recruited to be broadly representative of the Mornington Peninsula Shire.

The recruitment process for the Community Assembly was designed to involve community representatives who broadly reflected the diversity of the Mornington Peninsula Shire, with a focus on community groups with an interest in open space. To achieve this, a range of community groups were identified by MPS, including those representing different demographics, geographic areas, and specific user interests, such as environmental groups, recreational users, and accessibility advocates. This approach ensured that the Assembly captured a wide range of perspectives on the use and development of open spaces.

To further ensure representation of the different needs of people across the Shire, participants were assigned personas representing residents with various needs. These personas helped participants think beyond their own experiences and consider the broader community's needs. By exploring how different groups might use or access open spaces, participants engaged in more informed discussions, leading to more equitable and representative recommendations.

A list of the community groups represented in the Assembly is provided in Appendix 1.

THE ASSEMBLY'S TASK

Good, equitable access to open space is having access to a range of open space experiences that meet community needs.

The Community Assembly was tasked with helping to define what that really means for people, and how this is different throughout the Shire.

From there Council can:

- Consider current provision of spaces and amenities against this understanding of “good access to open space experiences”
- Prioritise filling gaps in service provision
- Consider opportunities, requests against a clear idea of what we are aiming for.

Purpose

To prioritise access to various experiences in open space and establish a “target” which reflects the unique needs of people throughout the Shire.

THE REMIT

The overarching question that the Community Assembly considered was:

Given limited resources, how should Council prioritise investment in open spaces across the Shire to ensure it aligns with the values and needs of our diverse coastal, suburban, and rural communities?

The Assembly was asked to:

- Prioritise the many different types of experiences offered in open space, for different areas of the Shire, and
- Make recommendations for the target distribution of these experiences.

The reason why this is so important is because it will help Council to make challenging decisions considering:

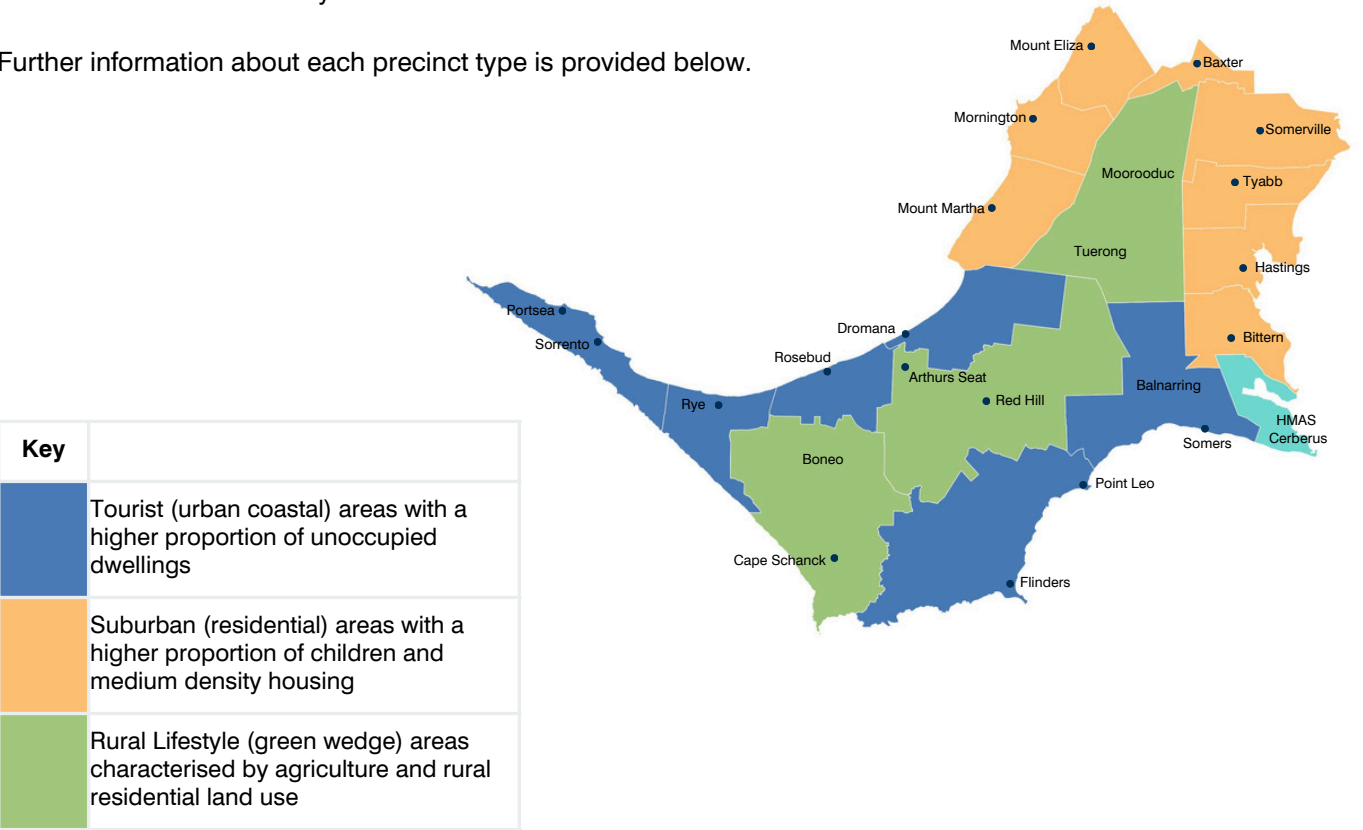
- Where to invest in community infrastructure to serve the most people or have the largest impact
- How best to respond to community requests for infrastructure and open spaces
- How to balance reactive decision making shaped by community requests and long term needs like maintenance and replacement of assets at the end of their service life.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRECINCTS

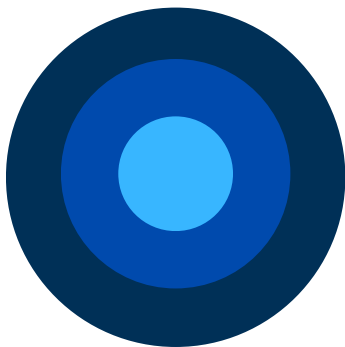
The starting point for the deliberative process was understanding the diverse precincts within the Mornington Peninsula Shire. Each precinct has unique characteristics that shape the needs and priorities for open space. By recognising these differences, the Assembly could make more informed recommendations about how to equitably distribute open space across the Shire.

The distinct landscapes, population densities, and community needs within these precincts provided the foundation for the Assembly’s discussions.

Further information about each precinct type is provided below.



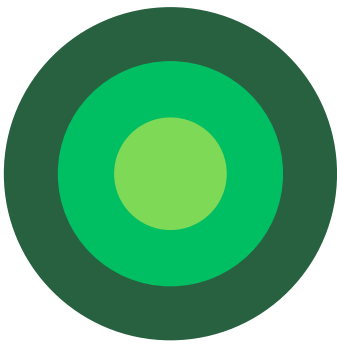
Please note that the areas mapped are indicative, there are towns/suburbs within these assigned areas which will not fit perfectly into the description.



Tourist Precincts
(Urban Coastal)



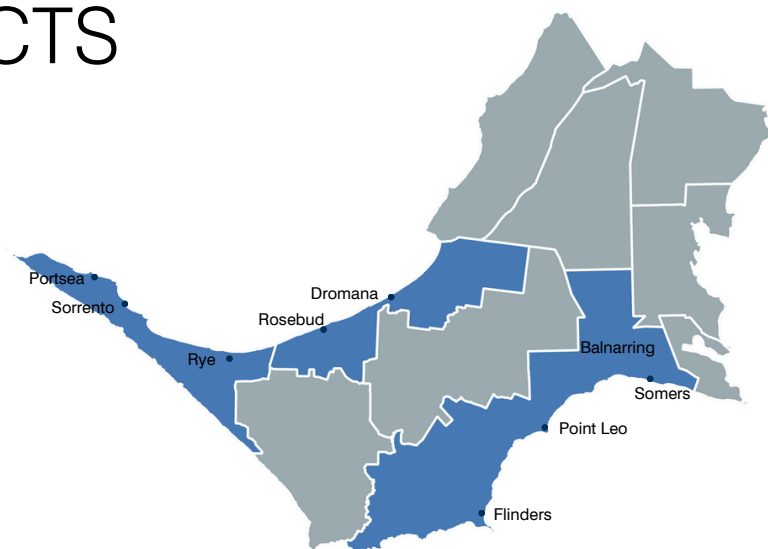
Suburban Precincts
(Residential)



Rural Lifestyle Precincts
(Green Wedge)

TOURIST PRECINCTS (BLUE)

Precincts along the southern portions of the coast and bays are known for their lifestyle offering and are historically holiday destinations for visitors from Melbourne. Recently these areas have seen both more visitors and more permanent residents.

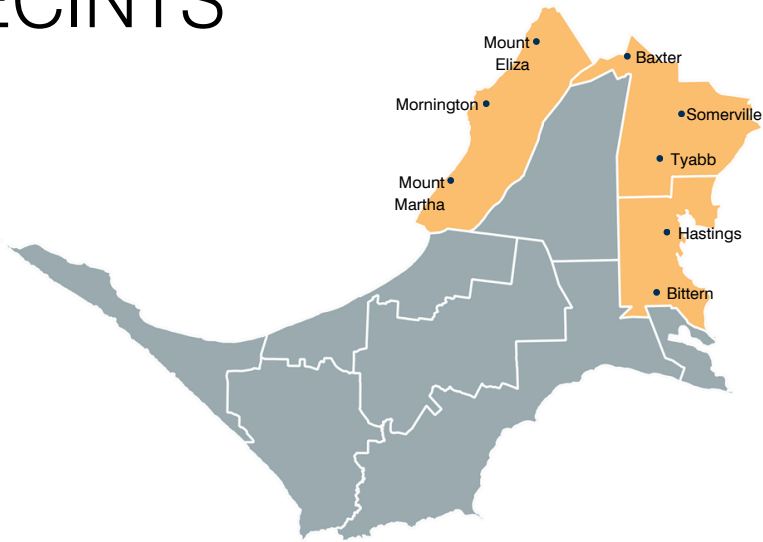


Distinctive Features	Implications for Open Space
Mixed density - Some larger properties with well developed private open space, in town centres smaller properties, town houses and apartments.	Open space in town centres is utilised by those with no access to private open space. Areas with more apartments and townhouses are more likely to rely on open space for larger gatherings and day-to-day access to green space. Those with backyards may have amenities (like pools, tennis courts etc.).
High proportion of holiday homes (42% vacant properties, 26% Shire average). Higher populations and visitation during Summer. More families and young people during these times but an older permanent demographic.	High demand for foreshore infrastructure and play spaces during peak holiday periods. These spaces are also likely to be in demand for events like concerts, festivals and markets. Resident year round population may not use play spaces as much. Popular experiences for older adults include looped walking and cycling paths, court sports, and natural areas.
Coastal landscape and access to beaches both along the bays and ocean.	These natural features are a draw card for both locals and visitors who enjoy walking along the coast. These areas will also be increasingly impacted by sea level rise.
Walkable, especially in/near town centres and along the coast.	People are more likely to walk to and between open spaces.



SUBURBAN PRECINCTS (YELLOW)

Precincts along the northern portions of the coast and bays are historically more residential than other areas of the Shire. While quite different in terms of affluence, there are many similarities in the urban landscape.

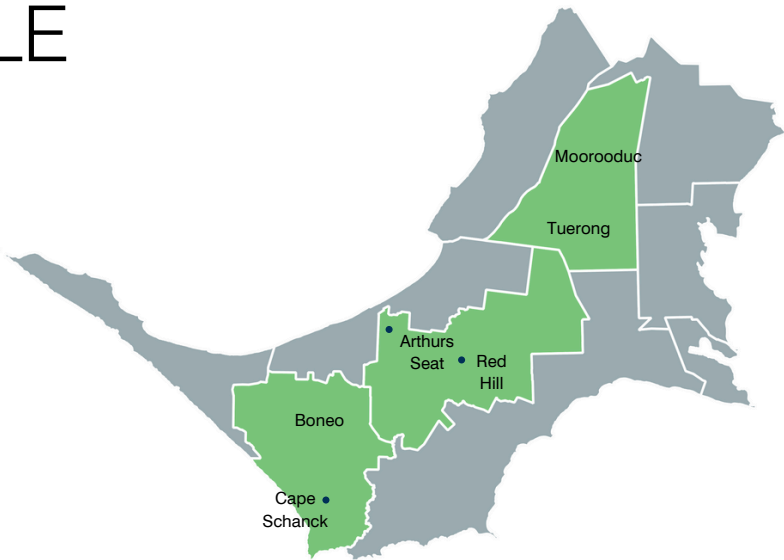


Distinctive Features	Implication for Open Space
Low to medium density, predominantly suburban areas with town centres. (16% medium density compared to the 12% Shire average).	People are fairly likely to walk to and between open spaces from home, more so near town centres. In suburban areas most people have backyards.
Higher proportion of families (42% households have children, compared to the 36% Shire average).	More recreational demand for play spaces and formal and informal places to play sport.
There are patches of older Suburban development and new subdivisions can result in less “unique” landscapes.	Open spaces can provide sense of place through views, trees, native species and other natural features.
Higher “permanent” populations (8.6% average unoccupied dwellings, 26% Shire average).	Residents in suburban precincts are more likely to be year round residents meaning demand for open space is more consistent.



RURAL LIFESTYLE (GREEN)

Precincts through the middle ridge of the peninsula are largely rural landholdings and include some significant areas of conservation space.



Distinctive Features	Implications for Open Space
Very low density - larger private properties predominantly zoned as green wedge.	Most residents have access to significant areas of private open space on their own properties. This means people may visit open spaces more for community events or team/group activities instead of for passive uses of open green space.
Situated within the Green Wedge area which is land specifically zoned for agriculture and conservation. Green Wedge zoned land only permits 1 dwelling per lot ensuring that properties have large areas of private open space.	More access to large bushland reserves for hiking and camping. Visitors to the area seek out features such as wineries, golf resorts, hot springs, and natural areas.
Car dependant landscape with large distances between destinations typically. As the green wedge zone doesn't permit high densities or commercial uses, town centres tend to be more concentrated and far between.	Walking is less important as most activities require a drive whether this be to access the local shops or sports oval.



PROCESS OVERVIEW

The Community Assembly met three times for an online evening briefing, an in-person session at Mornington Library, and a final online session. An overview of the sessions is provided below.

Briefing: Introduce and understand

Wednesday, 21 August, 6:00pm - 8:00pm (online)

The first session was an evening briefing session where the Assembly met each other, the facilitators and the project team. They gained an understanding of the Open Space planning process, the policy context and importantly, the Assembly process. This briefing set the foundation of the Assembly, understanding how we work together and setting the expectations for the deliberative process.

Session #1: Learn and explore

Saturday, 24 August, 9am- 2.30pm (in person)

An in person session to gain an understanding of the precincts and experiences. The Assembly considered information from the first phase of community engagement and current open space data. The group deliberated on the priority experiences and their distribution across the shire to ensure it aligns with the community's values and aspirations.

Session #2: Deliberate and decide

Thursday, 29 August, 6.00pm - 8.00pm (online)

The final session to share outcomes from the in-person session and build consensus. The Assembly finalised their recommended distribution and voted to confirm their support.



PRIORITISING EXPERIENCES

STEP #1 - PRIORITISING EXPERIENCES

The tags below describe the kinds of open space experiences the community might have access to, or might like to have access to.

The Community Assembly was asked to review the experiences and consider the unique needs of different communities throughout the Shire.

Activity

Participants were asked to prioritise the most important open space experiences for each precinct, ensuring that the recommendations reflected the unique needs of each area.

Natural area with a walking trail (such as bushland, coast, creekline)

A fenced dog off-leash area

Area or trail for off-leash dog exercise and socialisation (unfenced)

A trail, ideally in a loop for a short (under half an hour) walk

A quiet green space with trees and grass

A park which can host small community events such as a farmers market

A park which can host larger events such as live music or festivals

Casual sport/physical activity amenities (such as a half court, hit up wall, climbing wall, or outdoor exercise equipment)

A sport park with a single oval/field or small amount of courts (not lit for evening play)

A sport park with two ovals/fields which are lit for evening play and training

A sport precinct with multiple sports facilities, more than 3 ovals/fields with a pavilion and lighting for evening play and training

A grassy open space to kick a ball around

A small playground for short, regular visits (likely most suitable for younger kids)

A medium size playground for regular visits, with something to offer for a range of ages

A large playground for a weekend or longer visits with kids of different ages and abilities (perhaps an adventure playground or water play area)

A skatepark, BMX or pump track

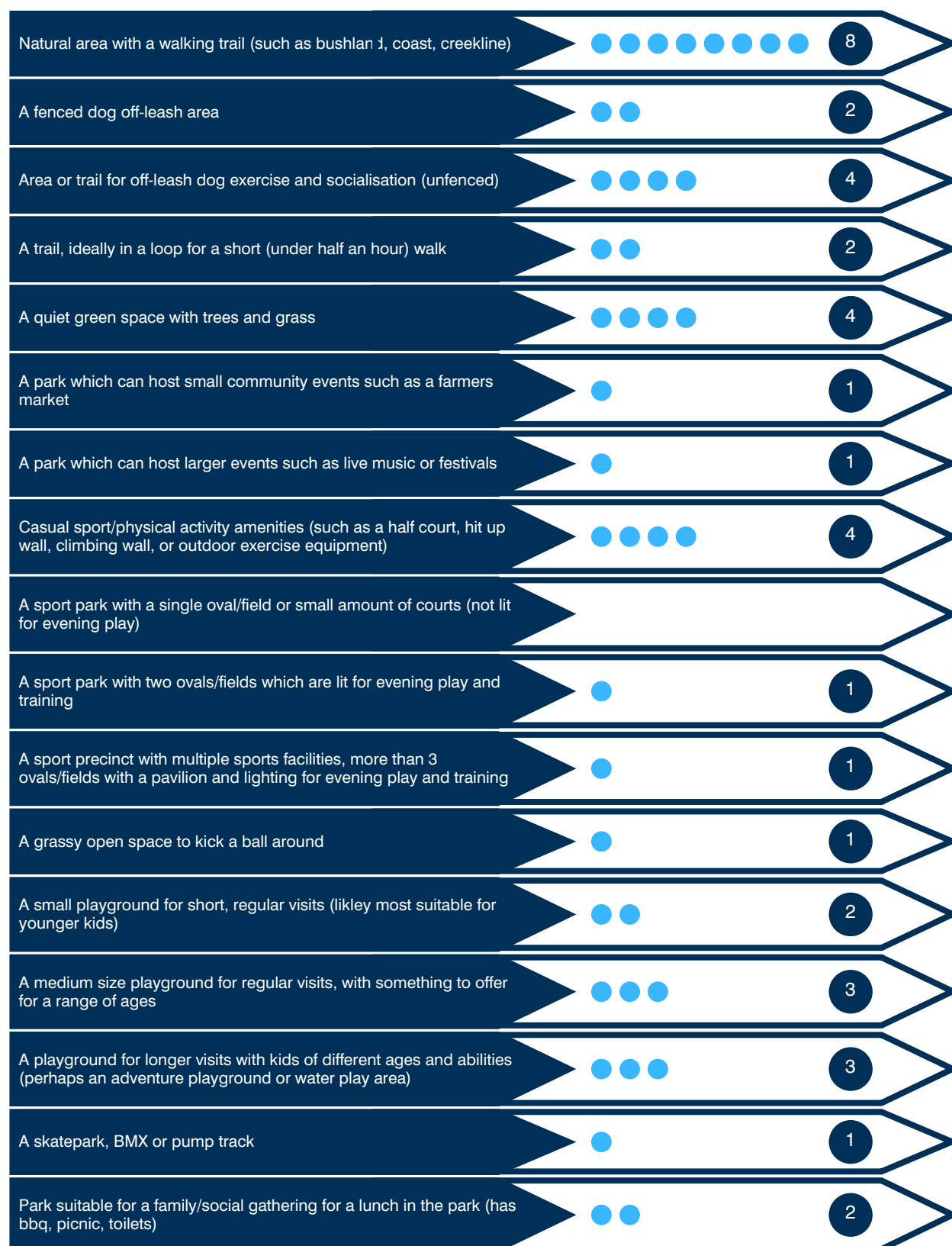
Park suitable for a family/social gathering for a lunch in the park (has bbq, picnic, toilets)



TOURIST PRECINCTS

OUTPUT

The Community Assembly prioritised the open space experiences for the Tourist Precincts as shown below.



TOURIST PRECINCTS

Based on the initial prioritisation, the experiences for each precinct were further discussed and grouped into categories based on their level of importance to the community as shown below.

Very important to have access to

Natural area with a walking trail (such as bushland, coast, creekline)

Area or trail for off-leash dog exercise and socialisation (unfenced)

Casual sport/physical activity amenities (such as a half court, hit up wall, climbing wall, or outdoor exercise equipment)

A quiet green space with trees and grass

Important

A medium size playground for regular visits, with something to offer for a range of ages

A large playground for a weekend or longer visits with kids of different ages and abilities (perhaps an adventure playground or water play area)

Nice to have

A sport park with a single oval/field or small amount of courts (not lit for evening play)

A park which can host larger events such as live music or festivals

A park which can host larger events such as live music or festivals

A sport precinct with multiple sports facilities, more than 3 ovals/fields with a pavilion and lighting for evening play and training

Not as important

A sport park with a single oval/field or small amount of courts (not lit for evening play)

A grassy open space to kick a ball around

A skatepark, BMX or pump track

Not important

SUBURBAN PRECINCTS

OUTPUT

The Community Assembly prioritised the open space experiences for the Suburban Precincts as shown below.



SUBURBAN PRECINCTS

Based on the initial prioritisation, the experiences for each precinct were further discussed and grouped into categories based on their level of importance to the community as shown below.

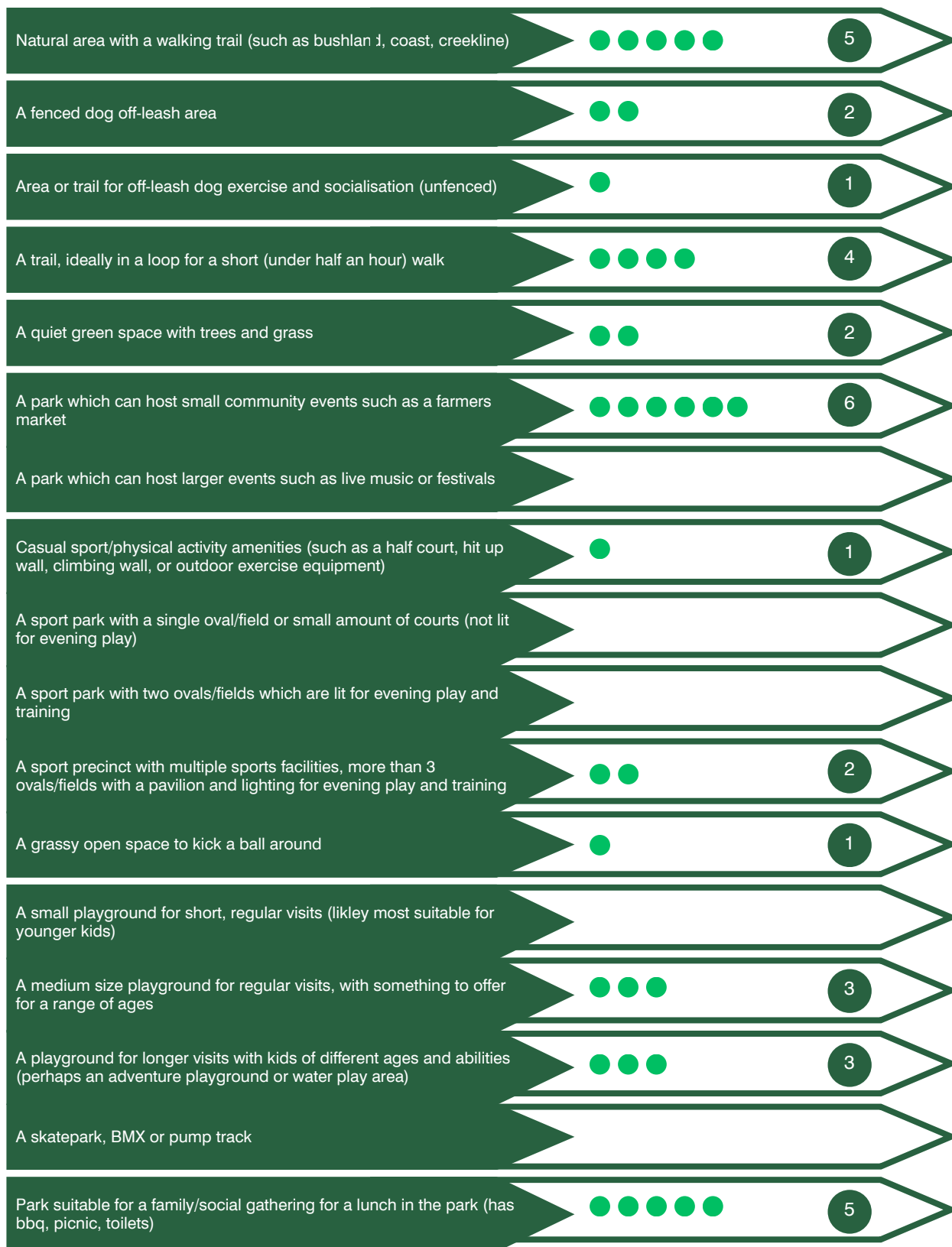
Very important to have access to	Natural area with a walking trail (such as bushland, coast, creekline)	A quiet green space with trees and grass
	Park suitable for a family/social gathering in the park (has bbq, picnic, toilets)	A grassy open space to kick a ball around
		A skatepark, BMX or pump track
Important	A trail, ideally in a loop for a short (under half an hour) walk	A sport precinct with multiple sports facilities, more than 3 ovals/fields with a pavilion and lighting for evening play and training
	A sport park with a single oval/field or small amount of courts (not lit for evening play)	A medium size playground for regular visits, with something to offer for a range of ages
Nice to have	A park which can host larger events such as live music or festivals	Casual sport/physical activity amenities (such as a half court, hit up wall, climbing wall, or outdoor exercise equipment)
Not as important	A sport precinct with multiple sports facilities, more than 3 ovals/fields with a pavilion and lighting for evening play and training	A sport park with a single oval/field or small amount of courts (not lit for evening play)
	A small playground for short, regular visits (likely most suitable for younger kids)	A park which can host larger events such as live music or festivals
		A sport park with a single oval/field or small amount of courts (not lit for evening play)

Not important

RURAL LIFESTYLE PRECINCTS

OUTPUT

The Community Assembly prioritised the open space experiences for the Rural Lifestyle Precincts as shown below.



RURAL LIFESTYLE PRECINCTS

Based on the initial prioritisation, the experiences for each precinct were further discussed and grouped into categories based on their level of importance to the community as shown below.

Very important to have access to

A park which can host small community events such as a farmers market

Natural area with a walking trail (such as bushland, coast, creekline)

A trail, ideally in a loop for a short (under half an hour) walk

Park suitable for a family/social gathering for a lunch in the park (has bbq, picnic, toilets)

Important

A large playground for a weekend or longer visits with kids of different ages and abilities (perhaps an adventure playground or water play area)

A medium size playground for regular visits, with something to offer for a range of ages

Nice to have

A grassy open space to kick a ball around

Area or trail for off-leash dog exercise and socialisation (unfenced)

Casual sport/physical activity amenities (such as a half court, hit up wall, climbing wall, or outdoor exercise equipment)

A quiet green space with trees and grass

Not as important

A sport park with a single oval/field or small amount of courts (not lit for evening play)

A park which can host larger events such as live music or festivals

A sport park with a single oval/field or small amount of courts (not lit for evening play)

A skatepark, BMX or pump track



SETTING DISTRIBUTION TARGETS

STEP #2 - SETTING TARGETS

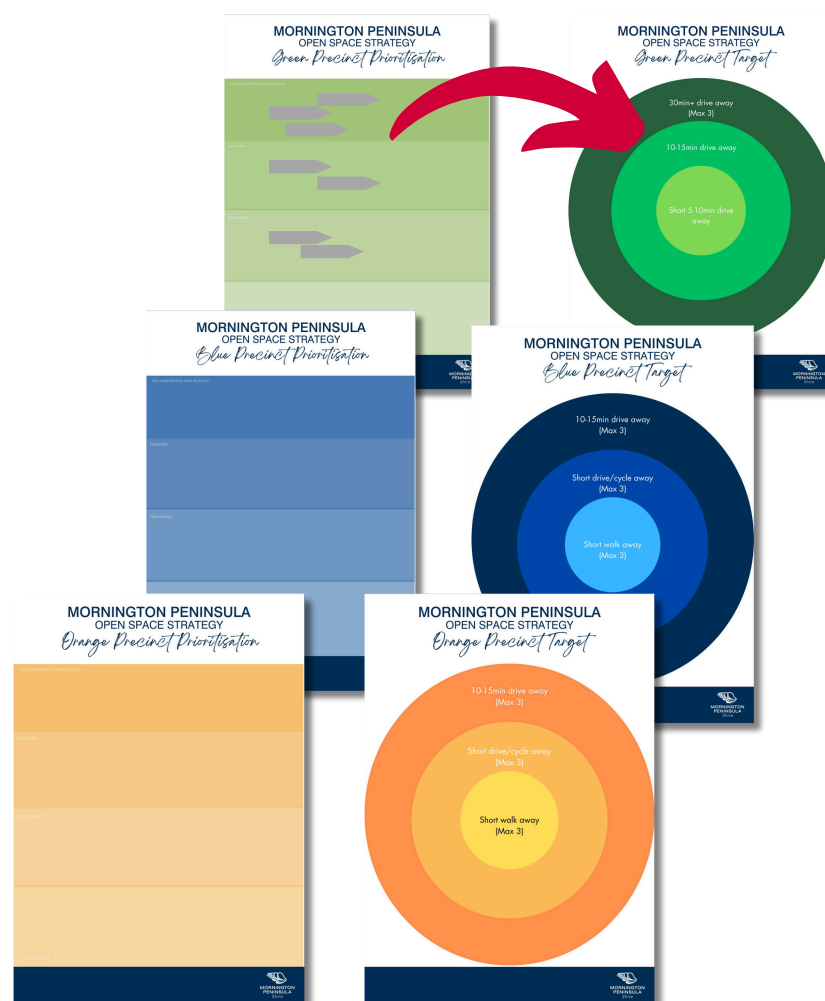
In this step, the Assembly further explored what it means to have "good access" to important open space experiences. Participants were asked to set targets for the ideal distribution of high-priority experiences across the Shire.

For each **important** and **very important** experience identified in the previous step, participants considered how far residents should reasonably travel to access these experiences.

The goal was to set a target for the distance from home where these experiences should be available.

Activity

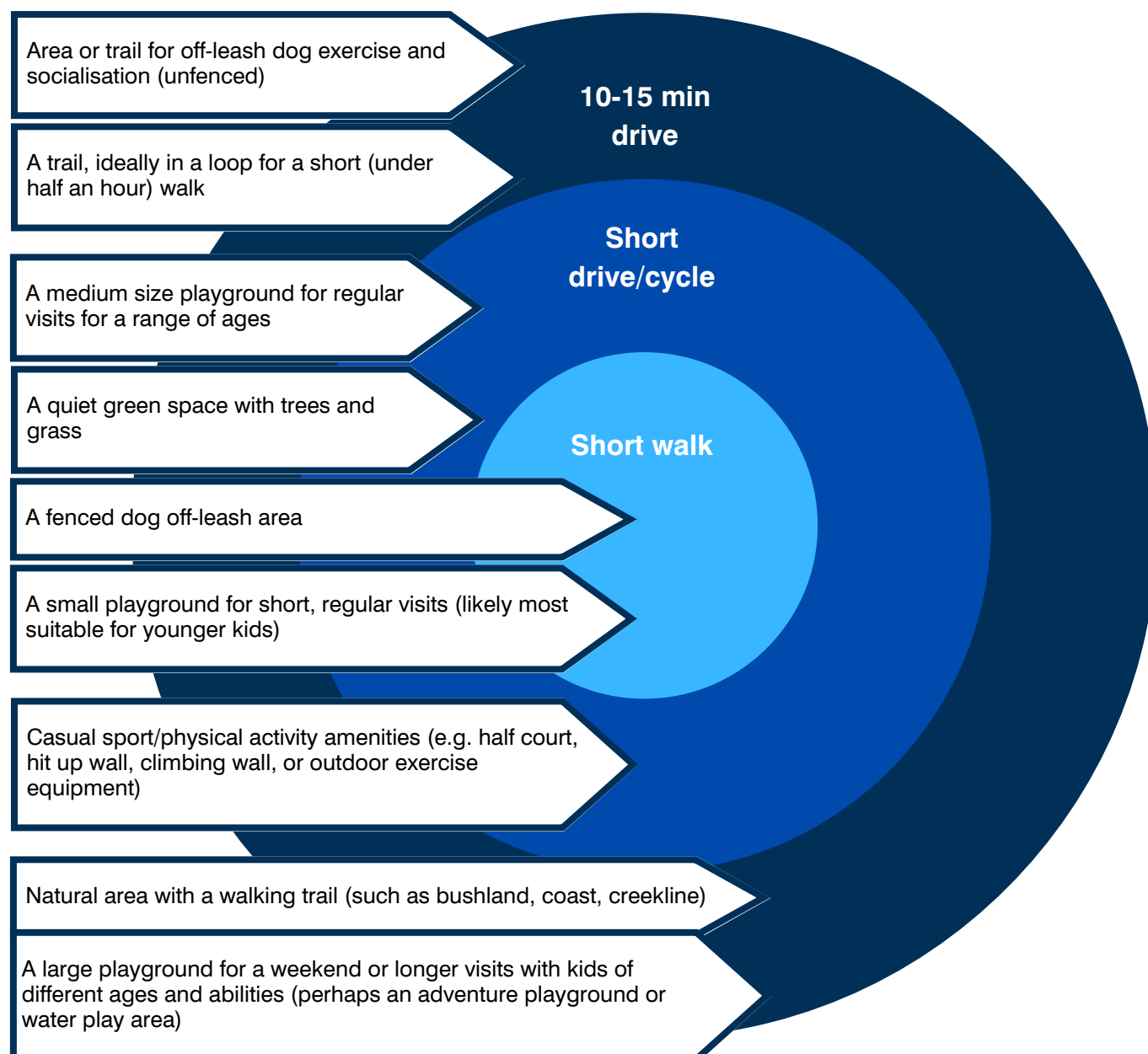
Participants were asked to prioritise the most important open space experiences in their precincts by setting a "target" for a reasonable distance from home.



TOURIST PRECINCTS

OUTCOME

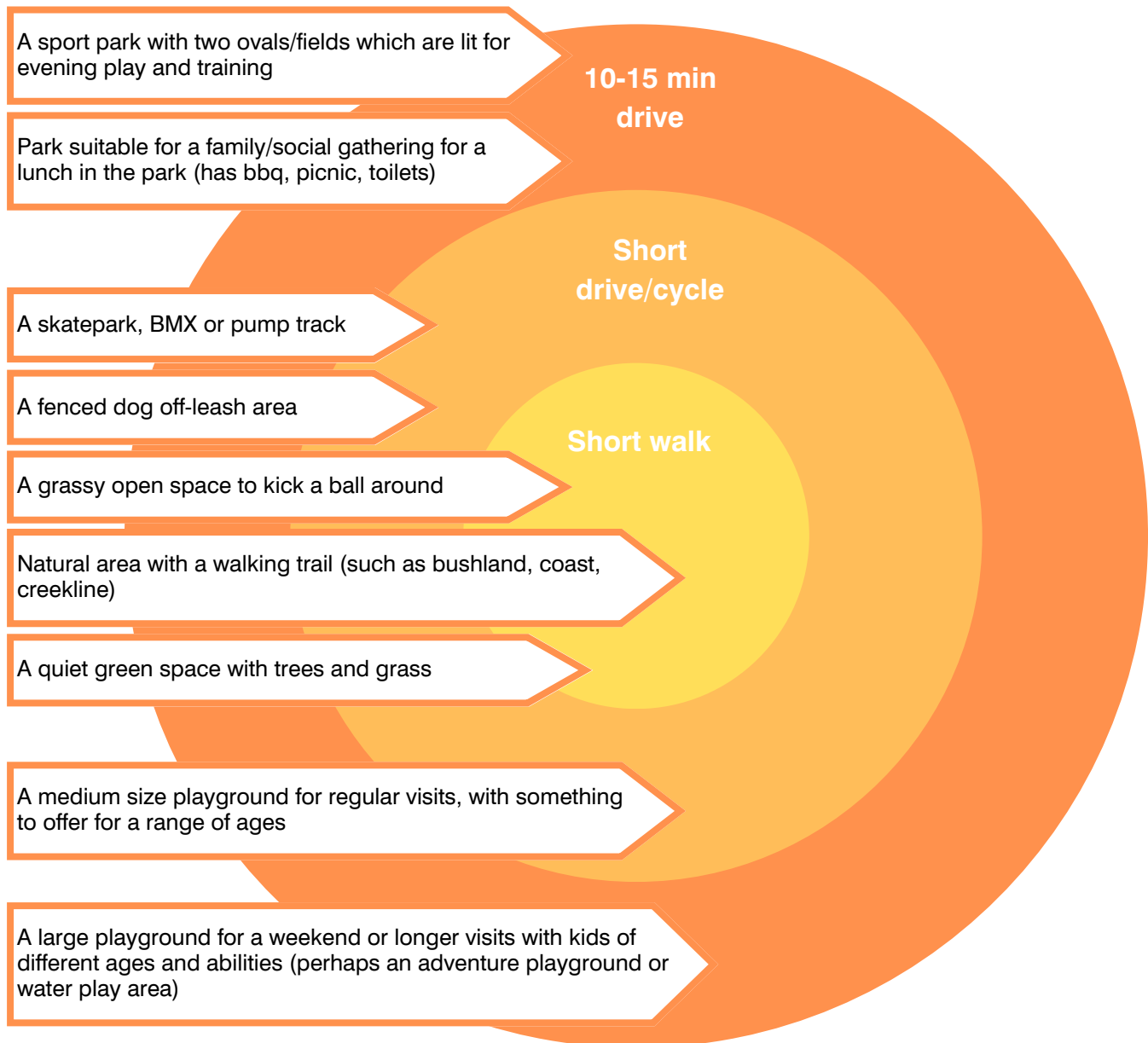
The Community Assembly recommended the distribution of experiences below for the Tourist (Urban Coastal) Precincts.



SUBURBAN PRECINCTS

OUTCOME

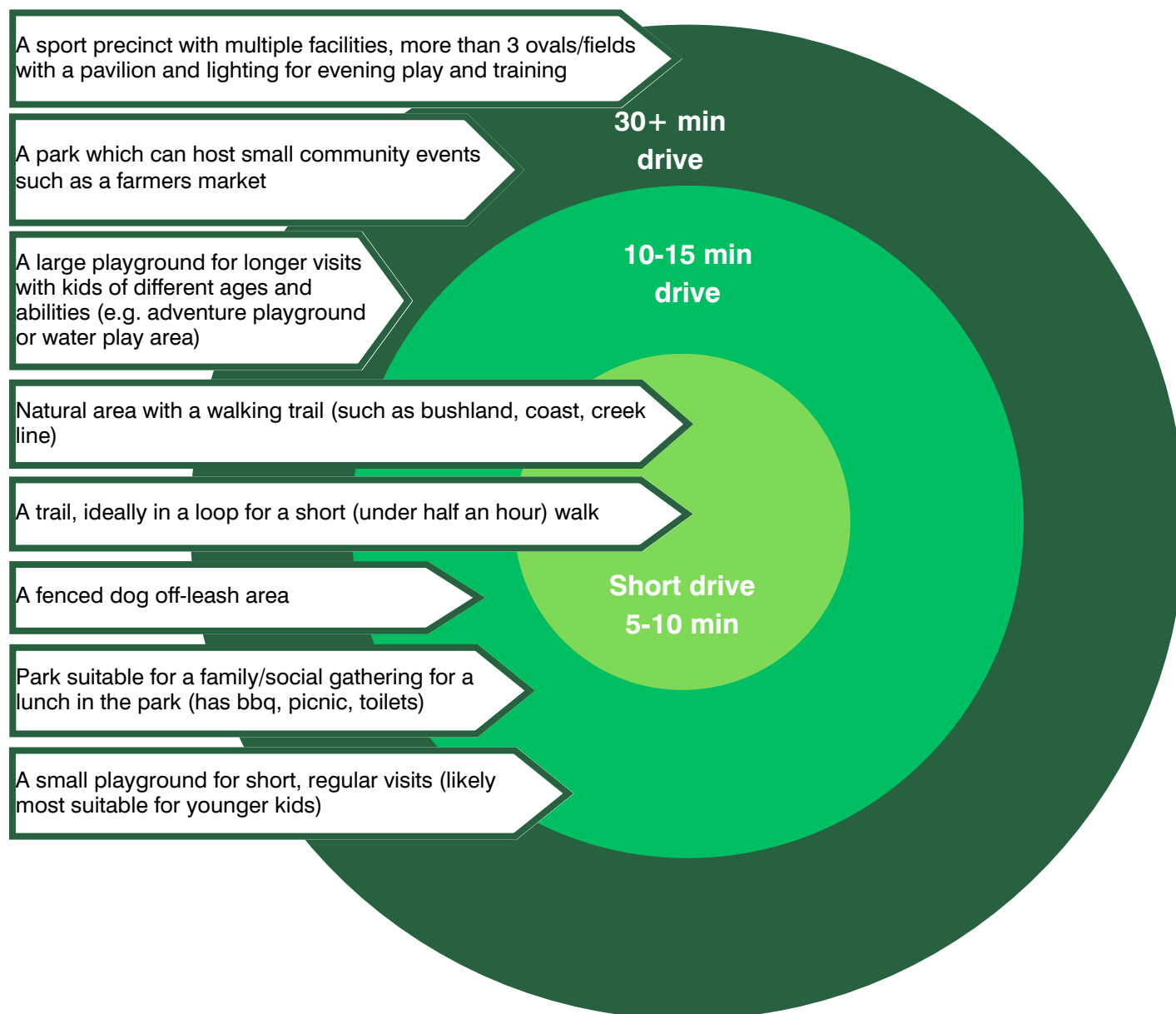
The Community Assembly recommended the distribution of experiences below for the Suburban Precincts (Residential).



RURAL LIFESTYLE PRECINCTS

OUTCOME

The Community Assembly recommended the distribution of experiences below for the Rural Lifestyle (Green Wedge) Precincts.





INFORMING THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

HOW THE OUTPUTS WILL INFORM THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

The outputs from the Community Assembly, including the prioritised open space experiences and the set of distribution targets, will directly influence the development of the Mornington Peninsula Shire's Open Space Strategy. These outputs represent the Assembly's recommendations on how to equitably distribute and enhance open space access across different precincts in the Shire.

Key ways the outputs will be used include:

Precinct assessments and gap analysis:

The Assembly's recommendations will help inform the precinct assessments by identifying key priorities and experiences that each precinct should offer. This information will be used to conduct a gap analysis, determining where the current provision of open space experiences may fall short of community needs and preferences.

Development of service standards and provision targets:

The targets set by the Assembly for the distribution of open space experiences will be used to guide the development of technical standards. These standards will specify the quantity and quality of open spaces within each precinct, ensuring that all residents have equitable access to important open space experiences, such as playgrounds, sports facilities, and natural areas.

Linking targets to service standards:

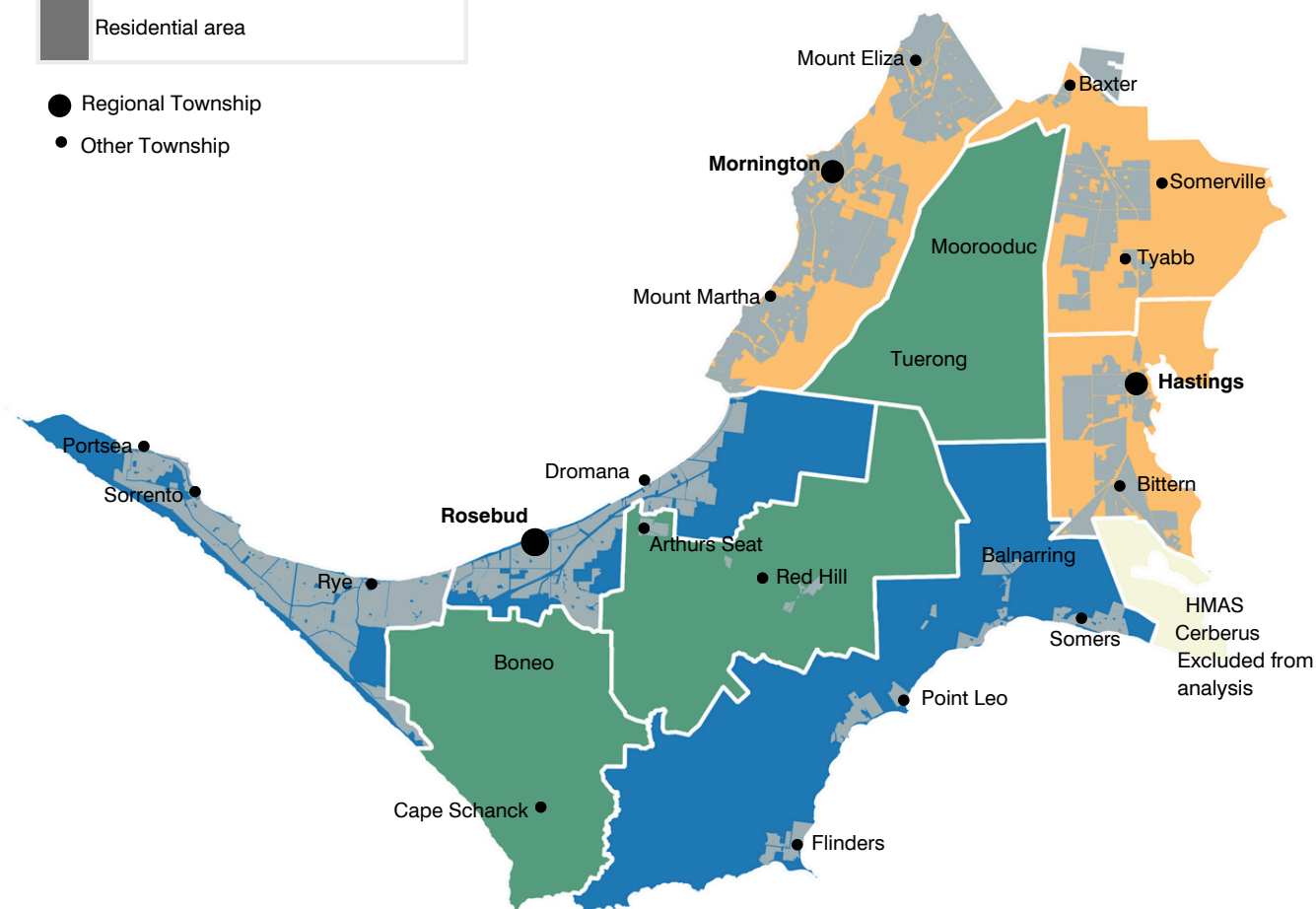
The targets set by the Assembly will be linked to the service standards. This ensures that priority experiences are mapped within precincts and aligned with the benchmarks for open space provision, guiding future planning decisions.

PRECINCT ASSESSMENT

This map illustrates the full range of precincts within the Mornington Peninsula Shire, which are more diverse than the simplified versions used in the Community Assembly process. While the Assembly focused on broader precinct categories to prioritise experiences, the precinct assessment will take into account the greater variation across these areas to ensure more tailored recommendations for open space distribution and accessibility.

1	PRECINCT: COASTAL Tourist (urban coastal) areas with a higher proportion of unoccupied dwellings
2	PRECINCT: RESIDENTIAL Suburban (residential) areas with a higher proportion of children and medium density housing.
3	PRECINCT RURAL Rural Lifestyle (Green Wedge) areas characterised by agriculture and rural residential land use.
	Residential area

- Regional Township
- Other Township





i.e.
community


**MORNINGTON
PENINSULA**
Shire

emerge
ASSOCIATES

APPENDIX #1 - PARTICIPATION

The Mornington Peninsula Open Space Community Assembly involved representatives from a diverse range of stakeholders representing various community interests, environmental groups, and local organisations. A list of the organisations and groups represented is provided below.

- Capel Sound Community Group
- Crib and Stony Point Foreshore Committee
- Disability Advisory Committee (DAC)
- Dromana Association
- Fossil Beach Interest Group
- Friends of Bernards Way Reserve
- Friends of Cape Schanck
- Friends of Haig Street Reserve
- Friends of The Briars
- Leash Free Mornington Peninsula
- Mornington Environment Association
- Mornington Peninsula Citizens Panel
- Mornington Rotary Club
- Nepean Conservation Group Inc
- Nepean Ratepayers Association
- Ranelagh Residents Association
- Rye Community Group Alliance
- Shoreham Community Association
- Watson Creek Landcare Group
- Western Port Seagrass Partnership
- Williams Road Foreshore Reserve